

CHAPTER 7

MINDFULNESS BASED CONSULTING¹

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The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will. An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence.

—William James (1890)

Simple activities that put clients in direct contact with their awareness can lead to profound insight regarding the nature of change. For instance, try sustaining attention to the sensation of breathing for just five seconds without gravitating to a thought such as what it means, what you will eat for your next meal, or what transpired earlier in the day. It often takes just a split second before the mind begins to wander. This response is not only a function of an age that demands hyper-tasking, but also the nature of the human mind. Taking these forces into consideration, it is crucial that we not only keep pace in the fast lane of consulting (Burke, 2010), but do so without falling asleep at the wheel.

Enter *Mindfulness Practice*, adapted for twenty-first-century professionals by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003, p. 145) as “an awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.” Basic mindfulness

practices, such as the breathing exercise described above, are gaining popularity as both a consulting approach and a practical way of supporting change. With regular integration, mindfulness practice has been observed to help members of organizations collaborate and lead with greater presence, empathy, creativity, and gratitude. It has also been recognized by consultants as a facet of compassionate organizational culture and citizenship behavior, as members come into greater awareness of how personal attachments can lead to considerable suffering in the face of change.

While there is no golden standard in assimilating mindfulness practice with change consultation, this chapter introduces a theoretical, practical, and measurable starting point. It aligns meditative practices observed as early as 400 BCE (Narain, 2003) with transformational change strategies in organizations as futuristic as Google (Chade-Meng, 2012). By comparing contemporary literature on mindfulness with approaches shared by four consultants in the Americas and Europe, this chapter defines Mindfulness Based Consulting (MBC) as: *a process of helping members embrace and lead organizational change by transforming their way of being, comprised of heightened awareness and genuine sense of purpose, through mindfulness practice.* This chapter introduces the reader to the five foundational applications of MBC, including ten related practices and nine measurement methodologies. It concludes with a new theory, application, and measurement methodology concerning leadership development, known as *Ways of Being*.

Seasoned consultants understand that despite their best attempts at planning, change efforts are often derailed by unheeded elements of the lived experience. More often than not, when members of organizations stand toe to toe with change their anxieties can lead to an ineffable sense of dread. Fears of inadequacy, helplessness, failure, and futility are some of the most challenging obstacles for change readiness, implementation, and commitment. The challenge is not in fixing or pushing these anxieties away, but standing in a new relationship with them. This new relationship is awareness itself, a field of knowing that is not defined or consumed by attachments. In mindfulness practice the aim is not to get caught in analysis around attachments at all, but rather being aware of them as they arise and dissipate. By actively addressing, versus simply being aware of these anxieties, we often sabotage our ability to accept the constant and often ambiguous nature of change.

The goal is simply being aware of our attachments for what they are, without striving to change them whatsoever. The irony is that by not striving to fix or change emotional hardships associated with change, through mindfulness practice we can indirectly free ourselves from those attachments. In other words, mindfulness practice is not an approach for tackling difficulties with change, it is a process of letting go. Behavioral means for attaining greater awareness include formal and informal mindfulness practices.

A departure from classic change strategies, which typically involve unyielding reflection upon past experience, consideration of external stimuli, and strategic orientation toward a desired future state, mindfulness practice creates the transformative space of non-striving and non-judgmental attitude that continuously returns to the present moment. This space is described as *Beginners Mind*:

Too often we let our thinking and our beliefs about what we 'know' prevent us from seeing things as they really are . . . An open, 'beginner's' mind allows us to be receptive to new possibilities and prevents us from getting stuck in a rut of our expertise, which often thinks it knows more than it does. (Kabat-Zinn, 2009, p. 35)

Beginners Mind is an approach that fits well with Jamieson and Armstrong's (2010, p. 3) characterization of real consulting as "not knowing the answers or exactly what you'll even do at the start."

Mindfulness practice is also linked to an increase in brain matter associated with improved learning and memory processes, emotional regulation, self-referential processing, and perspective taking (Hölzel et al., 2011). Mindfulness practice is even shown to rewire our most basic personal perceptions (Carmody, 2009), which have a profound influence on self-regulation in the midst of organizational change. All of these elements have direct application to more effective leadership as they may help members grasp the immediate fuller picture, quell psychological distress, make better decisions, and utilize expertise more effectively. It cannot be overemphasized that mindfulness practice is most conducive to change leadership when we extend beyond formal practice, such as meditation, and incorporate it as our very way of being.

Meditative practices have found a new home in industry giants such as Google, Apple, IBM, Starbucks, eBay, and AOL Time Warner. This practice is incorporated before, during, and after almost every conceivable organizational change activity, including client-consultant engagement, brainstorming, gap analysis, and strategic planning. It is also emerging as a central feature of organizational development activities such as coaching, mentoring, teambuilding, and leadership development.

In one of the more common practices, sitting meditation can be practiced and facilitated by consultants as follows:

The client maintains an upright sitting posture, either in a chair or cross-legged on the floor and attempts to maintain attention on a particular focus, most commonly the somatic sensations in his or her own breathing. Whenever attention wanders from the breath to the inevitable thoughts and feelings that arise, the client will simply take notice of them and then let them go as attention is returned to the breath. As sitting meditation is practiced,

there is an emphasis on simply taking notice of whatever the mind happens to wander to and accepting each object without making judgments about it or elaborating on its implications, additional meanings, or need for action. (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 232)

Chaskalson (2011) also suggests that leaders practice mindfulness in the routine spaces throughout the workday. You might imagine paying attention to your breathing in the moments before a client luncheon. Or simply paying attention to the way your feet touch the ground in the moments before you enter a client's boardroom, sustaining awareness to every footstep.

Many organizations have made pre- and post-meeting meditations a behavioral norm. Each of these routine practices holds promise across organizational contexts, as they serve to enhance a member's ability to enter a relationship with stakeholders and organizational challenges through a refreshed set of eyes. It can also provide a practical way of rediscovering the joy of leading as if for the first time, every time.

THE FIVE FOUNDATIONAL APPLICATIONS OF MBC

The literature on organizational change has shifted its own attention over the past few decades, from the promise of a *knowledge economy* (Argyris, 1991), to the competitive advantage of creativity in an *innovation economy* (De Geus, 2002), and most recently to the necessity of awareness in an *attention economy* (Davenport & Beck, 2012). If you agree that the greatest rival of innovation is habit, and that the greatest threat to breaking habits is awareness, it follows that innovation requires mindfulness practice.

Transforming our approach to problems and opportunities requires a process of recognizing and letting go of habits of mind in order to receive new ideas. That is to say, new ideas are capable of entering our minds without thinking. However, creating a space for epiphanies is not as easy as it seems—particularly in the workplace. In many ways it is counter-cultural because it involves non-doing, non-striving, and non-thinking. Innovation requires a transformation of habits and there is no shortage of literature on this subject. Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 2000) explains this well. Transformative Learning is a process that occurs when an individual is faced with a disorienting event, one that does not comport well with their existing assumptions. One of the most common disorienting events is the realization that there is no clear cut solution to a given problem. In other words, a leader is forced to adapt. Since the nature of the mind is largely habit forming, our direction for adaptation emerges from our existing *habit of mind*, described as “a set of assumptions—broad, generalized, orienting

predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17).

In exploring a fuller, unified approach of Transformative Learning Theory, Taylor and Cranton (2012, p. 3) suggest that the outcome of Transformative Learning includes:

... a deep shift in perspective, leading to more open, more permeable, and better-justified meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1978)—but the ways of getting there can differ depending on the person or people and the context or situation.

Transformation becomes observable and most beneficial to organizational change efforts when an individual’s transformed habit of mind prompts concrete action, which reflects this perspective shift. Meditation, which is essentially a process of letting go, can serve as the very disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000) required to prompt transformation. Transformative learning is a helpful complement to mindful leadership practices as it suggests a way of testing and producing innovation through critical reflection and dialogue with others.

Five foundational applications of mindfulness practice have emerged and support areas of transformation that hold enormous organizational value, including: strategic innovation, leadership development, organizational culture, employee satisfaction, and performance.

Application 1: Strategic Innovation

You may already be familiar with the story of Archimedes, a renowned mathematician of his time who was once asked to investigate whether a craftsman was replacing gold materials with silver in the production of the King’s crown. After struggling at the drawing board for days, Archimedes decided to relax his mind at the local baths. Soaking up the world at large, he noticed that when his body entered the bath, the water was displaced. Suddenly it occurred, would it not hold true that a crown mixed with silver would have to contain more density to displace the same amount of water as one made entirely of gold? Eureka!

Mindfulness Based Problem Solving

Game-changing innovation requires more than the thinking mind. Our fixation with management, logistics, and efficiency is still important though if unchecked it can detract from an organization’s ability to evolve. As Senge and colleagues (2004, p. 9) warn:

As long as our thinking is governed by habit—notably by industrial, ‘machine age’ concepts such as control, predictability, standardization, and ‘faster is better’—we will continue to re-create institutions as they have been, despite their disharmony with the larger world, and the need of all living systems to evolve.

Eureka moments are always at hand, and seem to thrive in organizations where members are encouraged to relax the mind before, during, and after problem solving. While critical reflection on event-experiences in the past remains absolutely critical to change, the work of Otto Scharmer has expanded how we might better anticipate the future from our sense of the present. Scharmer (2007, p. 30) moves from past interpretation to future ideation by suggesting “a different stream of time—the future that wants to emerge,” and along with Senge and colleagues (2004) has artfully expanded upon the transformative promise of suspending judgment.

Eureka-Storming

Mindfulness practice has been observed to be particularly helpful in stimulating discovery when it is practiced just prior to activities that require creativity such as brainstorming, or broadened awareness that is particularly germane to strategic planning. A consultant can facilitate these “Eureka moments” at the very start of the consultative process by encouraging their client to assume the position of an outside observer. The following protocol for Eureka-Storming can yield some amazing insights:

1. First, make sure that materials for writing, synthesizing, and concept mapping are completely hidden from view.
2. Suggest to the group that the real aim of Eureka-storming includes letting go (initially non-striving) in order to allow creative ideas to ‘come to us.’
3. Facilitate the group through a simple breathing meditation for five minutes. If you are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with facilitating a brief meditation, you can play an audio clip such as the one created by this author: tinyurl.com/kuspj66.
4. Next, have the group quietly and individually jot down what types of thoughts, attachments, and anxiety patterns crop up despite their best intentions to sustain attention to the breath. Rather than making sense of them or thinking about these thoughts any further, have the group write them down exactly as they appeared in no more than one sentence. Ask participants to do their very best not to analyze.
5. Then, ask participants to place their notes aside, flipping the paper over so that they cannot be seen. Tell them that they will return to this list eventually. If you experience any resistance you might invite the client to notice how attached they are to their ideas!

6. Now that you have primed the group through a symbolic process of letting go, facilitate a second five minute meditation, encouraging participants to allow their thoughts to come and go.
7. Next, facilitate participants through a process of brainstorming that requires beginner's mind, noting previous ideas when they arise and actively letting go of them; reminding the group that they will eventually return to these ideas.
8. Once you have grouped similar ideas, have the group turn their original bullet list over again, and discuss the following:
 - a. What is our current capacity for innovation? In other words, how attached are we to our thoughts and expertise?
 - b. Despite the merits of our expertise, what does this approach to innovation say about the organization's ability to evolve and out-innovate competitors?
 - c. Which ideas are most surprising or far-flung?
9. Next, have the group sit quietly with all of the ideas generated for two minutes, practicing beginner's mind and non-judgment. Encourage participants to allow these ideas to 'move them' rather than trying to make sense of them.
10. Finally, facilitate a final five-minute meditation before doing a *gallery walk*, where members move about the room quietly as if they were in an art gallery, looking at each grouping of ideas. Ask them to individually write (on the sheets which hold the ideas) additional ideas that come to mind.

When processes like this are practiced frequently enough they can strengthen our ability to maintain an open mind when solving problems and making decisions. This bodes well particularly for navigating ambiguous situations, precisely because they necessitate a brief step back before moving forward.

Application 2: Leadership Development

Mindfulness practice is not only linked to strategic discovery but also self-discovery, which requires openness to the nature of a one's identity, role, and worldview. Members of organizations often report that when the mind is relaxed through guided or self-directed meditation, any number of personal anxieties and attachments can surface on their own. It is helpful for clients to reflect upon difficult situations, particularly upon strong attachments that prevent them from discovering a deeper sense of purpose, authenticity, and fulfillment.

Leading change efforts can only benefit from a heightened sense of compassion regarding the suffering of others (products of attachments) and gratitude for simply being. Ironically, the attachments that leaders suffer from tend to sneak attention away from this higher standard in serving others. Those who find themselves in greater places of power tend to measure their sense of gratitude against material gain rather than fulfilling a deeper moral obligation to help others discover their potential. Gandhi knew this well. In relating Gandhi's discussion around leadership attachments, Nair (1994, p. 38) shares how such attachments may only serve to reward unhealthy leadership:

Attachments can corrupt all levels of an organization. Our need for a job and financial security, for example, may prevent us from speaking out against unethical conduct in the workplace. We know what we ought to do, but our attachments prevent us from doing it, so we condone—and therefore support—bad leadership.

Purpose Based Development

Monica Pigatto, the Managing Director of Atha Consulting based out of Montivideo, Uruguay, has worked with organizations throughout South America, assisting clients in creating leadership development frameworks that incorporate mindfulness practice. As captured in a recent discussion, her work centers on activities that help leaders unveil and better understand their 'authentic self':

As human beings, we are often our own obstacle in the ongoing process of learning and change. Employees have a natural potential that they can plug into, and in this process they can enjoy the path of learning and expanding. My vision is to shed light on this existing capability with leaders in organizations, by accompanying people in their development, including expansion of consciousness, care about their welfare, and balance in life. In many ways, my work is helping individuals, teams and organizations to see themselves for the first time and fall in love.

It may be said that the most powerful approach to accessing the expansive nature of self-transformation requires a retreat from the self entirely, rather than tireless reflection upon the self. In ancient Japanese Zen practice it is said that the greatest study of the self is to forget yourself (Loy, 1996, p. xv). It so happens that through mindfulness practice, leaders can learn to let go of their self-formation in unforgettable ways. At its deepest root transformative development is "the emergence of the Self" (Cranton, 2006, p. 195). As mentioned earlier, having a conception of self is enormously important at an objective level, because it allows us to address our use of self, just as we might continue to tune and play an instrument. Use of self is "... critical

in the daily interactions of any helping professional role and especially impactful in change since the responsibilities, ethics, and outcomes affect other's lives" (Jamieson et al., 2013, p. 127). However, in order to better understand an application from the perspective of mindfulness practice, you might view the self not only as the instrument but as the music.

Supra-Self Inquiry

It is our nature to typecast others and ourselves. Employees tend to orient change efforts around their sense of self, just as an entire movie script can be written to suit the character appeal of a familiar actor (think Robert De Niro). There is certainly nothing wrong with this unless one wishes to authentically lead transformation—that is, by first transforming oneself. When in our awareness we recognize this orientation, it may be best that we leave the theater of identity altogether.

The learning methodology that I have developed and facilitated successfully with a number of clients in different industries is called *Supra-Self Inquiry*. The term Supra-Self is used by this author to suggest a process of moving beyond one's concocted and conditioned view of self—which is typically limited in scope—in order to recognize the unbounded nature of the Self. This unbounded nature includes an infinite freedom to change in each moment, and an undivided field of care between self and other. The basic outline for facilitating Supra-Self Inquiry includes the following:

1. *Mindfulness Practice*: Participants are guided through formal mindfulness practice in an attempt to develop a non-judgmental level of wakefulness, moment by moment, in order to more clearly notice their unique streams of thought apart from one's previously defined self. Following formal practice, a discussion is held around ways in which our streams of thought are comprised of taken for granted anxieties, assumptions, and attachments. A particular focus is given to the resulting tension in identity we experience between life and work.
2. *Transformative Practice*: Participants are facilitated in recognizing through critical reflection, dialogue, and action how and why they organize (in Gestalt fashion) a 'Storied Self.' A core focus of reflection includes the three following elements that drive narratives: appearance, autonomy, and prestige.
3. *Transcendent Practice*: Following Mindfulness and Transformative Practice, participants are invited to adopt a new outlook and test new behaviors that enable them to transcend their previous (less mindful and appreciative) relationships with everyday experience. Specific attention is given to understanding the limitless nature of meaning, sustaining a 'boundless' sense of self, and recognizing infinite potential for growth.

Supra-Self Inquiry is designed to be an iterative process, which leaders return to repetitively. That is, leaders will go through this process several times, across several meetings and series of testing out new ways of being.

Leadership Presence Development

Rod Francis, the Managing Director of Flow Consulting based in London, has been practicing mindfulness meditation for over 25 years. During an interview, he described his approach as a presence-based form of executive coaching, where:

The client learns to deal with the reality of what is and remain totally available to whomever or whatever they are engaging with. It is essentially a skill of non-judgmental observation, which implies an ability to respond to reality rather than the perception (subjective interpretation) of reality. What I most often find is that the goals my clients present stem from the fundamental needs of meaning and purpose. To a person, my clients are looking for happiness and satisfaction but almost always the goals and solutions they arrive with are misinformed, misguided and misdirected. These expectations are fraught with the potential for eventual disappointment and a life misspent.

When confronted with change, employees can do better to relate with each other by intentionally *not striving* to disquiet any discomfort that exists in the midst of change. Instead, the invitation is to relate to each other without immediate interpretation:

If they are pleasant, we try to prolong these thoughts or feelings or situations, stretch them out, and conjure them up again and again. Similarly, there are many thoughts and feelings and experiences that we try to get rid of or to prevent and protect ourselves from having because they are unpleasant and painful and frightening in one way or another. (Kabat-Zinn, 2009, p. 40)

MBC practitioners introduce leaders to a number of reminders for practicing presence: being in the moment with individual employees, teams, and other organizational stakeholders. Some of these reminders include visual cues in offices and meeting rooms to prompt leaders—when they have wandered off into a diatribe—to come back to the present moment. It is also suggested that leaders set notifications on smartphone apps to snap out of ruminations on the past and anxieties about the future, in order to be present to the problems at hand. These cues are intentionally set to help leaders return to three critical questions:

1. How present am I with the full reality of this moment in time?
2. How is the reality of our situation presently overshadowed by being stuck in the past (i.e., mistakes I have made as a leader)?

3. How far into the future is my mind, and are the anxieties associated with worrying about the future helpful?

Daily Presencing Practices

Again, in order to assimilate greater presence as our very way of being, leaders must practice. Below are a number of creative ways to support a more mindful presence on a regular basis:

1. *Develop Concrete Reminders:* Suggest that employees develop concrete reminders to practice this transformed relationship with time, by posting visual cues nearby or setting hourly notifications on smartphone apps. When employees come into contact with reminders throughout the day, they may briefly reflect on the following questions:
 - a. How present am I with the full reality of this moment in time?
 - b. How is the reality of my situation now overshadowed by the way things were?
 - c. How non-mindful am I about how I wish things to be?
2. *The 2 Tab Rule:* Make it a practice that you never have more than two internet tabs open at a given point in time; anything beyond this is most likely a symptom of hyper-tasking.
3. *Life Integration:* Nancy Glynn, based in Stuttgart, Germany, is the Managing Director of ATTAIN Partners Ltd. Before pioneering MBC across Europe, she had supported five cross-border acquisitions, corporate portfolio restructurings, and change efforts brought about by crises. In an interview, Glynn recounted coaching a high performing leader through a simple meditation exercise that began at home, which produced a seamless sense of self between home and the workplace:

This client began with a 2-minute tooth-brushing exercise daily. He began gardening in his new home, differently than in the past, really being mindful and enjoying nature, his senses and surroundings. He became mindful in his interactions with others and aware of his behavior and its effect on others. The results, as described by the client, were that he had become a better team leader and better coach, which led to a stronger team; he reported that he felt more relaxed—despite the stress he anticipated; and felt more in control of his emotions.

Resting to Learn through Shared Experience: Yorks and Kasl (2002) suggest that those who lead adult learning in organizations might re-conceptualize experience as a phenomenological process that necessitates more of an affective 'experiencing' of a shared moment:

Casting experience as a verb instead of a noun—that is, conceptualizing experience phenomenologically instead of pragmatically—leads educators to examine how they can assist learners in sharing a felt sense of the other’s experience instead of reflecting on its meaning. (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 186)

Activities like these are crucial because even when we are psychologically committed to mindfulness practice, it is very easy to forget. These reminders are an essential means for keeping employees honest with their practice.

Application 3: Organizational Culture

MBC practitioners are also beginning to notice a number of beneficial patterns that may be associated with their approach, pertaining to organizations at large, including change readiness, commitment, and implementation. A healthy orientation to transformational change is observed by MBC practitioners to include a greater sense of gratitude, belonging, oneness, presence, organizational consciousness, faith, self-fulfillment, purpose, and freedom. The following practices focus on developing our ability to listen in a way that not only understands these dimensions of culture, but becomes our very way of being in relationship with others.

Mindful Listening Techniques

In order to facilitate a more mindful form of change leadership, exemplified through heightened compassion and gratitude, Nancy Glynn introduces *Mindful Listening* techniques that couple two individuals and tasks them with reflecting on tenets of mindfulness during and following a listening exercise. As she shared during a recent conversation, “They realize how little anyone listens, a common symptom of organizational ineffectiveness.” Glynn also coaches executives in *Mindful Questioning* techniques, illustrating how questions may be asked non-judgmentally, openly, and frankly, in order to help them see the problematic symptoms of organizational culture. The humanity that she refers to suggests that we strive to relate to the authentic voice of others by acknowledging the nature and influence of our own attachments and anxieties. Glynn has woven this notion into the simple yet profound vision of her organization: To ignite humanity and see what it can do.

Mindful Feedback

Breon Michel, a principal consultant for Breon Michel LLC, based out of Phoenix, Arizona, was recently asked to provide feedback to a military instructor to help her advance to the next level of training. As the unit was transitioning to a “culture of initiative,” the aim was to help the instructor feel better equipped to deliver the program on her own. Michel recalls that

the process for instilling mindfulness required the ability to be mindful. In particular, Michel practices mindfulness in order to more effectively record and deliver feedback, detailing the challenge and payoff of remaining aware in this process:

The task of recording feedback required paying attention to my delivery, content, interaction with students, and body language, which called for precise attention to detail while not losing sight of bigger picture. Without mindfulness, it would have been easy to focus too intently on the details. Staying aware of what was going on internally helped me remain relaxed and open to taking in the totality of the experience. Perhaps one of the greatest assets of using mindfulness in this setting is to deliver feedback in a way that is attuned to the receiver, ensuring that there is plenty of space for listening, reflection and absorption. Commonly, feedback is uncomfortable and one-sided, but integrating mindfulness created a space for understanding, courageousness, and curiosity.

Developing a Sense of Belonging

Returning to the discussion with Monica Pigatto, she shares that in order to sense belonging in an organization we would do well to reduce the anxiety of feeling threatened by stimuli in the environment, which can aggravate worries such as powerlessness, helplessness, and despair. As she suggests:

By becoming more aware of our different states of being, and more accepting of what we are at every moment, compassion emerges and that feeling allows us to accept others and communicate through a different ethic where we can accept another's perspective without feeling threatened. Even if the members of a team are simply taking time for mindfulness practice in the middle of their day, they report satisfaction in connecting with themselves and others.

Pigatto offers that as human beings, in the end we all search for the same thing: satisfaction and joy. This includes finding the joy of being in service with others. Mindfulness practice is a way of helping professionals, even those at the pinnacle of their careers, to deepen their sense of cohesion with others.

Developing Organizational Consciousness

Organizational consciousness is described as a state of organizational awareness that "provides the greatest freedom and potential for creative change" (Heaton & Harung, 1999, p. 159). Burke and Litwin (1992, p. 526) hint at how this dimension always seems just outside of conscious reach:

These underlying values and norms may not be entirely available to one's consciousness. They are thought to describe a meaning system that allows members of that social system to attribute meanings and values to the variety of external and internal events that are experienced.

Rod Francis (Flow Consulting) points out that it takes a great deal of faith to welcome a reality other than what we construct. He suggests to clients that mindfulness practice:

... allows us to engage with reality rather than a projection. With the skill of bare attention we also are able to more accurately discern our emotional and visceral responses to situations and respond in a more suitable and appropriate manner. We learn to step aside from the mental dialogue and chatter and engage with the world from a place of greater authenticity and wisdom.

An MBC approach to organizational culture expands some of our original notions of what an organizational culture is. It recognizes an organizational reality outside of judgment and inside the moment.

Reducing Judgment

Prior to a change kickoff meeting a leader can practice being aware of any limits she habitually places on her broader scope of awareness in the boardroom—as difficult as it may be—without judging those limits as good or bad. As she enters the room, rather than anxiously focusing on what she plans to deliver or how she has been perceived in the past, she can practice *noticing* rather than being consumed by her judgment. Breon Michel's consultation efforts pay careful attention to the ways in which members judge themselves and feel yearning in relationship with the organization's vision. As Michel explained:

Helping an organization's people become aware of the universality of certain issues helps to alleviate suffering and isolation. Less internal and external criticism and judgment fosters greater understanding, compassion and clearer communication across sectors. People understand themselves and each other better, which enhances well-being collectively, including sense of purpose and belonging.

Balancing Purpose and Freedom

As described above, we tend to instantly judge ourselves against both external and internal standards. Yet, a healthy sense of purpose is one that is balanced with a sense of freedom from what can and should be. Mindfulness is an acceptance of what is, which not only expands our freedom but also our willingness to create. Glynn (ATTAIN Partners) shares that as a consultant:

I myself am more accepting of 'what is' in the culture without judging, and enable leaders to take this productive view allowing for all parties to see more clearly, with fewer clouded lenses. In workshops, mindfulness is woven in to enable clarity, acceptance and motivation. I encourage teams that I am working with to apply tenets of mindfulness in their interactions with one another

and to apply this in team meetings, making people keenly aware of problems and better able to address them.

I use business language to guide them in these practices and refer to research, giving them a sense of legitimacy in applying new and effective ways of interacting that depart from the more typical transactional relationships. Most clients find this absolutely fascinating and liberating because it removes the sense of self blame or inadequateness.

Application 4: Employee Satisfaction

Rod Francis shares that mindfulness practice holds great promise in developing a deep sense of professional fulfillment:

... mindfulness is a way of being that I attempt to inculcate at all levels. I will often introduce it in the first session when I'll familiarize a client with the notion that the endless internal chatter that we all experience is simply a product of mind. That it's just chatter and that we can dis-identify from it—no longer see 'us' as the stories. We can observe the chatter and then turn our attention elsewhere. This, in essence, is mindfulness: bare attention in the present moment without judgment or opinion. This instantly frees the client from the tyranny of mind.

The practice of mindfulness also provides a sense of fulfillment when it comes to individual and organizational performance. Francis finds it particularly useful in front-end work to incorporate mindfulness practice as a way of tuning our unique instrument, in order to perform in a resonant fashion. Mindfulness practice can serve to refresh the eyes of analysis, particularly around the unstated value systems that are part of the client system. In order to demonstrate how fulfilling change efforts can be through the lens of mindfulness practice, he suggests that consultants develop their own personal meditation practice and seek out good teachers:

Sit a silent retreat at least once a year. Develop a community that is also so engaged and communicate and support each other. Connect to the world-wide community of practitioners now working in these areas in any way that you can. You'll meet at retreats, trainings, talks or anywhere the subject of mindfulness is on the agenda but most importantly put your hand out and actually meet those like-minded colleagues. You never know where that connection may lead.

Application 5: Performance

Change is rarely spurred by concepts alone but rather by a data and measurement orientation (Burke, 2011). Organizations are just beginning to

understand the benefits of innovation, operational efficiency, and self-discovery stemming from mindfulness practice (Hyland, Lee, & Mills, 2015). Since 2006, General Mills has trained over 290 employees in mindfulness-based leadership, with participants reporting a 23% increase in productivity, 80% improvement in decision making, and 89% improvement in listening skills.² In addition to productivity and improved relationships, Chaskalson (2011) notes that characteristics of a mindful workplace often include reduced absenteeism linked with illnesses caused by workplace stress.

Langer (1997), who writes about *Mindful Learning*, points to an ever-present danger in measuring ourselves against fixed and finite standards—the devaluation of self and others. Langer harkens to the many models of intelligence that exist, which gauge an individual's strengths and weaknesses. Modern organizations still subscribe to this deficit model, perhaps due to a deeper desire to substantiate the existence of development efforts through measurement and correlation. Langer (1997, p. 136) warns however, "Such devaluation sometimes causes people to compensate by devaluing others . . . Adding dimensions of intelligence encourages such labeling and competition." A Western orientation to being some "thing" tends to compartmentalize, commoditize, and even splinter the fuller reality of what it means to "be" with change. To borrow from the world of art, strategies for developing employees in support of change may span anywhere between a *paint-by-numbers* approach emphasizing valuation, and a *blank canvas* approach that may facilitate game-changing masterpieces.

Those who practice MBC incorporate a number of psychometrically tested instruments for measuring the impact of mindfulness practice, including levels of awareness and drivers associated with successful organizational change efforts. For instance, the *Mindful Attention Awareness Scale* measures "individual differences in the frequency of mindfulness states over time . . . presence or absence of attention to and awareness of what is occurring in the present" (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 824). Similarly, the *Toronto Mindfulness Scale* takes on a two-factor measurement structure that is mainly concerned with processes of curiosity and decentering (Lau et al., 2006). The *Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills* gauges skills associated with mindfulness, including "observing, describing, acting with awareness and accepting without judgment" (Baer et al., 2004, p. 191). For those interested in the connection between emotional intelligence and change readiness, the *Cognitive Affective Mindfulness Scale* was developed to measure factors including mindfulness, distress, well-being, emotional-regulation, and problem-solving (Feldman et al., 2007). Lastly the *Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory* looks at the lasting effects of mindfulness, including the increase in mindfulness after mindfulness retreats (Buchheld, Grossman, & Walach, 2001). A full list of measurements can be found at www.mindfulexperience.org, a site

dedicated to research on this subject for professionals in healthcare, psychology, and education.

Breon Michel (Breon Michell LLC) views herself as an integrative health consultant—someone who helps organizations reconnect with their innate capacity for well-being in order to flourish. She facilitates programs centered on using mindfulness, followed by inquiry and dialogue, to facilitate stress relief and healing from the inside out. As Michel shares, “The work is collaborative and experiential, requiring a commitment on behalf of key leaders to both engage in the process and support their employees in developing to the fullest.” Having studied under the aegis of Martin Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania,³ she measures the organizational impact of mindfulness through metrics associated with resilience and positive psychology, including: the *Resilience Scale*, which measures an individual’s capacity for resilience; the *Transgression Motivations Questionnaire*, which measures forgiveness; and the *Work-Life Questionnaire*, which measures work-life satisfaction. While these measures do a very good job at measuring mindfulness and many of its benefits, a measurement inventory is needed to fuse mindfulness practice with organizational change. With this specific aim in mind, the chapter introduces an emerging instrument.

WAYS OF BEING

It has been said that “Managers assert drive and control to get things done; leaders pause to discover new ways of being and achieving” (Cashman, 2012, p. 4). Yet, what does it mean to discover a new way of being? This is certainly a debate for the ages. However, when clients are asked to describe how mindfulness practice has influenced their way of being, even across cultures as remote as Germany, Uruguay, the United States, and London, MBC consultants observe two central features: greater sense of purpose and awareness. After much thought, I have come to identify these features as central to an individual’s Way of Being, describing them as *Mode of Purpose* and *Mode of Awareness*. What is most fascinating about these features is how they combine to indicate four specific ways of being.

Mode of Purpose

A common result of mindfulness practice in the organizational setting is that members become aware that they view work-life and home-life through a divided lens. What does it mean after all, to be one person at home and another at work? This would imply a subconscious, role oriented dissection of self where one is never “fully being” in the organization or at home. This

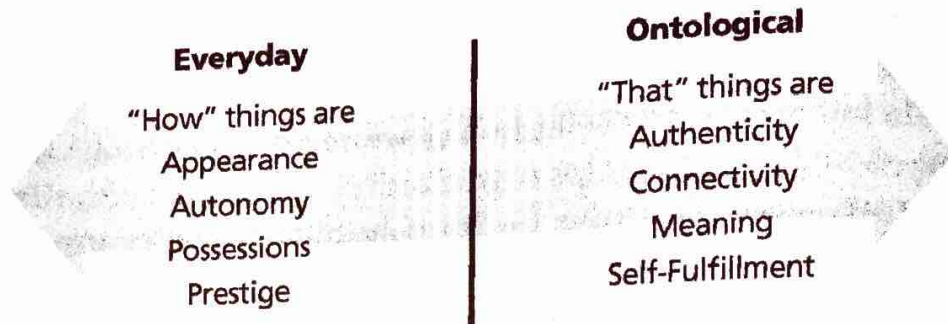


Figure 7.1 Mode of purpose.

realization is ripe for developmental dialogue around a leader's sense of "why" they are there, or sense of purpose through life in general.

As explored earlier in the discussion around leadership development, it can be said that we often operate based on some Habit of Mind. Our Habit of Mind regarding "being" is referred to as our *Mode of Purpose*. Irvin Yalom (2008) suggests that to some degree we tend toward one of two modes of existence: one pertaining to preoccupations with the *Everyday*, and the other pertaining to our deeper sense of being, the *Ontological*.

An everyday organizational orientation is important, though MBC practitioners remind leaders that this mode alone does not capture the fuller import of being for leaders and those they lead. Figure 7.1 adapts Yalom's work (1980) to this discussion, highlighting the distinct tensions that might govern a member's Mode of Purpose during organizational change. The power in this diagram is the way it reveals a multitude of attachments influencing one's Mode of Purpose. Yalom refers to these driving forces as primal conflicts, which include "repression, denial, displacement, and symbolization" (Yalom, 1980, p. 6).

Mode of Awareness

Transforming our Way of Being requires that we learn to see ourselves as part of something that is both equal to and greater than our everyday situation and everyday self. In order to see this more clearly it is helpful to understand what it means to continuously operate from a particular *Mode of Awareness* (see Figure 7.2). Greater awareness or quality of mind is not characterized as a destination, but rather as something that is always abundant. This assumes that the self is more than an individual agent, but rather a "psychological construct that represents the psyche both conscious and unconscious" (Cranton, 2006, p. 195). As awareness increases, a leader may be better able to recognize the presence of anxieties, fears, and personal attachment that directly influence their leadership style and efficacy.



Figure 7.2 Mode of awareness.

Ways of Being

Mahatma Gandhi is often quoted as saying, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” It is a beautiful sentiment, but these words were never uttered by Gandhi. In fact, this phrase was a mistaken interpretation of his original observation, “As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him” (Gandhi, 1958, p. 241). When we take a closer look, these words seem to imply something more than modeling or practicing change. Gandhi may have actually been advocating that you *change the ‘be’* you wish to see in the world. In order to do so it may be helpful for clients, consultants, and organizational members to re-conceptualize their very nature, or way of being.

The model provided in Figure 7.3 offers just one interpretation of an individual’s way of *being* by combining their level of awareness and mode of purpose. The poles present in this model do not represent an “either/or” proposition, where a leader is either preoccupied with the everyday or purely consumed by an ontological focus. Instead, it is meant to portray a tension. Consultants may utilize this model as a centerpiece for dialogue with leaders about how they—and their members—can access their way of being through mindfulness practice in order to reduce anxieties, let go of attachments, free up creative faculties, improve decision making, utilize expertise more wisely, and find a unique sense of fulfillment.

Figure 7.3 illustrates four Ways of Being, which, in any given moment or context, a member embodies a specific sense of purpose and awareness. It is important to underscore that these do not represent a static typology or style. The focus is less on the labels and aims, and more on awareness,

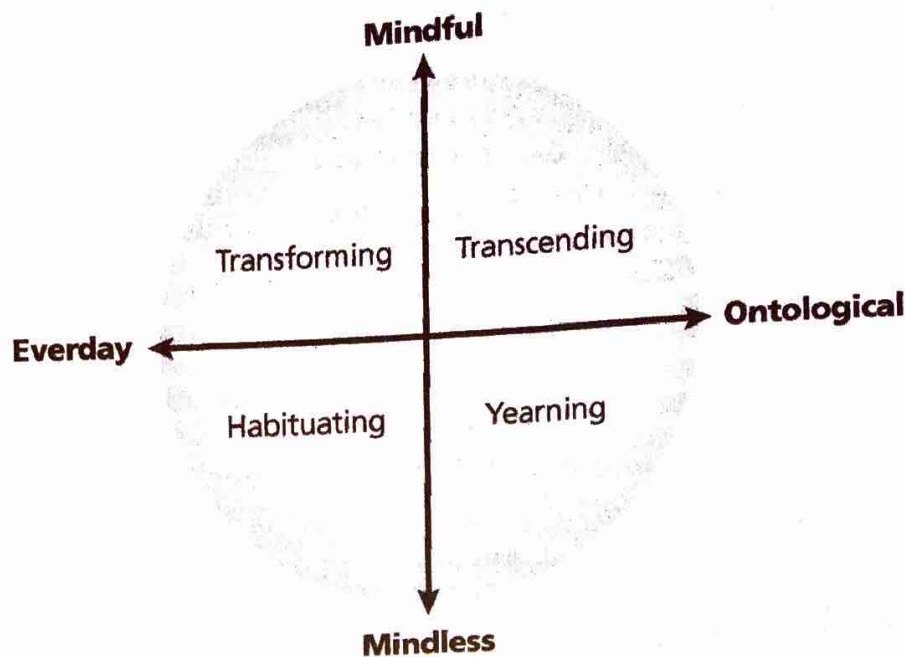


Figure 7.3 Ways of being.

dialogue, and transformation. In fact, exploring these tensions through the Supra-Self Inquiry protocol described earlier can help clients and consultants better understand how they relate with those who resemble similar and dissimilar Ways of Being. These tensions include: Yearning, Habituating, Transforming, and Transcending.

Yearning

An organizational member who, for the time being, embodies a Yearning Way of Being may be described as anxiously preoccupied with their larger purpose in life. Their central worry may be that they lack purpose or even greater *raison d'être* in the organizational setting. Resulting anxieties including guilt may distract from everyday tasks associated with their position. This attachment may also draw their attention away from the day-to-day operations comprising organizational change. In other words they may not be fully alert (i.e., mindful) regarding the everyday operations of the organization.

As leaders, they may be able to espouse what it means to be part of something bigger but at a subconscious level they experience a sense of personal hypocrisy. Introducing mindfulness practice that highlights these sensitivities must be done with a great sense of care, as those who primarily experience themselves as perpetually “yearning” may experience a sense of shock that is too overwhelming to serve as a catalyst for self-transformation. This need for sensitivity underscores how important it is for MBC practitioners to undergo intensive mindfulness training with reputable organizations. As a result of this half-wakeful relationship with the everyday, these members may also be guided in recognizing how their way of being may result in unintentional mistakes and missed practical opportunities.

Habituating

A member who, for the time being, embodies a Habituating Way of Being may conceptualize their awareness as part and parcel with everyday tasks. Their attention may tend to privilege finite, objective, measurable, everyday aspects of organizational life. They may also find it easy and preferable to define and focus intently upon tangible problems, rather than investigating the deeper premises that frame these problems. As leaders, they may demonstrate a preoccupation with fixing what is broken and maintaining what is not broken in line with the status quo; the catch is that they may be unaware of the paradigm from which they operate. In doing so, they may be prone to automating strategies, goals, tasks, and measurement of “real world” success.

Transforming

Members who, for the time being, embody a Transforming Way of Being may be more fully aware of their everyday assumptions, practicing a greater awareness when addressing the premises and anxieties associated with organizational change strategy. They may also be better at identifying *streams of consciousness* for critical reflection, dialogue, and continuous change.

These members, however, may overemphasize critical reflection upon everyday orientations, habits, and behaviors in the organization. As a result, there is greater room to explore deeper assumptions pertaining to being and time. As leaders, these individuals are more likely to strive toward transforming the status quo in organizations, teams, and their own professional role and identity. They may also experience a great deal of enjoyment in challenging the perspectives of others, and helping others reciprocate. Yet, the concept of transformation may be confined to a process of replacing one habit for another, rather than releasing judgment altogether. Their efforts toward self-discovery may begin to incorporate the notion that fuller mindfulness implies a continuous renewal of our way-of-being. In this way, they may choose to help members learn to think beyond dualistic realities in order to consider the larger tensions in organizational theater. These tensions may include contradictions inherent in change strategy and human nature.

Transcending

Members who, for the time being, embody a Transcending Way of Being may be substantially aware of the process of existing, and more holistically familiar with their Way of Being. At the same time, they may be better oriented to accept the ways of being that are adopted by others in the organization. These individuals may be said to view the self as an *ocean of consciousness* that simply is, and at the same time may hold value as a snapshot for critical reflection. They may tend to view the organization as a process in motion. In this way, they are able to recognize paradoxes and

lead others to embrace polarities. At the same time, in this process they are often misunderstood by others to contradict themselves. Leaders who tend toward this way of being are also likely more interested in the questions than the answers, thereby exemplifying beginner's mind. In both purpose-driven and everyday discussions with others they might draw attention to instances where individuals and teams get ahead of themselves, trapped in the past, or being stifled by attachments that cause suffering. They may also tend to be transparent in their practice of awareness and favor both realities of "now" and the measurements of "before and after."

CONCLUSION

Introducing mindfulness practice as an approach or centerpiece of organizational change requires encouraging, supporting, and rewarding the practice of intentionally breaking away from analysis, which may lead to strategic, self, and transcendent discovery. MBC consultants find it particularly helpful to introduce and customize creative exercises conducive to more expansive and less judgmental ways of being. They also take great care to customize their approach to individuals who tend to a particular way of being. In the absence of a mindfulness based approach, organizational change efforts can be hindered or stifled by psychological constructs and expectations. Needless to say, the consultant who wishes to introduce mindfulness should do so mindfully and with a clear sense of purpose. This can be done by maintaining a personal practice and recognizing a "self" that exists beyond their deepest attachments.

NOTES

1. Special thanks to Rod Francis, Monica Pigatto, Nancy Glynn, and Breon Michel for breathing life into this chapter by sharing their consulting experiences.
2. See the General Mills website, "Inside General Mills: Leadership Program Helps Train the Mind". Retrieved from http://www.generalmills.com/en/Media/Inside_General_Mills_archive/leadership_6_8_2010.aspx
3. See the University of Pennsylvania website, www.authenticchappiness.sas.upenn.edu

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