



# LAWYER WELL-BEING WEEK

MAY 4-8, 2020

MON



**STAY STRONG**

Physical Well-Being

TUES



**ALIGN**

Spiritual Well-Being

WEDS



**ENGAGE & GROW**

Career & Intellectual Well-Being

THURS



**CONNECT**

Social Well-Being

FRI



**FEEL WELL**

Emotional Well-Being

# LAWYER WELL-BEING WEEK ACTIVITY PLANNING GUIDE

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Activity Title:	Connect to Thrive
Well-Being Dimension:	Social
Complexity Rating (1 to 3):	<p>Level 1 – Low Cost/Low Administration, Individual Level</p> <p>Level 2 – Medium Cost/Medium Administration, Group Level</p> <p>Level 3 – High Cost/High Administration, Group Level</p>
Required Resources/Materials:	<p>Depends on complexity</p> <p>1 – Email or phone</p> <p>2 – Printer, Room, Coordinator, there are several alternatives for this level. Some which don't have costs beyond printing, and others that offer prizes putting the cost around \$200</p> <p>3 – Coffee Gift cards for pairings, ~\$3000 for 600 lawyers</p>
Author	Courtney Wylie, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, courtney.wylie@faegredrinker.com, Wylie.com

### Activity Objective:

To encourage lawyers to experience connection and belongingness with others.

### Well-Being Connection (How/Why Does this Work?)

Social connection improves physical health and mental and emotional well-being. We all tend to think of physical things when it comes to our well-being, not recognizing that social connection is just as critical.

In fact, one landmark study indicated that lack of social connection is a greater detriment to health than obesity, smoking and high blood pressure. People who feel more connected to others have lower levels of anxiety and depression. Moreover, studies show they also have higher self-esteem, greater empathy for others, are more trusting and cooperative and, as a consequence, others are more open to trusting and cooperating with them. In other words, social connectedness generates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional and physical well-being.

Research unfortunately shows that loneliness is on the rise. Despite its clear importance for health and survival, research shows that social connectedness is waning at an alarming rate in the US. A revealing sociological study showed that the modal number of close others (i.e., people with whom one feels comfortable sharing a personal problem) Americans claimed to have in 1985 was only three. In 2004 it dropped to zero, with over 25% of Americans saying that they have no one to confide in. This survey suggests that one in four people that we meet may have no one they call a close friend!

### Well-Being Connection (How/Why Does this Work?)

People low in social connection are more vulnerable to anxiety, depression, antisocial behavior, and even suicidal behaviors which tend to further increase their isolation. Most poignantly, a landmark survey showed that lack of social connectedness predicts vulnerability to disease and death beyond traditional risk factors such as smoking, blood pressure, and physical activity! Eat your greens and exercise, yes, but don't forget to connect.

So how do you improve your social well-being?

Social connection is more about your subjective feeling of connection than the number of people that you interact with or number of friends. So, what makes you feel connected? Family? Friends? Community? Volunteering? Find a few moments today to make that a priority for yourself.

### Procedure

#### LEVEL 1:

The below can be done at an individual or an organizational level for low to minimal cost.

For individuals –

In the daily bustle, it can be easy to feel alone or disconnected. This can have profound effects on your well-being that often aren't noticed right away. As lawyers, we often work in silos or on our own and don't prioritize our needs for social connection. Recent headlines have even claimed law as the loneliest profession [1] But in a profession of passionate, talented, and educated individuals, it doesn't have to be. You are not alone. Take 60 seconds today to remind yourself of that and make connection a priority.

#### a. Preparation

#### 60 Seconds of Action

Take 60 seconds of action today to do one (or more) of the following:

- Call, text, or email a friend, family member, mentor, or colleague that you haven't spoken to in a while and set a time to catch-up.
- Write a thank-you note to someone that has made your life a little better in the last 30 days.

For Organizations:

Simply have a firm leader send the following email and personalize it with a message encouraging others to participate for the day.

Print copies of the attached affirmation cards or notecards with your organization's information on them on notecard stock and make available.

### Procedure

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As part of Lawyer Well-Being week, we are taking a moment today to recognize the importance of social connection to each of our well-being and to the difficult and important work we do.

In the daily bustle, it can be easy to feel alone or disconnected. This can have profound effects on your well-being that often aren't noticed right away. As lawyers, we often work in silos or on our own and don't prioritize our needs for social connection. Recent headlines have even claimed law as the loneliest profession. [2] But in a profession of passionate, talented, and educated individuals, it doesn't have to be. You are not alone.

We encourage you to join us today and make your social well-being a priority, by engaging in one of the following activities:

- Call, text, or email a friend, family member, mentor, or colleague that you haven't spoken to in a while and catch-up.
- Write a thank-you note to someone that has made your life a little better in the last 30 days. You may have noticed some cards on your desk when you walked in, take a moment to use this to send a thank you to someone. There are more available at \_\_\_\_\_.
- Grab a colleague and ask them to join you for coffee or lunch. Make a commitment not to talk about work during this time.
- Volunteer today doing something that matters to you. Ask if colleagues would like to join you.
- Celebrate members of your team during a meeting today. Share stories about what made you want to be a lawyer or a mistake you made that you thought was insurmountable.

#### a. Preparation

If the above seems daunting, start small. Join us in 60 Seconds of Action by doing one of the following:

- Call, text, or email a friend, family member, mentor, or colleague that you haven't spoken to in a while and to set a time to catch-up.
- Write a thank-you note to someone that has made your life a little better in the last 30 days.
- Take a moment to think about what you are working on and what it means to you. Write this on a post-it and place it on the door to your office to share with others.
- Celebrate the wins and hard work of your team through a shared email or recognition at the beginning of the meeting.
- Sign-up to participate in a volunteer activity that means something to you.
- Make a goal to use Adam Grant's 5/10 rule all day today. If someone is within 10 feet of you, look up and smile. If someone is within 5 feet of you, look up smile and greet them (including their name if you know it – "Hi Mary").

These suggestions are by no means exhaustive, but we hope they encourage you to reach out beyond your office today and connect to thrive. Not only will it help to improve your own social well-being, but your action may be the reason another person feels connected. Thank you for your dedication, time, and hard work. Our [association, organization, firm, etc] would not be the same without all of you.

### Procedure

<p>a. Preparation</p>	<p>LEVEL 3 Send the above emails but include a \$10 gift card to mentors (if you have a mentoring program) or partners with a note asking them to take an associate or report to coffee and not talk about work. If the funds are available, it is a good idea to include staff in this exercise. Gift cards can be bought in high quantities and shipped online, try to find a coffee shop near the office that people can walk to together. For \$3,000 you can encourage 300 pairings to meet (that's 600 people!).</p>
<p>b. Notes</p>	<p>[1] Rubino, K. (2018, April 3). New Survey Proves Lawyer Is The Loneliest Profession Of All. Retrieved from <a href="https://abovethelaw.com/2018/04/new-survey-proves-lawyer-is-the-loneliest-profession-of-all/">https://abovethelaw.com/2018/04/new-survey-proves-lawyer-is-the-loneliest-profession-of-all/</a>; Reeves, J., &amp; Scruggs, M. (n.d.). Law is the Loneliest Profession. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.lawyersmutualnc.com/blog/law-is-the-loneliest-profession">https://www.lawyersmutualnc.com/blog/law-is-the-loneliest-profession</a>; Anchor, S., Rosen, G., Kellerman, A, Reece, A., Seppala, E., King, M., Burkus, D., &amp; Dillon, K. (2018, April 11). America's Loneliest Workers, According to Research. Retrieved from <a href="https://hbr.org/2018/03/americas-loneliest-workers-according-to-research">https://hbr.org/2018/03/americas-loneliest-workers-according-to-research</a></p> <p>[2] Rubino, K. (2018, April 3). New Survey Proves Lawyer Is The Loneliest Profession Of All. Retrieved from <a href="https://abovethelaw.com/2018/04/new-survey-proves-lawyer-is-the-loneliest-profession-of-all/">https://abovethelaw.com/2018/04/new-survey-proves-lawyer-is-the-loneliest-profession-of-all/</a></p>

### Suggestions for Resources

Videos:

Adam Grant – 5/10 Rule - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vz1lbqUSV40>

Emma Sappälä – The Power & Science of Social Connection - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZvUppaDfNs>

Books:

Katzman, M. A. (2019). Connect First 52 Simple Ways to Ignite Success, Meaning, and Joy at work. McGraw-Hill.

In Seppala, E., In Simon-Thomas, E., In Brown, S. L., In Worline, M. C., In Cameron, C. D., & In Doty, J. R. (2017). The Oxford handbook of compassion science.

# Connect to Thrive

## Activity Resource Materials

- Sample Graphic to Print/Post
- Sample Affirmation Cards to Print
- Example Affirmation Cards with Logo on Back
- Directions for Gratitude Notecards
- Example of Gratitude Notecards
- Example of Gratitude Challenge Flyer
- Sense of Connectedness Exercise
- Mindfulness Exercise
- Creating a More Human Workplace Where Employees and Business Thrive  
SHRM Foundation's Effective Practice Guidelines Series  
*Report with business case information, examples, additional ideas, and resource links*
- Creating a Culture of Mindfulness at Work  
Created by Mindful Leader and Garrison Institute  
*Key Insights, Guidance, and Questions from weekend bringing together individuals attempting to bring mindfulness into 100 mid-large companies*
- Sample Memes/Graphics to post, share, use to publicize the idea or get employees to use their social media to support the activity

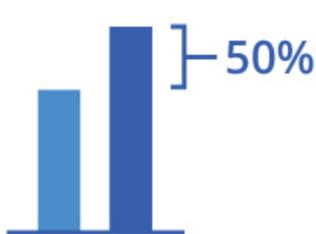
# Connect to Thrive

## WHAT IS SOCIAL CONNECTION?



The subjective experience of feeling close to and a sense of belongingness with others.

## THE BENEFITS OF HIGH SOCIAL CONNECTION:



50% increased chance of longevity



stronger gene expression for immunity (research by Steve Cole, UCLA)



lower rates of anxiety and depression



higher self-esteem and empathy



better emotion regulation skills



Social connection creates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical well being.

## THE DANGERS OF LOW SOCIAL CONNECTION



worse for health than smoking, high blood pressure or obesity



higher inflammation at the cellular level



higher susceptibility to anxiety and depression



slower recovery from disease



increased antisocial behavior and violence



suicide

## HOW MUCH SOCIAL CONNECTION DO AMERICANS HAVE?



Loneliness, isolation and alienation are on the rise.



In 2004, 25% of Americans claim that they have no one to share a personal problem with.

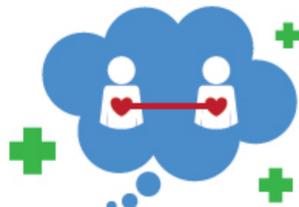


Loneliness is the main reason why people seek psychological counseling.

## HOW CAN I INCREASE MY SOCIAL CONNECTION? I'M AN INTROVERT, A LONER OR HAVE NO FRIENDS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?



No problem! All the benefits mentioned above have nothing to do with how many friends you have. The benefits come from your internal and subjective sense of connection!



As long as you feel connected to others on the inside, you still get the benefit of being connected. Think of children who run up to play with children they don't know, they feel connected from within.

An internal sense of connection can be nurtured and built:



1) Give, Share, Support & Do acts of service and kindness for others.

Research shows that compassion and volunteering has huge health benefits and creates a sense of connection and purpose. Research also shows that if we need help, we should ask for it. It will create belonging for those we ask.



2) Take care of oneself:

Stress is linked to high self-focus and therefore a lower sense of connection; if you are happy from within, you are also more likely to feel connected, to reach out to others, and to make the world a happier and sunnier place.



3) Ask for help.

Research shows that people are willing to help us but if we don't ask, they assume we don't need help. Reach out to those around you. Sad to be spending Christmas alone? Ask if you can join friends or invite others to join you!

Emma Seppala, Ph.D.

THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS, HEALTH & SOCIAL CONNECTION

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YOU ARE CAPABLE OF  
**AMAZING  
THINGS.**

*You are*  
**fun!**

YOU ARE AMAZING.  
YOU ARE IMPORTANT.  
YOU ARE SPECIAL.  
YOU ARE UNIQUE.  
YOU ARE KIND.  
YOU ARE PRECIOUS.  
YOU ARE LOVED!

**#BEYOU**

*you make the world*  
**special**  
BY JUST BEING IN IT!

YOU ARE  
**MORE**  
THAN  
ENOUGH!

*You are a  
whole lot  
of lovely!*

**TRUST  
YOURSELF,**  
YOU KNOW MORE  
THAN YOU  
THINK YOU DO.

- BENJAMIN SPOCK -

YOU ARE  
**AMAZING!**  
*remember that.*

**THANK  
YOU**  
*for being you!*

YOU ARE  
**WONDERFUL!**  
*yes, you.*

**IN CASE YOU FORGOT  
TO REMIND YOURSELF  
THIS MORNING:**  
YOUR BUTT IS PERFECT.  
YOUR SMILE LIGHTS UP THE  
ROOM. YOUR MIND IS  
INSANELY COOL.  
**YOU ARE WAY MORE  
THAN ENOUGH AND  
YOU ARE DOING AN  
AMAZING JOB AT LIFE.**

**IF YOU COULD SEE  
YOURSELF THROUGH  
MY EYES, YOU  
WOULD KNOW HOW**  
*incredible*  
**YOU  
TRULY  
ARE!**

YOU ARE CAPABLE OF  
**AMAZING**  
THINGS.

*You are*  
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ARE UNIQUE. YOU  
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**IF YOU COULD SEE  
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*incredible*  
**YOU  
TRULY  
ARE!**

DrinkerBiddle  
WELL 360 BEING

### **Gratitude Notecards**

An example of gratitude notecards follows this page. These are incredibly easy to make and require no design background.

#### **Direction to create your own:**

1. Simply open a word doc, change the view page orientation to "Landscape."
2. Insert a 2x2 Table
3. Pick a border that you like for the table cells
4. Insert the logo or message you want in the center of each cell
5. Print on cardstock (colored cardstock makes it more fun) and cut!

DrinkerBiddle  
WELL **360** BEING

DrinkerBiddle  
WELL **360** BEING

DrinkerBiddle  
WELL **360** BEING

DrinkerBiddle  
WELL **360** BEING

Drinker Biddle

# WELL 360 BEING

**Have you shown your gratitude today?**

Where Well-Being Comes Full Circle

Gratitude has been scientifically proven to enhance well-being.

We all fall into the trap of moving from task to task without expressing our appreciation. Take a moment today to express your appreciation and gratitude for someone in the firm who has made your life easier in the last day, week, or month.

Simply fill out a Well-Being 360 postcard and we'll make sure it is delivered. You can pick up a card from your Office Administrator.

1. Writing gratitude letters increased happiness decreased stress and depression for up to 12 weeks after!
2. Gratitude improves sleep
3. Gratitude improves brain function

Where Well-Being Comes Full Circle

Participation in any aspect of the DBR Well-Being 360 program is completely voluntary. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no impact on your employment or contractor relationship with the firm. If you choose to participate in the wellness and fitness challenges offered through the IncentFit app, your data will be protected by IncentFit as described in IncentFit's privacy policy, available here. Firm personnel who participate in wellness and fitness challenges may be able to view your progress only in challenges in which they also participate. Program administrators may have access to individual results in order to monitor challenges. DBR may receive anonymized, aggregated data regarding participation levels. Your participation in any wellness or fitness activities is at your own risk and DBR is making no warranties, express or implied, regarding the DBR Well-Being 360 program or any individual health or fitness conditions that may impact a person's ability to participate.

# Exercises

# sense of connectedness

— RELATIONSHIP

— COMMUNITY

— VULNERABILITY

**Our community lives or dies** by the way we interact with one another. As part of our frameworks, we help develop ways for companies to create more **personal, emotional connections** (PECs) in the workplace. In *DH the book*, Tony emphasized that at Zappos, people were hired based on both **culture fit and skill fit** - whether they can do the job **but also thrive** in their company culture. This creates employee experiences that ripple into the way we treat customers, stakeholders, and partners.

If employees are expected to **go above-and-beyond** in their jobs, they also need to do that for one another. It's not just about company perks like happy hours and ping-pong tables, it's about doing the work to **foster PECs every day**.



Reference: Gallup's *State of the Global Workplace* 2017 Report

## Psychological safety

*noun*

A belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.

*Google research showed it was a top contributing factor in successful teams.*

The probability of living longer is  
**30% higher**  
 for people with good social relationships.



# MOMENTS THAT MATTER

It's easy to fall into a routine dynamic with other people (family, friends, strangers, etc.), but what makes certain moments stand out?

Describe times when you had a moment that broke the script in a meaningful way:



A moment with a family member:

---

---

A moment with a friend:

---

---

A moment with a stranger:

---

---

List three adjectives or emotions that these moments shared:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflect:

- Did your perspective of this person change after sharing these moments?
- What would your relationships look like if you had more moments of connectedness?

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## TAKE IT TO THE TEAM: THE PEC WALK

At your next team meeting, assign two people together and a number from 1-5 [different pairs can have the same number]. Before the next meeting, each pair has meet to go for a 20-30 min walk or have a chat over coffee.

When you find out when they're meeting, send them the corresponding question right before [the day before is fine too]:

### Questions:

1. Who has been the greatest influence in your life?
2. Share a crossroads moment in your life when you had to choose one path.
3. What is an adversity you faced that you are actually grateful for?
4. What is one of the most inspiring moments in your life?
5. What do you wake up for every morning?

**BONUS:** do this a few times with different pairs before the next meeting!

### Discuss Together:

- How did it FEEL to connect on a personal level? Did you want to do it at first?

---

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- Has anything changed about your approach to work? To team collaboration?

---

---

- List three ideas to encourage more depth of connection at work:

1. 

---

2. 

---

3. 

---



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# Everyday Mindfulness

## Refocus | Recharge | Reconnect

Mindfulness can be an effective tool to reduce stress and anxiety, increase focus, and enhance our connections to others. We can view mindfulness as a *state* and a *practice*, where we are actively paying attention to what is happening in the moment. In a state of mindfulness, we experience a heightened state of **awareness** and **concentration**, and an ability to **choose** that which we want to focus on.

The beauty of mindfulness is that we can practice it anywhere. Taking a few moments a day to consciously practice **paying attention** can go a long way in improving individual and collective well being and performance. The following practices are designed to be short and easily interjected into a busy work-day.



# Individual Practices

---

## Taking a breath

Transitioning between tasks creates an opportunity for us to reset. Taking **3 (or more) deep breaths** with eyes closed is an effective way to clear the mind and redirect our focus. Next time to are shifting between tasks, go ahead and take a **moment to be with your breath**.

## Writing it out

When our mind is focused on the future or past, we are unable to maximize productivity in the present. Taking **2-5 minutes** to write out **whatever** is on your mind clears cognitive space for creativity, ingenuity, and efficient processing to emerge.

## Reflection Questions

1. How do you feel different after your practice?

---

2. What is your intention for the rest of your day?

---

## Everyday Opportunities

### Mindful Eating

Try and chew each bite 20 times

### Walking

Pay attention to sounds, smells, and feeling of feet as you walk

### Driving

Count your breaths. When you lose count, start over at 0.





# Group Practices

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## Mindful Meetings

Begin the meeting by setting a collective intention. Agreeing upon a common goal or group norm, increases group cohesion, productivity, and efficiency.

Example: *In this meeting, we will actively listen to others, be open to feedback, and work together to arrive at a solution.*

## Mindful Conversations

We all want to be heard. One way to show others that you are present and engaged when they are speaking is to actively listen. This is easier said than done. Make it a goal to give someone your full attention during a conversation. Confirm your understanding of what they are saying by following-up with phrases such as, “It sounds like you are saying \_\_\_\_, is that right?” or “That sounds frustrating, how did you feel?”

## Reflection Questions

1. How did it *feel* to practice being fully present in conversation?  

---
2. What is 1 action you can take to improve the feeling of connectedness at work?  

---

## Everyday Opportunities

### Being Present

Turn your phone on airplane mode when at lunch with others.

### Curiosity

Ask a co-worker about their life outside of the office.

### Centering

Start a meeting or conversation by taking 3 deep breaths together



# Jordan Hamilton

## Refocus | Recharge | Reconnect

As a former collegiate and professional athlete, Jordan had the unique opportunity to serve as a leader in a variety of contexts and countries. After graduating from Lehigh University, Jordan went on to play professional basketball in Canada, Mexico, Luxembourg, and Germany.

Jordan then served as chief empowerment officer for a startup (Prose), where he worked with the executive team on how to lead effectively and develop a thriving culture and completed his master's degree in positive organizational psychology and evaluation.

For the last several years, Jordan has consulted with law firms, academic organizations, businesses, executives, and collegiate athletic teams to develop solutions designed to improve team and individual performance. Specializing in mindfulness interventions, he creates industry tailored programs based on the latest research and science that integrate mindfulness into daily work settings so that lasting habits are built for peak performance.

As a coach, Jordan works with clients to establish clear goals, develop tangible action steps, identify and address limiting beliefs, and leverage strengths. For the last two years, Jordan has worked in conjunction with LeAD labs to provide training and oversee executive coaches as part of an immersive leadership development program.

Jordan is currently pursuing his doctoral degree from at Claremont Graduate University in Psychology. Jordan's research interests include mindfulness, group flow, and mental wellness. In his free time, he enjoys hiking, surfing, meditating, writing, volleyball, basketball, and virtually anything that involves movement and the outdoors.

# **Additional Report Resources**



SHRM Foundation's  
Effective Practice Guidelines Series

# Creating a More Human Workplace Where Employees and Business Thrive



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**Foundation**  
Shaping the future of HR

**SHRM**<sup>®</sup>  
SOCIETY FOR HUMAN  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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work human<sup>®</sup>

## Creating a More Human Workplace Where Employees and Business Thrive

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## FOREWORD



For many employees, the current state of the workplace is depleting, dispiriting and stressful. “Doing more with less” often means demands are exceeding capacity, draining people of the energy needed to fulfill their potential. Technology links us 24/7 to a flood of information, and Americans are spending more and more hours working with little downtime. How do we, as HR professionals, change this picture?

Research has shown that creating a more human, caring workplace ultimately leads to improved customer service, better health outcomes and all-around satisfaction. A more human workplace is one that promotes people’s strengths and capabilities, leading to the high levels of engagement, productivity and retention businesses need. This new report, *Creating a More Human Workplace Where Employees and Business Thrive*, will provide you with detailed suggestions—many for little or no cost—on how to shape a culture of thriving so your organization can achieve these valuable outcomes that benefit both employees and the bottom line.

Now used in college classrooms worldwide, the SHRM Foundation’s Effective Practice Guidelines series includes more than 20 titles. The series was created in 2004 for busy HR professionals. It integrates research findings with expert opinion in an easy-to-use format and provides the tools to successfully practice evidence-based management. Other recent reports include *Talent Acquisition*, *Leading Change*, and *Cultural Intelligence: The Essential Intelligence for the 21st Century*. To ensure the material is both practical and research-based, the reports are written by subject-matter experts and are then peer-reviewed by both academics and HR professionals.

In addition to producing educational resources, the SHRM Foundation awards multiple scholarships annually to support education, conference attendance and SHRM certification for HR professionals. And all this good work is made possible by the generous support of donors like you.

We encourage you to learn more. Please visit [shrmfoundation.org](http://shrmfoundation.org) to download other complimentary resources and to find out how you can get involved with the SHRM Foundation.

Thank you!

Mark Schmit, Ph.D., SHRM-SCP  
Executive Director  
SHRM Foundation



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Organizations that succeed put their own people first—even above customers—because they recognize that their employees are the key to creating long-term value.



# CREATING A MORE HUMAN WORKPLACE WHERE EMPLOYEES AND BUSINESS THRIVE



As human resource professionals, we understand that increasing employee engagement, productivity, satisfaction and retention is essential to any successful business. But we often struggle to achieve those diverse outcomes. This report will demonstrate that we can achieve our most valuable outcomes by focusing on one key strategy: creating a more human, caring workplace. A more human workplace is one that promotes people's strengths, capabilities and functioning, leading to the high levels of engagement, productivity, satisfaction and retention businesses need.

Many organizations fail to thrive because their employees are not thriving. To thrive, we need to experience 1) vitality, or feeling truly alive every day, and 2) learning. When they are at their best, thriving employees experience "flow," or deep immersion in an activity so that they lose awareness of time and their surroundings.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Business Case for a More Human Workplace**

Organizations reap many benefits from creating more human workplaces, including better employee performance, improved safety and health, and greater worker satisfaction and commitment.<sup>2</sup> This finding is true across industries and applies to blue- and white-collar employees and to small and large organizations. Evidence shows that employees thrive in caring workplaces. Thriving employees are not only satisfied and productive, but are also actively engaged in shaping their own and the organization's future.<sup>3</sup>

A thriving workforce means greater engagement of each employee's physical, cognitive and emotional energies.<sup>4</sup> Engagement then spurs the employee's feelings of vitality and progress. People feel good when they are "plugged in" and connected in the workplace. Research has demonstrated that a human, caring culture ultimately leads to improved customer service, better client health outcomes and all-around satisfaction.<sup>5</sup>

In partnership with the Great Place to Work Institute®, *Fortune* magazine compiles an annual list of the 100 Best Companies to Work For. These 100 Best Companies have leaders who care for and listen to their employees, crafting policies and programs that help people thrive. Though perks may matter, the underlying common denominator of these firms is that they value employees. The *Fortune* list provides a strong rationale for creating an environment where people thrive, because since 1998, the companies on the list have outperformed the S&P 500 stock index by a ratio of almost two to one.<sup>6</sup>

Organizations that succeed put their own people first—even above customers—because they recognize that their employees are the key to creating long-term value. Thriving workers treat customers well, which improves the bottom line and benefits shareholders. In *The Good Jobs Strategy*, Zeynep Ton explained how firms in Europe and the United States win big by investing in employees.<sup>7</sup> These firms not only pay workers well but also provide a sense of purpose and empowerment. For example, Mercadona, a small grocery store in Spain, provides extensive employee training and benefits, leading to competent, cross-trained staff and very low turnover. Employees feel cared for; they are energized, learning and growing. The cost to train each employee is high, but it pays off for Mercadona and its customers.

### Strategies That Pay Off

Research shows that the strategies, or “levers,” used to create more

### The Value of Sustainable Engagement

A 2012 analysis of 263 research studies covering 192 companies found that organizations with the most engaged employees outperformed those with the least engaged employees in the following ways:

- 22 percent greater profitability.
- 21 percent greater productivity.
- 65 percent lower turnover.
- 10 percent better customer ratings.
- 48 percent fewer safety incidents.
- 28 percent less theft.

When we drill deeper, however, we see that there is more than one variety of employee engagement. Another 2012 global study of 32,000 employees by consulting firm Towers Watson found that traditional engagement—defined as an emotional connection to an organization and willingness of employees to voluntarily expend extra effort—does not fuel the highest levels of performance. Instead, the study identified *sustainable engagement* as willingness to go “above and beyond” at work and to *maintain that energy over time*. In the Towers Watson study, organizations with high traditional engagement scores had an operating margin of 14 percent. In contrast, organizations with the highest number of *sustainably engaged* employees had an operating margin of 27 percent.

What is the difference between strategies employed to develop traditional versus sustainable engagement? According to the study, the chief drivers of sustainable engagement are cultural, encompassing the nature, style and quality of organizational life—in other words, the components of a human workplace.

human workplaces apply in any organization. People respond positively when they feel cared for and valued.

The retailing giant Costco pays its average worker \$20.89 per hour, or about 65 percent more than Walmart, which owns Costco's biggest competitor, Sam's Club. Over time, Costco's huge investment in employees—including benefits for part-time workers—has provided a distinct advantage. Costco's employees generate nearly twice the sales of Sam's Club employees.

Costco has about 5 percent turnover among employees who stay at least a year, an overall rate far lower than Walmart's turnover rate. Reduced costs of recruiting and training new employees save Costco several hundred million dollars a year. Costco also has the lowest shrinkage rate (employee theft) in the industry.<sup>8</sup> Between 2003 and 2013, Costco's stock rose more than 200 percent, compared with an approximate rise of 50 percent for Walmart's.<sup>9</sup>

Costco's policies are indicative of a culture that values people, but there are many other ways to help employees thrive. Without heroic measures or major financial investments, leaders can jumpstart a more human workplace culture by focusing on these seven powerful strategies:

- Share information about the organization and its strategy.
- Provide decision-making discretion and autonomy.
- Create a civil culture with positive relationships.
- Value diversity and establish an inclusive atmosphere.
- Offer performance feedback.
- Provide a sense of meaning.
- Boost employee well-being.

These levers are derived from research into what factors help employees most, and taken together they account for most of the variation in how much people thrive.<sup>10</sup>

When organizations create more human workplaces, they and their employees stand to reap abundant benefits and to improve the work environment in each organization.

### High Costs of Our Current Work Culture

For the past several decades, job satisfaction and engagement have declined in the United States. According to a survey conducted by Nielsen Company for The Conference Board in 2012, fewer than half of all employees (47 percent) are satisfied with their jobs. Since the survey began in 1987 with a 61.1 percent satisfaction level, there has been a striking and consistent decline.<sup>11</sup>

Other domestic and international surveys reveal the same decline. Mercer's 2012 survey of more than 30,000 employees worldwide reported that 28 percent to 56 percent of employees want to leave their jobs.<sup>12</sup> In fact, a mere 30 percent of employees in the United States feel engaged at work, according to a 2013 report by Gallup.<sup>13</sup>

Around the world the numbers of disaffected workers are even higher. Across 142 countries, just 13 percent of employees feel engaged at work, with some 24 percent actively disengaged.<sup>14</sup> In a 2014 global study of more than 20,000 mostly white-collar employees across a broad range of companies and industries, more than half said they feel stressed and overloaded. A mere 36 percent said they have positive energy at work.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, the current state of the workplace is depleting, dispiriting and stressful for most people. Demands are exceeding our capacity, draining us of the energy we need to fulfill our potential. More competition and a leaner, post-recession workforce add to the stress. Technology links us 24/7 to a flood of information and requests. The time Americans spend at work has continued to increase over the past four decades, and we now work an average of 1,836 hours per year, up by 9 percent since 1979.<sup>16</sup>

The costs associated with our demanding work culture are enormous. The American Psychological Association estimates that workplace stress costs the U.S. economy \$500 billion a year.<sup>17</sup> Some 550 billion workdays

are lost annually due to stress on the job, 60 percent to 80 percent of workplace accidents are attributed to stress, and more than 80 percent of doctor visits are linked to stress. Workplace stress increases voluntary turnover by nearly 50 percent.<sup>18</sup>

Beyond workplace stresses, a lack of employee engagement exacts a heavy toll on organizations and on our economy. Gallup estimated that poor leadership associated with active disengagement costs the U.S. economy \$450 to \$550 billion per year.<sup>19</sup> By creating more human workplaces, we can turn those losses into profits. One study that focused on businesses with 50 to 399 employees found that organizations with the most engaged employees achieve 65 percent greater share-price increases, 15 percent more employee productivity, 26 percent less employee turnover, 20 percent less absenteeism and up to 30 percent greater customer satisfaction levels.<sup>20</sup> These organizations also receive 100 percent more unsolicited employment applications.

### Multiple Benefits of a Thriving Work Culture

When people are thriving at work, they transfer the benefits they feel to their organization and colleagues, and good things happen.

Vicki Lostetter, general manager of talent and organizational capability at Microsoft, described her experience of thriving this way:

*My world was on fire. I was in a meaty, challenging job . . . learning a lot. I had a great team working for me . . . a great team around me. We had an environment of trust. We*

*had each other's backs. You could challenge effectively. I had a boss who gave me good feedback, but a ton of rope.*

As Lostetter noted, many factors played important roles in her success. Colleagues, her leader and the organization's environment strongly shaped her ability to thrive.

Studies of more than a dozen organizations across a wide variety of industries (including health care, financial services, maritime, energy, nonprofits, manufacturing, mining and education) have demonstrated that when people are thriving at work, their job performance improves, and they become good organizational citizens, going above and beyond the call of duty. Some of the most valuable benefits that move from thriving employees to the organization are vitality, learning, good health, effective leadership and positive work/life balance.

### **Vitality**

The first characteristic of a thriving employee is vitality, or the sense of feeling energetic and alive at work. Vitality is contagious, sparking energy and productivity in others.

### **Learning**

Another characteristic of thriving employees is an interest in learning new information and skills. When people believe they are getting better at what they do, a cycle of growth begins and is self-perpetuating. Employees who are thriving actively seek opportunities to learn and develop, experiment with new ideas to propel their learning forward, and take initiative

in developing their careers. They also exhibit more innovative work behavior and creativity.<sup>21</sup>

### **Health**

Thriving employees tend to be healthier, reporting fewer physical complaints, far fewer doctor visits and less burnout—all of which translates to lower health care costs and greater sustainability. The impact of thriving on these health outcomes exceeds the effects of other factors, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment.<sup>22</sup>

### **Effective leadership**

Thriving helps increase leaders' effectiveness. In a study of executives across different industries, thriving leaders were rated 17 percent more effective than leaders who reported lower levels of thriving. Employees described thriving leaders as role models who take initiative and empower others. Such leaders' energy is contagious.<sup>23</sup>

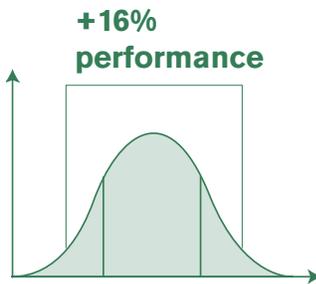
### **Work/life balance**

Those who thrive at work often thrive in their personal lives, too. The positive energy at work spills over into home life. At the same time, thriving in nonwork activities seems to build up resources that people bring to their work.<sup>24</sup>

Some people thrive naturally, with little outside encouragement. Organizations should seek out and recruit those people. But the majority of employees are influenced by their work environments, in which human resource professionals can have an enormous impact in creating a more caring, human workplace.<sup>25</sup>

In the next sections, we look more closely at the seven most effective levers to make any workplace more human and at the roles that human resource leaders can play in supporting positive workplace changes.

## Thriving in the Workplace: Benefits for White-collar and Blue-collar Employees

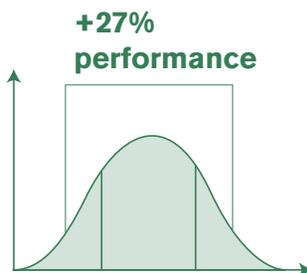


### The Benefits of Thriving (white-collar employees)

In a study of six organizations, employees just one standard deviation (less than one point on a seven-point scale) above the mean for thriving performed more than 16% better than those one standard deviation below the mean.

### These employees were also:

- +32% more committed
- +72% more satisfied with job
- 1.25x less burned out



### The Benefits of Thriving (blue-collar employees)

Among a study of blue-collar employees, the differences were even more dramatic. Higher thriving employees performed 27% better than lower thriving employees.

### These employees were also:

- +37% better on a team
- +89% better on innovation
- +39% better in a safety performance
- +79% more committed to the organization

Sources: Porath, C. L., Spreitzer, G., Gibson, C., & Garnett, F. S. (2012). Thriving in the workplace: Toward its measurement, construct validation, and theoretical refinement. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33, 250-275; Porath, C. L. (2015). *Care: How to create an environment where employees and organizations thrive* [Working paper].



Employees who are thriving actively seek opportunities to learn and develop, experiment with new ideas to propel their learning forward, and take initiative in developing their careers.



## SEVEN WAYS TO HELP EMPLOYEES THRIVE



Each strategy, or lever, suggested below provides organizations with a tool to help employees thrive, but organizations will gain the maximum benefit by using all the levers together.

### **1. Share Information About the Organization and Its Strategy**

Organizations build energy and excitement by sharing information with employees. People contribute more effectively when they understand how their own work fits with their company's mission and strategy. Such knowledge allows workers to respond quickly to problems as they arise, make good decisions and coordinate actions across the firm.<sup>26</sup> Information sharing also builds trust.

#### ***Google shares company goals***

Focusing on a few priorities, identifying metrics that measure progress toward those goals and quantifying the impact of progress helped Google execute its business strategies.<sup>27</sup> Sharing organizationwide goals has increased employees' alignment and connection to a higher purpose at the tech giant and has been key to its success.

#### ***Alaska Airlines takes its show on the road***

Alaska Airlines invests significant management time in helping its employees gain a broad view of the company's strategy. The airline launched its 2010 Plan with traditional communications, a months-long road show and training classes designed to help employees share ideas.<sup>28</sup>

Alaska Airlines pairs its information sharing with empowering employees to take on issues proactively, sparking greater, more informed efforts to address strategic goals.

The organization's CEO, president and chief operating officer (COO) go on the road quarterly to gather information about the idiosyncrasies of various markets, then disseminate what they have learned. The trips facilitate two-way dialogues in which employees discuss what they are learning, which is then shared with other

markets to deliver superior customer service and meet other goals. The benefits of sharing information show up in annual measures of employee pride in the organization, which reach an impressive 90 percent.<sup>29</sup>

### **Zingerman's huddles for employee input**

The founders of Zingerman's, a food business based in Ann Arbor, Mich., believe that informed employees show more interest and initiative if they are active in tracking the organization's key statistics. Over more than five years, the company built information sharing into its systems and routines, including "huddles," or weekly gatherings around a whiteboard at which teams track results, keep score and forecast the next week's numbers. The whiteboards include not only financials but also measures of service and food quality, check averages, and internal satisfaction figures. The organization regularly runs weekly contests for employees and seeks their input on innovation.<sup>30</sup>

The Zingerman's system has increased frontline employees' sense of ownership, contributing to better performance. Between 2000 and 2010, revenue grew by almost 300 percent to more than \$35 million, and the company's leaders credit open book management as a key factor in that success.<sup>31</sup> Zingerman's is a small business, but much larger companies, including Whole Foods and Roadway Express, have followed its lead in adopting open book management.

### **Southwest Airlines employees know the score**

Organizations have a variety of

ways to keep employees informed. Southwest Airlines sends daily news updates via its intranet, and the CEO delivers a weekly telephone message to all employees.<sup>32</sup> The airline provides detailed information about quarterly earnings, referred to as "Knowing the Score," and holds town-hall-style meetings each year. These strategies can be implemented effectively in large or small organizations.

### **Information is shared at all levels**

The Mighty is a digital media organization dedicated to improving the lives of people facing disease and disability. Its founder-CEO believes in transparency, so he sends all 13 employees the same e-mails he shares with investors and the board of directors. Even in industries such as machine tooling and manufacturing, sharing key information about customers and competitors can drive business results. As a result of sharing information at all levels of the organization, a large diversified firm in Australia reported substantial increases in sales.<sup>33</sup>

Access to strategic and financial information helps employees do their own jobs effectively and provides them with a broader, more holistic picture of the company's health.

## **2. Provide Decision-making Discretion and Autonomy**

Successful organizations know how to energize employees by giving them the ability to make decisions that affect their work. Empowering employees in this way provides them a greater sense of control, more say in how work gets accomplished and more opportunities for learning.

### **The Alaska Airlines 2010 Plan**

Alaska Airlines created a culture of empowerment that has contributed to a major turnaround over the past decade. It launched the 2010 Plan, which explicitly encouraged employee input into decisions that would improve service while maintaining a reputation for timely departures.

By empowering employees, firms can create a more positive, human organization and help stakeholders. In Alaska Airlines' case, employees' efforts to meet customer needs without delaying flights led to a number one rating for on-time performance and a full trophy case of awards.<sup>34</sup>

### **No micromanagers at Chick-fil-A**

Chick-fil-A restaurants keep rules to a minimum and do not micromanage employees.<sup>35</sup> The company operates using core principles and asks people to base decisions on those principles. Company leaders ask employees "to care deeply, serve ceaselessly, and impact the lives of others." Chick-fil-A has cultivated a degree of employee commitment that has led to fantastic returns for the organization over the past six decades.<sup>36</sup>

### **The ROWE approach at The Gap Inc.**

One proven way to enable autonomy is to grant employees more discretion on where or when they do their work. An extreme version of this approach is ROWE, the results-only work environment. In 2008 the Gap clothing company piloted ROWE. Determined to increase engagement, improve

work/life harmony, cater to demands for flexible schedules (important to its young workforce), and decrease time and energy spent commuting, the company decided to experiment with ROWE in one department. The results were impressive: Engagement in that department went from last in the company to second best, productivity increased by 21 percent, and turnover decreased by 50 percent. Based on these results, the Gap expanded the program, and ROWE has continued to improve work/life balance for employees.<sup>37</sup>

### **More ways to increase autonomy**

Many organizations have followed the Gap's lead, and even more traditional workplaces are experimenting with small changes, such as allowing employees to work at home one day per week.

- Firehouse, a small advertising agency in Dallas, Texas, moved from a billable hours model—the industry norm—to a policy of billing per project, with no time sheets, several years ago.
- 3M and other organizations allow employees to schedule time for projects they especially want to tackle. 3M found that this encourages its workers to become more innovative.
- Google famously allows employees to spend 20 percent of their time on projects of their choosing.

Some smaller organizations provide one day a quarter when employees can collaborate to tackle projects they dream up to help the business, with great success.

Another simple way to give employees more discretion is to involve them in the hiring process. This provides people with a say in who their future teammates will be and increases the probability of eliminating candidates who will not fit the organization's work culture.

### **Mistakes as learning opportunities**

One challenge firms face is to avoid cutting back on employee empowerment when people make mistakes. Those situations create the best conditions for learning, not only for the responsible employees but also for others, who learn vicariously. A leader who frames mistakes as knowledge to be used for learning and improvement will promote thriving and build a more trusting, safe environment for employees to experiment, take risks and innovate.<sup>38</sup>

## **3. Create a Civil Culture and Positive Relationships**

Incivility, which includes disrespectful, rude or insensitive behavior, can derail people and organizations.<sup>39</sup> Incivility takes an emotional and physical toll on employees, and organizations pay the price in a variety of ways, from health care costs to losses stemming from poor performance, absenteeism and turnover.<sup>40</sup> Research suggests that even if people want to perform well, they cannot when they are operating in a disrespectful atmosphere. The productivity and creativity of those who experience or witness incivility plummet. Employees eventually lose their conviction and contribute less.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, a sensitive, respectful climate spurs positive energy and employees' eagerness to participate and contribute to the organization. Civility increases performance, creativity,<sup>42</sup> detection of mistakes and the initiative to take action.<sup>43</sup> Civility also reduces emotional exhaustion<sup>44</sup> and fosters psychological safety,<sup>45</sup> a key predictor of success for teams at companies such as Google.<sup>46</sup> Civility is the foundation employees need to be comfortable speaking up and sharing ideas.<sup>47</sup>

### **Build social capital through civility**

Civility builds relationships<sup>48</sup> that help people accomplish tasks and provide personal support.<sup>49</sup> By being civil, employees boost their "social capital," resources that help them thrive and achieve their goals.<sup>50</sup> Social capital resources include knowledge, advice, contacts, emotional support and goodwill. All of these resources help employees succeed in job searches, increase promotion potential and pay, and improve organizational influence.<sup>51</sup>

Each small act of kindness and respect contributes to a cycle that fosters greater civility among the people in one's network.<sup>52</sup> Giving works the same way. Giving thanks, acknowledgement, attention and feedback is civility in its finest form.

### **QUICK TIPS: Building a Culture of Givers**

Givers are those who go out of their way to support and help others. They volunteer to help a co-worker with a project or to mentor a junior colleague. In *Give and Take*, Adam Grant showed how givers benefit in the long run. Offering employees the opportunity to give to one another increases their commitment to the company.

To build a culture of givers:

1. Do not insist on quid pro quo.
2. Screen out agreeable takers.
3. Regularly offer employees the opportunity to give to one another.
4. Build a culture that encourages employees to seek help when they need it.
5. Reward those who help others succeed.

Source: Grant, A. M. (2014). *Give and take: Why helping others drives our success*. New York, NY: Viking.

### **Foster a culture of civility**

Civility is an important characteristic of any good hire, but even the best companies occasionally make bad choices, and employees from acquired organizations may bring different norms to the workplace. The key is to identify and try to correct troublesome behavior as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, most incidents of incivility go unreported, often because employees believe no action will be taken. To combat this problem, leaders must set the norms of acceptable behavior.

- Danny Meyers, the owner of 27 New York City-based restaurants, preaches civility and tolerates nothing less.<sup>53</sup> Bad behavior, even from an exceptional chef, must be corrected quickly, and if the behavior does not improve, the chef is let go. Meyers is convinced customers can taste incivility, and research supports his assumption. Studies demonstrate that incivility not only hurts employees, but also influences customers' willingness to do business with an organization.<sup>54</sup>

### **Make civility a mission**

Organizations should communicate expectations by making civility part of their mission statements. Clear norms established by a founder, leaders or a team set the right tone and inspire a more positive human work culture. Founder and CEO of the Four Seasons, Isadore Sharp, credits the hotel chain's success to the golden rule: Treat others as you would like to be treated. He explains that basic human needs are the same around the world. The way a firm treats its employees demonstrates how it expects them to treat customers.<sup>55</sup>

One way to begin modeling civility is to cultivate trust and respectful engagement in onboarding employees. Employers can make sure new people get to know more seasoned employees and can encourage listening, sharing stories and contributions from everyone. These actions foster high-quality connections.

### **Use training to enhance civility**

Training and coaching increase civility, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and reduce turnover.<sup>56</sup>

- Microsoft uses courses such as Precision Questioning that aim to build emotional agility and calm, even in intense situations. Participants are taught to improve their ability to listen and respond to constructive criticism. The company views this kind of civility as crucial to innovating on a daily basis. As a result of the training, Microsoft reports greater employee, customer and partner satisfaction along with improved retention.<sup>57</sup>
- Hospitals now train doctors and other employees to be on the lookout for incivility. Are residents, nurses and staff avoiding particular shifts due to a toxic colleague? Are there patterns of turnover or requests to move? Such steps are useful in rooting out potential issues before they expand, especially because most employees do not report incidents of incivility on their own.<sup>58</sup>

### **Establish norms in the workplace**

Simple norms can go a long way to promoting civility.

- Ochsner Health System, a large Louisiana health care provider, adopted what it calls the 10/5 Way. If employees are within 10 feet of someone, they should make eye contact and smile. Within five feet, they should say hello. Ochsner has seen greater patient satisfaction and an increase in patient referrals as a result of this simple formula.<sup>59</sup>
- Members of Bryan Cave, a law firm, developed norms for its Irvine, Calif., office. These norms help everyone clarify expectations, reinforce positive behaviors and hold one another accountable for civil behavior. The managing partner credits the code of civility for the firm's win as a Best Place to Work in Orange County.<sup>60</sup>

### Code of Civility from the Bryan Cave Law Firm

1. We greet and acknowledge each other.
2. We say please and thank you.
3. We treat each other equally and with respect, no matter the conditions.
4. We acknowledge the impact of our behavior on others.
5. We welcome feedback from each other.
6. We are approachable.
7. We are direct, sensitive and honest.
8. We acknowledge the contributions of others.
9. We respect each other's time commitments.
10. We address incivility.

### Use evaluations to encourage civility

Performance evaluation systems should score and reward employees who are living the organization's values.

- At Gore, a multinational enterprise specializing in high-performance fabrics, peers rank one another based on what they have done and how they have interacted with others. Compensation is based on these scores. Values at Gore are clearly defined, and people are expected to "walk the talk" every day.<sup>61</sup>

### Civility's benefits for employers

Civility helps sustain positive relationships at work, with proven benefits. High-quality human connections are associated with physical and psychological health,<sup>62</sup> greater cognitive functioning,<sup>63</sup>

broader capacity for thinking,<sup>64</sup> increased learning,<sup>65</sup> more resiliency,<sup>66</sup> improved commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors,<sup>67</sup> and enhanced creativity.<sup>68</sup> Strong relationships also enable better employee coordination, marked by shared knowledge, shared goals and mutual respect, which are associated with greater organizational effectiveness and efficiency.<sup>69</sup>

Connecting with co-workers is simply good for employees and good for business. Research from 20,000 employees across a wide range of jobs in Sweden, Finland, Germany, Poland and Italy showed that if an employee believes that he or she lacks the ability to do the job well and feels disconnected from a manager, that employee is more likely to get sick, miss work and even suffer a heart attack.<sup>70</sup>

The authors of the book *Connected* explained how each of us has a much bigger impact on others than we realize. Happiness spreads not only between dyads but also between one person and that person's friends, and then their friends. If a friend of a friend of a friend becomes happier, this can positively affect someone. A person is about 15 percent more likely to be happy if someone directly connected to him or her is happy. The happiness effect for a friend of a friend of a friend is 6 percent.<sup>71</sup> Other research, based on professional cricket teams, revealed that teammates' happiness influences other teammates' happiness and affects team performance.<sup>72</sup>

By moving the happiness needle in the positive direction, employees and employers gain exponentially. The beauty is that positive connections do

not require significant time to build. Time and attention can strengthen quality, but the spread of happiness does not depend on deep, personal connections. Research revealed that frequent, superficial, face-to-face interactions are equally powerful influencers of happiness.<sup>73</sup> This helps explain why simple interactions like those based on the 10/5 rule are so powerful and how their benefits extend to other stakeholders, such as customers and patients.

### QUICK TIPS: Strengthening Connections

1. Encourage storytelling in your organization.
2. Empower everyone to give recognition and appreciation.
3. Find a way to visualize connections among colleagues.
4. Amplify and celebrate your own culture.
5. Encourage mentoring and cross-pollination.

Source: Globoforce. (2015). *A ten-step guide to working more human: Lessons learned from WorkHuman*. Southborough, MA: Globoforce.

### Don't forget to have fun!

Another way to think about community is "team spirit," and there are many ways for organizations to instill team spirit and a sense of fun in the workplace:

- Host a team-building event or activity, such as a softball or basketball game, outside the office. Caiman Consulting, a small company headquartered in Seattle, has won numerous

culture awards for its hosting of events such as Taco Tuesdays, happy hours and even an annual trip to a tropical locale. All of these events build camaraderie and a community in which employees support one another. Friendships blossom through such activities.

- Encourage employees to reach out and befriend colleagues who may feel like outsiders. Research reveals that people who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be positively engaged.<sup>74</sup>
- Host informal breakfasts or lunches. In a semi-social atmosphere, leaders can introduce a new project, get creative juices flowing, celebrate an achievement or event, or just kick off a new month.
- Provide funds for a more seasoned employee to take a new employee or someone from a different team out to coffee, breakfast or lunch. SpaceX holds Lunchtime Roulette, subsidizing lunch for five or six full-time and contract employees from different units.<sup>75</sup>
- The Motley Fool offers employees \$10 Starbucks cards to take each other out to chat and form new relationships. CEO Tom Gardner encourages using the cards as ways to learn about others' projects, identify best practices and collaborate.<sup>76</sup>

#### 4. Value Diversity and Create an Inclusive Atmosphere

A workplace climate that embraces diversity<sup>77</sup> contributes to thriving and promotes equality and inclusiveness.<sup>78</sup> Valuing diversity is really just an extension of civility, respect and trust. Research from both private- and

#### Connecting Through Celebrations in the Workplace: What to Celebrate?

- Cyclical events such as holiday seasons, key milestones, birthdays and company anniversaries.
- Recognition ceremonies for achieving goals.
- Special events for beating forecasts, launching a new product or strategy, or besting the competition.
- Rituals of comfort and letting go, such as for the death of a colleague or an experiment that failed.
- Personal transitions, especially entrances and exits in the organization.
- Workplace appreciation and altruism, including charity work, promoting social change, and customer and client appreciation.
- Games and sporting events that help energize meetings and conventions.

public-sector organizations indicates that a climate of respect for diversity significantly influences a range of career and organizational attitudes.<sup>79</sup>

#### *Diversity adds value to the workplace*

Groups that value diversity pay more attention to the different perspectives members bring, the unique information they hold and the potential contributions they make.<sup>80</sup>

Research has shown that diverse groups often perform better, make wiser decisions and innovate more.<sup>81</sup> Diversity also drives market growth.<sup>82</sup> In addition, diversity may be a valuable recruiting tool in landing top talent. In a recent Glassdoor survey, two-thirds of the people polled reported that diversity is important to them when evaluating companies and job offers.<sup>83</sup>

#### *Diversity also brings challenges*

The positive effect of workgroup diversity is often undermined by negative group relationships and processes. If people do not

expect or know how to deal with the possibly disruptive effects of diversity, its value may not be fulfilled.<sup>84</sup> Even when diverse members like each other, they may not respect each others' competence. Research has found this to be the case for the elderly and people with disabilities.<sup>85</sup> Our unconscious biases can cause inequality and low group performance.<sup>86</sup>

Even well-intentioned efforts may disadvantage particular groups. Unconscious biases can creep in, often through subtle attitudes or actions. Unconscious biases often affect the way we deliver feedback to some employees.<sup>87</sup> Research has demonstrated, for instance, that both men and women are more likely to shield women from unpleasant or embarrassing news by telling white lies.<sup>88</sup> The result is that women do not receive the same feedback as men and may not develop as effectively without such knowledge. Research revealed that women want honest feedback, and resentment may occur if women detect lying.<sup>89</sup>

An effective strategy for limiting unconscious bias is simply to take a moment to focus on similarities and common identities.<sup>90</sup> For example, individuals can emphasize their shared identity as parents, residents of a city, fans of a sports team or members of a community group.<sup>91</sup>

### **Tackling unconscious bias**

To minimize unconscious biases and their detrimental effects, companies must increase awareness. Google, The Motley Fool and other organizations have initiated training in unconscious biases. Google's training can be viewed at its re:Work website. Google has found that employees who have completed the program are significantly more aware of bias, have a greater understanding of bias and are more motivated to overcome bias.<sup>92</sup> Just one month after attending the workshop, participants were more likely to perceive Google's culture as fair, objective and attuned to diversity than those in the control group.<sup>93</sup> At Google, employees are trained to call out any statements or actions that may be unconsciously biased to help people avoid them.<sup>94</sup>

Other organizations have recently started journeys toward inclusion by introducing new frameworks for behaviors.

- Expedia, a global tech company, has focused on creating greater contextual awareness. Britta Wilson, vice president of inclusion strategies, and her team have been on a world tour hosting events to promote dialogue and understanding about inclusion. The efforts are making a difference. Despite not being a part of the corporate vocabulary nine months ago, "inclusion" was

cited as the most positive attribute of Expedia in a recent employee engagement survey.

- Employees are also gleaned a better understanding of what it means to create and participate in a workplace of respect, trust and equity of access in which everyone has the opportunity to wholly engage. As a result of new learning programs, Expedia employees are now having conversations that they were not having before. Those who believe they have experienced a slight bias are more likely to engage in a productive discussion about it. Instead of letting that slight eat away at them and affect their performance, they address it.<sup>95</sup>

### **Participating in "courageous conversations"**

Educational institutions around the globe have been experimenting with an approach developed by Stanford University educator and consultant Glenn Singleton called "courageous conversations about race." The approach provides a process for embracing diversity and discussing challenging issues at work. Recently, the framework has been extended to address religion and other sources of diversity, and has also been applied in noneducational work settings in a variety of industries.<sup>96</sup> Such programs help develop positive diversity climates and, in turn, increase thriving.<sup>97</sup>

Other practices that promote a positive climate include equal opportunity policies, family-friendly policies and higher representation of minorities at the top of organizations, all of which tend to decrease turnover rates for minority groups.<sup>98</sup>

Companies that see diversity as

a positive resource for learning have the most positive intergroup relations and group performance.<sup>99</sup> They watch for blind spots, challenge assumptions and make sure that leaders act as role models.

### **5. Offer Performance Feedback**

Feedback—two-way, open, frequent and guided communication—creates opportunities for learning. Good feedback builds feelings of thriving because it helps people know where they stand in terms of their skills, competencies and performance.<sup>100</sup>

#### **Positive feedback creates high-performing employees**

Low-performing teams share much more negative feedback, and high-performing teams share more positive.<sup>101</sup> A Gallup survey found that 67 percent of employees who strongly believed their manager focused on their strengths were engaged. Only 31 percent of employees whose managers focused on weaknesses were engaged.

IBM's WorkTrends survey of over 19,000 workers revealed that the engagement level of employees who receive recognition is almost three times higher than the engagement level of those who do not.<sup>102</sup> Employees who receive recognition are also far less likely to quit.<sup>103</sup> Recognition increases happiness at work and in general<sup>104</sup> and is tied to culture and business results.<sup>105</sup>

Here are some examples of creative ways to make ongoing, constructive feedback part of the work environment:

- The Zingerman's huddle is a tool that allows almost

immediate sharing of information about individual and business performance.<sup>106</sup> The huddles include “code reds” and “code greens,” which document customer complaints and compliments so that all employees can learn and grow from tangible feedback. Leaders record daily ups and downs on the whiteboard. Employees are expected to “own” the numbers and come up with ideas for getting back on track when they deviate from the plan.

- Some Zingerman's sites began instituting “mini games,” or short-term incentive plans—involving goals, scorecards and rewards—to fix a problem or capitalize on an opportunity.
- The Zingerman's Roadhouse restaurant staff used the Greeter Game to track how long it took for customers to be greeted. The Greeter Game challenged the host team to greet every customer within five minutes of being seated, with a modest financial reward for 50 straight days of “success.” The game inspired hosts to quickly uncover and fix holes in the service process. Service scores improved considerably over the course of a month.
- Other Zingerman's businesses started similar games, with incentives for faster delivery, reduced knife injuries in the bakery (which would lower insurance costs) and neater kitchens.<sup>107</sup>
- At The Mighty, five numbers are continually updated on its whiteboard—a focal point in the open office. Employees brainstorm ways to improve, rally to achieve goals and celebrate wins along the way. This helps keep them

focused and energized.

- Any company can follow this example by creating a compelling scoreboard that highlights top goals and other quantifiable achievements: the current result, the target result and the deadline. Employers can encourage employees to review the scoreboard every day or every week, as appropriate. In meetings, managers can highlight progress on the goals and ask their teams to brainstorm possibilities for how to achieve priorities.<sup>108</sup>

Research from the Center for Creative Leadership suggests that 360-degree evaluations are more accurate and less likely to create unintended reactions from leaders when rater anonymity is ensured and confidentiality is preserved. By collecting feedback from bosses, peers, subordinates and even clients or customers, organizations obtain a fuller picture of employee strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, employees learn about the difference they make and gain a more realistic picture of improvements that will make a difference to colleagues and the organization.

Positive feelings in the workplace are contagious. Small interpersonal interactions can have a big impact on others and their motivation. Managers should take the time to notice what each employee prefers, or ask each directly. Sometimes the simplest way to generate good feelings is to ask, “How did you solve that problem or score that result?”<sup>109</sup> And employees should share success stories. A daily sense of progress, or small wins, can boost employees' motivation and performance.<sup>110</sup>

### **Connect recognition to the company's core values**

Recognition sticks and helps create a meaningful, human environment when it clearly supports organizational values.<sup>111</sup> A gift or reward also makes the recognition stick.<sup>112</sup>

- JetBlue's Lift program recognizes the organization's values of safety, caring, integrity, fun and passion. Employees nominate peers for awards with messages of thanks that can be accompanied by rewards (redeemable for a choice of gift cards), which are meant to create lasting memories linked to employee achievement and organizational values.<sup>113</sup>

### **Praise others freely and genuinely**

Most people express gratitude at work less than once a year.<sup>114</sup> Offering a simple and genuine “thank you” can improve others' confidence, improve relationships, enhance others' trust and ultimately raise one's income.<sup>115</sup> Research has shown that it also lowers stress and makes people feel good.<sup>116</sup>

The more channels used for recognition, the higher the employee engagement level.<sup>117</sup> The following actions help managers recognize their employees:

- Writing thank you notes (e-mails or handwritten) to subordinates for their contributions. Giving credit to subordinates, even if the leaders themselves have contributed greatly.

### **Get employees into the act**

Peers are the most likely candidates to recognize positive behavior, but they are often underused.

- Zappos implemented a Wow recognition program designed to capture people in the act of doing the right thing. Any employee at any level who sees a colleague doing something special can award a Wow, which includes a cash bonus of up to \$50. Recipients are automatically eligible for a Hero award, chosen by top executives. They receive a covered parking spot for a month, a \$150 Zappos gift card and a hero's cape. Light-hearted awards such as these can serve as enduring symbols of the organization's values.<sup>118</sup>
- Cisco is using employee recognition software to increase peer recognition, reinforce company values, boost employee satisfaction and promote teamwork.<sup>119</sup> Peers nominate one another for representation of certain Cisco values such as innovation, teamwork or customer service. A manager approves the decision, distributing cash awards valued from \$25 to \$2,000.

### QUICK TIPS: Recognizing Outstanding Workers

1. Be specific about what they did.
2. Talk about their results.
3. Consider your words.
4. Make it individual.
5. Use their name.
6. Tell a story.
7. Don't forget to say thank you.

Source: Mosley, E., & Irvine, D. (2015). *The power of thanks*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

## 6. Provide a Sense of Meaning

Meaningful work is a fundamental need that motivates all of us and has become U.S. employees' number one desire in a job. Doing what helps others matters to us.<sup>120</sup> Meaningful work increases motivation,<sup>121</sup> social behavior<sup>122</sup> and performance.<sup>123</sup> A study of social service employees found those who reported more meaning in their work were more likely to thrive.<sup>124</sup> Meaningful work encourages personal growth,<sup>125</sup> work engagement<sup>126</sup> and well-being.<sup>127</sup> A greater sense of purpose produces positive emotions like fulfillment and elevation<sup>128</sup> and attitudes like job satisfaction.<sup>129</sup> Having a sense of purpose may also lead individuals to be more attentive and responsive to others in doing their work.<sup>130</sup>

### **Servant leadership at Chick-fil-A**

Chick-fil-A practices servant leadership. Its S.E.R.V.E.<sup>TM</sup> Model stands for:

- See and shape the future.
- Engage and develop others.
- Reinvent continuously.
- Value results and relationships.
- Embody the company values.

Founder Truett Cathy declared, "We are not in the chicken business. We are in the people business." Chick-fil-A sees its work culture as the soul of the organization. Its operator retention rate spanning nearly 50 years is 96 percent. The corporate staff rate is 95 percent to 97 percent. Chick-fil-A has experienced a sales increase of more than 10 percent almost every year it has been in existence. Its leaders believe that commitment breeds commitment and produces phenomenal results for employees and the organization.<sup>131</sup>

### **Enhancing meaning at The Mighty**

Many employees don't see how their work makes a difference to others in their organization, customers or society. Leaders,<sup>132</sup> peers and customers<sup>133</sup> can all help reveal the positive impact to employees, but research has demonstrated that the best source of inspiration is the end user, the person who benefits from the company's products and services.<sup>134</sup> At The Mighty, employees circulate and post stories from readers and contributors that thank employees for providing the support, inspiration or information to help them face disease, disabilities or disorders.

Leaders can help make such vital connections to end users. For example, university call center employees got to meet directly with a student who explained how their work had helped fund a scholarship that had changed his life. As a result, the workers on average spent 142 percent more time on the phone with alumni and collected 171 percent more revenue for additional scholarships over the next month.<sup>135</sup>

Strategies that employers can use to help employees see how they are making a difference include:<sup>136</sup>

- **Meet end users.** Leaders at Medtronic, a medical device company, provide meaning to employees who have no day-to-day contact with customers, by inviting customers to annual meetings to provide testimonies about how a device saved or improved the patient's life.
- **Ask employees to share stories.** In daily 15-minute meetings, Ritz-Carlton employees exchange stories about how they have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help customers. The Mighty's

founder begins meetings by asking employees to share their best experiences at work. Years-of-service milestones are great opportunities to share positive stories and build relationships that drive commitment.<sup>137</sup>

- **Become a bridge.** Employers can connect end users' stories and the organization's mission or vision.
  - My Saint My Hero, a company headquartered in San Pedro, Calif., creates wearable blessings to help transform lives and make the world a better place. It connects employees with women in Medjugorje, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Cambodia; Ischia, Italy; Uganda; and other communities that are empowered through meaningful work for the company. Employees are inspired by how they are helping lift women, families and local economies.
  - TINYpulse, a Seattle company that measures employee engagement, asks its own employees to decide which nonprofits to help during companywide meetings. The process highlights how its product and work contributes to stronger communities.
- **Encourage job crafting.** To develop a sense of meaning and purpose, organizations can encourage employees to think about how they would change or craft their jobs differently if given a chance.<sup>138</sup> Employees who "job craft," whether individually or in collaboration with teammates, perform significantly better than those who do not.<sup>139</sup> Those who craft their jobs are also more engaged in their work and are less likely to be absent.<sup>140</sup> In

addition, they seem to become happier,<sup>141</sup> reporting more positive emotions and better mental health and well-being.<sup>142</sup>

Leaders can employ several strategies to facilitate job crafting:

- When employees have a deep understanding of the strategic goals of the organization, managers may boost autonomy and empower workers to take the initiative to adjust their work, particularly if it aligns with organizational goals.
- Managers can look at how employees approach each task—which tasks they focus on individually, which they collaborate on and which they delegate.
- Managers can consider whom employees work with and the skills and development they seek.
- Leaders may have to remove some barriers to job crafting or reinforce the possibilities that already exist.
- Leaders might build job crafting into development plans, asking managers to inquire about changes that employees would like to make and trying to support these desires.
- Some employees might require mentoring, training to acquire new knowledge or skills, or taking the initiative to start a project.

Strategies that *employees* can use to bring meaning to their work include:<sup>143</sup>

- **Talk with customers or end users.** Employees should make it a priority to see how their work affects others. If in-person

connections are not practical, this can be done through video or via Skype.

- **Actively seek feedback.** Employees can meet with managers and fellow co-workers on a regular basis to ask what they have done that has been most and least helpful and how their feedback and suggestions have been used.
- **Journal about contributions.** Employees can bring meaning to their jobs by recording in a journal how they made a difference. In a study of fundraising callers, researchers found that writing about their contributions for less than an hour per week boosted hourly calls by more than 29 percent.<sup>144</sup> Journaling is more beneficial once a week than once a day.<sup>145</sup>
- **Become an end user.** One of the most efficient and potent ways to appreciate the meaningfulness of work is to become a customer or client. At the Four Seasons Hotels, new employees are given a "familiarization stay" overnight. After being treated like royalty, they are more inclined to lavish customers with this experience.
- **Job craft.** Employees can hold job-crafting swap meets to share goals with other employees and to discover opportunities for task and relationship exchanges. Teams at Google have found that this exercise focuses their efforts in more satisfying and productive ways.<sup>146</sup>

## 7. Boost Employee Well-Being

Employee energy and well-being have four dimensions: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. The more effectively leaders and organizations support employees in meeting all these needs, the more

likely the employees are to experience engagement, loyalty, job satisfaction and positive energy at work, lowering their levels of stress.<sup>147</sup>

Wachovia employees participated in a four-module energy-renewal program, in which each module focused on specific strategies for strengthening one of the four dimensions of energy. Participants produced 13 percent greater revenue from loans and 20 percent greater revenue from deposits than employees in the control group who did not participate. The participants reported substantial improvements in engagement at work, relationships with customers and personal satisfaction.<sup>148</sup>

When employees have one core need met, all of their performance variables improve.<sup>149</sup> The more needs met, the more positive the impact.

### ***Physical energy and well-being***

Exercise, nutrition and sleep combine to improve people's physical energy and well-being.

#### ■ **Exercise**

Exercise boosts brainpower and is a powerful way to reduce stress.<sup>150</sup> A study of 1,632 workers who exercised at least four hours a week were half as likely to suffer from depression or burnout.<sup>151</sup> Another study found that exercise was better than sertraline (Zoloft) in treating depression.<sup>152</sup> Exercise helps combat stress-related diseases, including chronic fatigue, arthritis, fibromyalgia and other autoimmune diseases.<sup>153</sup>

Exercise promotes alertness, concentration and cognitive performance, so people learn more efficiently following exercise. People who exercise regularly benefit from astonishing gains in cognitive performance—memory, reasoning,

attention, problem-solving and even fluid intelligence.<sup>154</sup>

Organizations can encourage exercise by providing access to gyms and fitness classes, including subsidies for memberships. The key is to get people moving. The Motley Fool hired a full-time personal trainer who teaches yoga, high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workouts, Zumba and strength classes at its offices.<sup>155</sup> The trainer even coaches employees at global offices around the world via Skype. The company reports that this convenient solution has led to higher productivity, lower health insurance costs and greater levels of satisfaction. Part-time trainers are another option.

Leaders and employees may also want to organize workout challenges. The Mighty built an offsite event around a marathon and 10K race, offering free registration to employees. It encouraged employees to raise money for their favorite charities. Such challenges are a healthy way to build camaraderie, lose weight, tackle a fitness goal and increase meaning by raising funds for charities.

#### ■ **Nutrition**

Promoting healthy eating is another way to improve employee well-being. Company events should provide healthy food options rather than sugary snacks and drinks. Employers can upgrade vending machines and kitchens to include healthy options and consider hiring a nutritionist to speak to employees.

#### ■ **Sleep**

Employees today are struggling with sleep and recovery. The National Sleep Foundation reported that by the turn of the millennium, Americans were sleeping a mean of seven hours, 1.5 hours less than they did in 1960.<sup>156</sup> Although 95 percent of people need seven to eight hours of sleep a day, a large-scale study revealed that 29.9 percent of Americans get less than six hours.<sup>157</sup> Studies from Korea, Finland, Sweden and England found the problem is global.<sup>158</sup> A Harvard study reported that sleep deprivation costs U.S. companies \$63.2 billion a year in lost productivity.<sup>159</sup>

Low sleep quantity or quality has been associated with low job satisfaction,<sup>160</sup> poor motivation,<sup>161</sup> a reduction in executive functioning,<sup>162</sup> less innovative thinking<sup>163</sup> and poor task performance.<sup>164</sup> Sleep deprivation also causes safety lapses and work injuries.<sup>165</sup> Lack of sleep and poor sleep leads to absences,<sup>166</sup> workplace deviance,<sup>167</sup> difficulty with organization, impatience, cyber loafing<sup>168</sup> and even unethical behavior.<sup>169</sup>

A lack of sleep or poor sleep quality negatively affects people's ability to interact effectively with one another.<sup>170</sup> People who experience a lack of sleep have trouble regulating moods and emotions.<sup>171</sup> They have stronger—and typically more negative—reactions to minor events.<sup>172</sup> Lack of sleep is linked to frustration, hostility, anxiety and low levels of joviality,<sup>173</sup> as well as a lack of trust<sup>174</sup> and interpersonally inappropriate behavior.<sup>175</sup> A

lack of sleep reduces emotional intelligence and civility at work.<sup>176</sup> Sleep deprivation has also been shown to negatively affect the relationship between leaders and employees, but sleepy people may not be aware of the negative affect on others.<sup>177</sup>

Organizations concerned about employees' sleep can offer more flexibility regarding where and when work is done to provide employees with greater windows for sleep, including naps. Napping rooms and pods may help.

### ***Mental energy and well-being***

Even when employees get enough sleep, taking breaks throughout the day to rejuvenate is important. Research showed that when the human brain is asked to process extraordinary amounts of data,

### **Genentech and Well-being**

Genentech takes a holistic approach to helping employees thrive, recognizing that this will help the organization achieve more. In 2011, Genentech's career and learning team developed a Wellbeing @ Work initiative based on *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements*, by Tom Rath and Jim Harter. Rath and Harter focused on five interdependent essential elements: career, community, finances, social life and physical health.

Genentech analyzed how the corporate environment affects each of these pillars and how the organization can support each employee and enhance well-being across all five areas. The firm rolled out a variety of resources, including:

- **Wellbeing @ Work Tool Kit:** a website with resources and tools, including a well-being assessment.
- **A Social Community:** groups in which employees share ideas and experiences.
- **A Better Way of Working:** a course focused on energy management.
- **Resilience: Finding Your Inner Strength:** a set of practical strategies to manage challenging situations by developing a healthy stress cycle, with periods of rest and recovery.
- **More Time For You®:** a course featuring time management practices to better handle e-mail and other work responsibilities from a holistic point of view aimed at work/life harmony.

As Genentech's well-being initiative gained momentum, the company developed the Wellbeing Journey, a team-based change management program designed to support leaders interested in adapting environmental conditions that influence employee well-being. This program involves creating a definition of each well-being element, analyzing the current state of well-being with the leadership team and collecting well-being assessment data from employees on the team. After analyzing the data, the team identifies areas of focus to enhance well-being. For example, it might encourage the leader to refrain from sending e-mails over the weekend, to institute walking one-on-one meetings, to initiate flexible work arrangements or to connect through local volunteer activities during Genentech Gives Back Week.

Employees involved in the Wellbeing Journey engaged in dialogue and built relationships. Results are impressive: One team that focused on well-being between 2013 and 2014 reported a 30 percent improvement in employee opinion scores related to balance between work and personal commitments. To sustain momentum, the firm also created a Team of Champions.

Genentech's well-being initiatives continue to evolve. Over the past year the company renewed its focus on physical well-being. Leaders encouraged preventive screenings through education awareness and incentives, and helped employees and their covered dependents understand their biometric numbers and overall health. Employees share personal stories about how preventive screenings helped them with early diagnoses and about more effective treatments.

Well-being is now part of the fabric of the Genentech organization, with positive results for both employees and the company.

Source: Morgado, T., & Vega, V. (2015, July). A glimpse into a wellbeing journey. *Workforce Solutions Review*, 13-14.

its ability to solve problems flexibly and creatively decreases, mistakes increase and risks are underestimated. The more hours people work beyond 40—and the more continuously they work—the worse they feel and the less engaged they are.<sup>178</sup> Without routines to renew mental energy, performance and health are likely to suffer.

■ **Breaks during the workday**

Think in terms of sprinters and marathoners.<sup>179</sup> Research revealed that people get a boost in outcome for each additional break they take during the day.<sup>180</sup> Employees who take a break every 90 minutes report a 30 percent higher level of focus than those who take no breaks or just take one during the day. They also report a nearly 50 percent greater capacity to think creatively and a 46 percent higher level of health and well-being.

A study of 150 accountants in the middle of their firm's busy tax season offered further evidence of the value of intermittent rest. The study compared a group of accountants who alternated highly focused and uninterrupted 90-minute periods of work with 10-to-15-minute breaks in between, and a full one-hour break in the late afternoon. These employees were also permitted to leave as soon as they had accomplished a designated amount of work. When compared with a group that did not take breaks, the group of employees who took breaks had greater focus, finished more work in less time, left work earlier in the evenings and reported a much less

stressful overall experience during the busy season. Their turnover rate was far lower than that of the rest of the firm.<sup>181</sup>

■ **Vacations**

Vacations are a valuable form of mental renewal to improve employee functioning and well-being. A study conducted by Ernst & Young showed that for each additional 10 hours of vacation employees took, their year-end performance ratings from supervisors improved by 8 percent.<sup>182</sup> Frequent vacationers are also significantly less likely to leave their firms. Research from over 20,000 employees across industries indicates that people and organizations benefit from more vacation, with a boost in job satisfaction, engagement, likelihood to stay with the organization, thriving at work and a reduction in stress. The best outcomes were associated with four weeks or more of vacation.<sup>183</sup>

These findings help explain why many organizations have introduced less stringent vacation policies. Some have devised creative ways to encourage renewal when people leave vacation days unused. The Motley Fool implemented a unique benefit—the Fool's Errand—a monthly drawing in which the winner receives two consecutive, paid, no-contact-with-work weeks off. The winner must use the prize within the month. The company reported that this reward fosters renewal and recovery, and is also a great way to test sustainability. Typically an unplanned absence is a result of something unpleasant like illness, and only then can a team learn its weaknesses. With the Fool's Errand, the organization ensures most employees are cross-trained in the event someone needs to take time off unexpectedly.<sup>184</sup>

Organizations should consider how they can encourage employees to take more daily breaks and vacations. They can start small by offering a random employee a day off as a reward for great work.

■ **Sabbaticals, mini-sabbaticals and community days**

Another way to encourage renewal is to offer sabbaticals. Sabbatical leaves of six months or more reduce stress levels, particularly for those who fully unplug from work.<sup>185</sup>

Many companies are experimenting with mini-sabbaticals in which employees remove themselves from their day-to-day job roles and offer their expertise to nonprofit organizations or entrepreneurs from disadvantaged communities.

At Firehouse in Dallas, employees spend a day each year volunteering together. The first year they painted a firehouse; another year they painted and decorated a school. In Australia, where firms are required to assess and document their social, environmental and economic impact on local communities, employees who volunteer their expertise often report gains in thriving because they are learning to apply their skills in a new context. They report a sense of vitality because they are contributing to a greater good. Such programs are an example of how human sustainability can go hand in hand with environmental and economic sustainability.<sup>186</sup>

***Emotional energy and well-being***

Play builds the brain. Positive emotions broaden thinking, stimulate

creativity and improve performance. Play also stimulates the amygdala, which helps regulate emotions and executive functions, including planning, prioritizing, scheduling, anticipating, delegating, deciding and analyzing. Dr. Edward Hallowell explained that play is good for business: "In play the brain totally lights up."<sup>187</sup>

#### ■ Question

Ask open-ended questions rather than those with a yes/no or other specific answer. Ask questions that prompt brainstorming or reflection, such as, "What did you learn?", "What did we do well?" and "What was the best thing that happened last week?" Promote a questioning culture and attitude in which employees routinely discuss opposing ideas and viewpoints.<sup>188</sup>

#### ■ Decorate

Decorate the workspace with imagination. Whiteboards on the walls promote brainstorming. Include fun spots in the office. The Motley Fool designates one area for board games, Nerf balls and comfortable couches. The entire office is scattered with toys and sports equipment.

#### ■ Have fun

Enhance fun, relaxing interaction between employees. Small kitchens, a café room with comfortable seating and open office space often increase employee touch points and sharing of ideas. Plan events such as happy hours, a brown bag "lunch and learn" and outings. Host "Take Your Child to Work Day" or, as Google does, "Take Your Parents to Work Day."<sup>189</sup>

Carolina Made, a wholesale distributor of sportswear in North Carolina, holds a cookout for all temporary and full-time workers.

The company president puts on a goofy apron and flips burgers and hot dogs for everyone.

At its holiday party, TINYpulse employees nominate colleagues for different awards. Mimicking the Academy Awards, people speak on camera about the nominees, and they play the videos to celebrate colleagues and reaffirm company values through storytelling.

### ***Spiritual energy and well-being***

Improving spiritual energy increases the well-being and performance of employees just as attention to physical, mental and emotional well-being does.

#### ■ Mindfulness and meditation

A multidecade study spanning 15,000 participants at the University of Massachusetts Medical School indicated that meditation reduces the number of medical and psychological symptoms by more than 35 percent.<sup>190</sup> A great deal of research showed the benefits of mindfulness for employee health and well-being,<sup>191</sup> engagement,<sup>192</sup> performance<sup>193</sup> and leadership effectiveness.<sup>194</sup> Recent studies suggest that meditation reduces anxiety and depression, expands the ability to focus, and positively alters the structure of the brain.

By improving self-regulation and functioning,<sup>195</sup> mindfulness-based practices should facilitate more positive interactions between employees. One vice president at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care insurance company started a grassroots mindfulness program that employees raved about. It has blossomed to encompass the company's clients. Over 30 percent of 1,200 employees have experienced the

mindfulness practice, with growing wait lists. Participants reported feeling much more focused, energetic and productive, and less stressed and overwhelmed.<sup>196</sup>

General Mills introduced a Mindful Leadership program and a seven-week course. After the course, 83 percent of participants said they took time to optimize personal productivity—up from 23 percent before the course. Among senior executives who took the course, 80 percent reported positive changes in their ability to make decisions, and 89 percent reported becoming better listeners.<sup>197</sup>

#### ■ Yoga

Some organizations have found that mindfulness and related programs generate health benefits and cost savings. Duke University School of Medicine found that practicing one hour of yoga a week decreased stress levels in Aetna's employees by a third, which reduced health care costs by an average of \$2,000 per year.<sup>198</sup> In 2012, Aetna reduced its health care costs by 7 percent. Its CEO credited limiting stress through meditation and yoga.<sup>199</sup>

Offering daily meditation in the workplace or dedicating time to individual practice is a low-risk and inexpensive option for employers.

### **Individual Strategies for Thriving**

Research highlights the value of being continuously attuned to one's own level of vitality and learning and being mindful and diligent about making adjustments if vitality wanes. Below are seven winning strategies to increase individual thriving:<sup>200</sup>

### ***Craft your job into something more meaningful***

Meaning is a key renewable resource that fuels thriving.<sup>201</sup> Job crafting, a work redesign that makes work more fulfilling, is a helpful tool.<sup>202</sup>

- First, optimize your current job. Reflect on how you spend your time in the tasks and interactions at work. Think about how you can allocate time and energy differently to build a sense of control, positive identity and connection with others. Reorder tasks and interactions to better feed your sense of meaning and engagement.
- Then, adapt your work to capitalize on positive interactions. Seek positive relationships. Consider how you can mitigate or improve relations with people who energize you. “De-energizers” have four to seven times the effect of energizers, so be thoughtful about how you can adjust your work to minimize the effect of de-energizers.<sup>203</sup>

### ***Look for opportunities to learn and innovate***

Knowledge fuels thriving and builds feelings of competence. Look for mentors to increase your knowledge. Volunteer to help newcomers or other co-workers. Find ways to contribute to projects that are outside your daily routine. If you do not have immediate opportunities within the organization, seek leadership and learning opportunities in the community to hone skills.

### **Supporting Employee Well-Being When Resources Are Limited**

Fortunately, most strategies for improving employees' ability to thrive require minimal financial resources. Leaders, not dollars, play the crucial role. Without the support of leaders, employees hesitate to use gyms, enrichment classes and other perks. Leaders must be role models in sustainable work practices.

Most of the recommendations in this report apply globally, across industries, and to blue- and white-collar workers. Sharing information with all employees, from line workers to C-suite executives, is a powerful lever, as is demanding respect across every layer of an organization.

Regardless of their position, most people want greater autonomy and feedback, but in some cases, there are limits to autonomy. For example, employing ROWE with shift workers is difficult, particularly in service or manufacturing settings. However, some firms are trying to shatter traditional boundaries with software that allows store workers to trade shifts and have greater flexibility.

Organizations with limited resources may find it difficult to cover gym memberships or yoga and meditation classes. They may not be able to offer sabbaticals or more flexible vacation policies, but any company can provide employees with energy management information:

- Hold lunchtime meetings about the benefits of self-care.
- Provide free tools such as the energy audit and assessment listed on page 28.
- Encourage employees to form groups that set energy management goals or tackle fitness challenges together.

Many people are more likely to achieve goals with the support of friends and colleagues, and mutual support will also improve camaraderie.

A particularly helpful resource for implementing change with few resources is Laszlo Bock's book, *Work Rules!*, especially Chapter 11, “The Best Things in Life Are Free (or Almost Free).”

### ***Invest in relationships that energize***

Positive relationships invigorate people and their sense of thriving (as well as their motivation, engagement and well-being). Social networks also enable learning, as they are the conduits for harnessing information and knowledge. To increase thriving, be mindful of building high-quality relationships with energizers, and rejuvenating or disconnecting from de-energizing relationships.

### ***Take care of your health through energy management***

People who have healthy eating habits, including drinking plenty of water, eating a nutritious breakfast and maintaining modest meal proportions; who exercise regularly, doing both cardiovascular and strength training each week; who have good sleep practices, getting seven to eight hours of sleep; and who take regular breaks to move the body and clear the mind, are more

likely to thrive. Paying attention to when you are at your best and when you struggle should be helpful in managing role overload, your mood and effectiveness.<sup>204</sup> The Energy Audit, listed in the “Recommended Resources” section, is one tool individuals can use to develop strategies for sustaining energy.<sup>205</sup>

Intermittent breaks and other renewal tactics, no matter how small, can be enormously refreshing and create positive physical energy. Scheduling daily breaks—ideally after 90 to 120 minutes—in addition to normal vacations will enhance energy and effectiveness.<sup>206</sup> Energy management practices, along with stress reducers such as mindfulness, meditation and yoga, help people become more civil. Taking planned time out from digital devices will help, too.

### ***Recognize that thriving can spill over outside the office***

There is no evidence that high levels of thriving at work will crowd out personal life. Research suggests a significant positive spillover in both directions: Rewarding relationships and positive energy at work bring vitality and learning to the rest of one's life, and vice versa.<sup>207</sup> So strive to be happy in nonwork activities.

### ***Be grateful***

Gratitude can increase happiness levels by around 25 percent.<sup>208</sup>

### ***Practice kindness and giving***

Make kindness and giving a habit. At the start of every day, send a short message praising someone you know.

### **QUICK TIPS: Making Gratitude a Habit**

- Keep a gratitude journal.
- Remember the hard times that you have experienced in the past.
- Ask yourself three questions: “What have I received from \_\_\_?”, “What have I given to \_\_\_?” and “What troubles and difficulty have I caused?”
- Smile, say thank you and write thank-you notes to trigger gratitude.

Source: Emmons, R. (2007). *Thanks! How practicing gratitude can make you happier*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

### **Set the Example: The Importance of Leaders**

Leaders can jumpstart a culture that encourages thriving without heroic efforts or major financial investments. Modeling good practices is more important than new facilities or policies. In a study of more than 20,000 employees around the world, only 25 percent of respondents reported that their leaders model sustainable work practices.<sup>209</sup>

### ***Wellness perks***

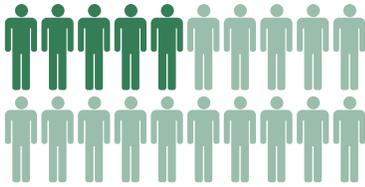
Although many organizations have built fitness facilities and even nap rooms, if leaders do not use them,

### **Building a More Human Workplace: A Final Checklist**

Keep these powerful levers in mind as you work to create a more human workplace where employees thrive:

- ✓ **Share information about the organization and its strategy.** Be transparent. Keep employees up to date.
- ✓ **Empower employees by providing decision-making discretion and autonomy.** Strive to grant employees freedom to do their work where and when they want to do it while holding them accountable for hitting performance standards.
- ✓ **Create a civil culture with positive relationships.** Do not tolerate incivility—even from the powerful. Find ways to encourage connections among employees. Build community, celebrate and have fun!
- ✓ **Promote diversity and inclusion.** Urge employees to be accepting of those who differ from the majority. Develop a climate that promotes diversity and values the contributions it makes to the organization.
- ✓ **Offer performance feedback.** Encourage an open dialogue, with two-way feedback, creating opportunities for learning for employees and leaders. Check in with one another to gauge progress.
- ✓ **Provide a sense of meaningfulness.** Share stories or bring end users into the organization to highlight the impact your employees have made. Ask employees to share their best work experiences.
- ✓ **Boost well-being.** Encourage employees to exercise. Allow time for breaks. Urge them to structure work so that they take care of themselves, use vacation time or take mini-sabbaticals. Spend a day volunteering together. Provide some basic information on energy management.

## Leaders Who Model Sustainable Work Practices Earn Employees' Trust



In a study of more than 20,000 employees around the world, only **25%** of survey respondents report that their leaders model **sustainable work practices**.

### Those leaders' employees are:

+55% more engaged

+72% higher in health well-being

+53% more focused

+77% more satisfied at work

+68% **greater thriving**  
(sense of vitality and learning)

1.15x more likely to stay at the company



2x Trust

Employees not only felt empowered to follow suit but also report more than twice the level of trust in their supervisors.

Source: Schwartz, T., & Porath, C. L. (2014, July 9). Your boss's work-life balance matters as much as your own. *Harvard Business Review*; Porath, C. L. (2015). *Care: How to create an environment where employees and organizations thrive* [Working paper].

employees are reluctant to use them, too. Rather than generating positive energy and renewal, these amenities may prompt anger, frustration and resentment.

#### **Companywide habits**

Leaders establish norms through their own habits and routines. For example, leaders set the tone for answering e-mail and whether it is acceptable to disengage from work after hours. If leaders typically send out e-mails in the evenings and on weekends, their employees will likely feel compelled to read and respond. Even if leaders say they do not expect responses, their actions tell a different story.<sup>210</sup>

- **Set new e-mail norms:** Managers who write e-mails at all hours should consider placing them in draft folders until working hours, and then hitting "send." Identifying which e-mails are low priority and do not need an immediate response helps employees focus on tackling high-priority items.<sup>211</sup>

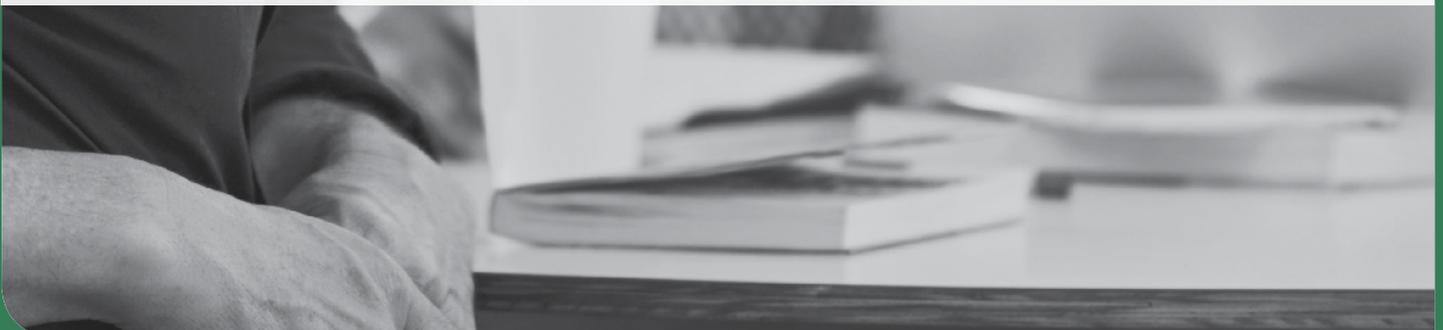
#### **Respect matters most**

The number one thing that people want from their leaders—the thing that makes the biggest difference across organizational outcomes—is respect.<sup>212</sup> Leaders must create a workplace where respect and civility reign and where everyone holds each other accountable.

The better leaders take care of themselves and their people, the better their people will take care of business. The key is leader self-care and caring for others. It's important to remember that leaders have the power to fuel or drain employees' energy, value, focus and purpose by their small actions or inactions.



Leaders have the power to fuel or drain employees' energy, value, focus and purpose by their small actions or inactions.





## CONCLUSION

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As detailed in this report, organizations have many ways to help employees thrive. Many of these strategies require few resources, whereas others are more of an investment. The key is to start. Even employees who do not lead the organization can still make it better for everyone. In fact, HR professionals are uniquely positioned to model positivity and encourage other employees to thrive. Helping people thrive at work is valuable on its own merits, but can also boost a company's performance in a sustainable way.

By creating a more human workplace that enables employee thriving, organizations can boost people's positive emotions and well-being at work. This, in turn, boosts employee performance and business results. Employee well-being feeds loyalty and attracts talent. HR professionals who focus on creating a human workplace will ultimately create wins for their organizations, shareholders and customers.



When employees have a deep understanding of the strategic goals of the organization, managers may boost autonomy and empower workers to take the initiative to adjust their work, particularly if it aligns with organizational goals.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

To improve work: Google's re:Work website: <https://rework.withgoogle.com/>

For research, cases of positive organizations and various tools such as the Reflected Best Self exercise: Center for Positive Organizations, <http://positiveorgs.bus.umich.edu>

To avoid unconscious bias: Gilrane, V. (2015, November 15). How employees and managers combat unconscious bias [Web log post]. *The Water Cooler*. <https://rework.withgoogle.com/blog/employees-and-managers-can-combat-unconscious-bias/>

Unconscious Bias @ Work [Video]. re:Work. <https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/unbiasing-raise-awareness/steps/watch-unconscious-bias-at-work>

Bock, L. (2015). *Work Rules, Insights from Inside Google that will transform how you live and lead*. New York: Twelve.

To estimate the costs of incivility, see Chapter 3, "What could incivility cost a company? A case study" in Pearson, C., & Porath, C. (2009). *The costs of bad behavior: How incivility is damaging your business and what to do about it*. New York, NY: Pearson.

To create a more civil, positive culture: Porath, C. (in press). *Mastering civility: A manifesto for the workplace*.

To encourage civility: Take a civility assessment at <http://cycletocivility.sproj.com/take-the-assessment>

To manage energy effectively: Loehr, J., & Schwartz, T. (2003). *The power of full engagement: Managing energy, not time, is the key to high performance and personal renewal*. New York, NY: Free Press. See also the Human Performance Institute (<https://www.jjhpi.com>) and The Energy Project (<http://theenergyproject.com>) websites.

Take a brief energy assessment:

The Energy Audit,  
<http://theenergyproject.com/audits/individual>

Consider doing an energy audit:

Grant, T., & Spreitzer, G. (2012). *Energy action—awareness and action*. <http://positiveorgs.bus.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/GrantSpreitzer-EnergyAudit.pdf>

To boost well-being: Goldsmith, M., & Reiter, M. (2015). *Triggers: Creating behavior that lasts—Becoming the person you want to be*. New York, NY: Crown.

Huffington, A. (2014). *Thrive: The third metric to redefining success and creating a life of well-being, wisdom, and wonder*. New York, NY: Harmony.

Rath, T. (2013.) *Eat, move, sleep: How small choices lead to big changes*. New York, NY: Missionbay.

To create a culture of giving: Grant, A. (2014). *Give and take: Why helping others drives our success*. New York, NY: Viking.

To give thanks: Emmons, R. (2007). *Thanks!: How practicing gratitude can make you happier*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Websites on culture:

Harvard Business Review.  
<https://hbr.org>

Developing Happiness.  
<http://deliveringhappiness.com>

Best Places to Work. The Motley Fool. <http://culture.fool.com>

WorkHuman.  
<http://www.workhuman.com>



The way a firm treats its employees demonstrates how it expects them to treat customers.





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**SHRM**  
**Foundation**  
Shaping the future of HR

# Creating a Culture of Mindfulness at Work

Created by:



**MINDFUL  
LEADER**



GARRISON INSTITUTE

## Overview

This document captures key questions and insights that arose during a weekend deep-dive retreat hosted by Mindful Leader and the Garrison Institute in August 2018. The participants were all internal champions of mindfulness within medium to large organizations (100+ employees). Our objective was to provide a forum where these peers could share best practices & lessons learned, bond, and find meaningful ways to support the continued growth of mindfulness at work.

The contents of this document are raw and captured from the notes that the participants presented during the retreat. The document is meant to offer insight into some of the key issues and questions that employees are facing whether they are running mature programs or trying to get programs into a sustainable state.

The document is separated into seven sections. Each section reflects a break out topic that attendees explored. Within each topic the key questions and key insights that were presented have been documented and are presented below.

## Snapshot of Organizations who Participated

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Google</li><li>● BuzzFeed</li><li>● Aetna</li><li>● Harvard Pilgrim Health Care</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Humana</li><li>● Novo Nordisk</li><li>● Boeing</li><li>● LVMH</li><li>● Fidelity Investments</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The United Nations</li><li>● The World Bank</li><li>● Goodwill</li><li>● YMCA USA</li><li>● Naropa University</li></ul> |
|---|--|---|

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- Topic Area 5: Metrics & Buy In
- Topic Area 6: Qualification & Credentials Conversation
- Topic Area 7: Diversity & Unconscious Bias
- Shared Resources & Tools



# Starting a Mindfulness Program at Work

*"Take a page from Nike's playbook and 'Just Do It.' Overcoming fear and resistance is central to getting a program off the ground."*

## Key Questions

- What problems are we trying to solve with mindfulness and what are the consequences of not doing it?
- What is the best practice for creating a program?
- What is the science/research to demonstrate the business case? What are cultural trends and movements to support the business case?
- What are the specific, situational considerations for introducing a successful and sustainable mindfulness program in your organization?
- What is the risk? What is your tolerance for risk?
- What fears are present? For you and for the organization/leadership?

## Insights & Aha Moments

- JUST DO IT. Don't get held up with specifics or lost in the weeds. Go for it in small ways and then adjust on the fly. Overcome fear, gain and recruit allies, adapt it.
- The "one-two punch" of creating a program:
  - How to make the business case to get buy-in
  - How to actually build it?
- Do your research. Know the specifics of your organization's culture and openness. What does your company care about? What programs and tools are out there and available? What is your competition or similar companies doing?
- Find your internal advocates and champions. They can form the roots of your effort.
- Find the right language for your audience. Refine.
- Importance of busting misperceptions of mindfulness
- Secularizing the practices is important
  - BuzzFeed story about using "Zen" in the name of the program - very polarizing
  - Trying to take Buddhist concepts into the executives is not useful.
  - Meditation can be a "bad word" in the workplace - secularize
  - The science and the research are now available. Neuroscience, etc.
- Think of both formal programs and informal mindfulness moments—both can be important in a culture just adopting these practices



- The spirit in which the program is created matters. If we push, demand, and create in a rigid and linear way, that's the kind of program we're going to get. How to involve heart, spontaneity and receptivity in the process of creation? What is the role of stillness? Patience? Slow and steady really does win the race where mindfulness is concerned.
- Many internal champions have to overcome a concern about their own personal reputation: What if it fails? Make sure you have a support system in place as you launch. It will be a lot of work and will require vulnerability. There may be mistakes. Make sure you know who to call and lean on.
- Have a sense for the metrics up front. How will we know if what we're doing is working?
- Develop a plan:
  - Business case and budget needs
  - Marketing
  - Content development
  - Evaluation system
- See: Building the Case for Mindfulness in the Workplace ([http://themindfulnessinitiative.org.uk/images/reports/MI\\_Building-the-Case\\_v1.1\\_Oct16.pdf](http://themindfulnessinitiative.org.uk/images/reports/MI_Building-the-Case_v1.1_Oct16.pdf))
- Recognizing the source of resistance: Some resistance and reactivity can come from the feeling of overwhelm many office workers are struggling with these days. It can feel like "one more thing on my plate" or "one more thing I need to look into or do." That can cause resistance. How can we respect the overwhelm and give space for it? How can we make it easier for people to engage in bite-size and manageable ways?
  - Empathy can be an important tool for enlisting people into your mindfulness program. Let them know you understand their stress.
  - Little programs and simple tools to start: like the #2333 phone number at the hospital that anyone can dial for a 3-min guided meditation. Used by all. Easy to distribute and tap into any time.
  - Giving people non-invasive assignments to start: Just observe yourself for a week. No need to change anything; simply observe and take note of where you feel stressed or overwhelmed, how relationships affect you, where you are tired...Notice.
- Start with yourself - we are changed as much by the practice as those we bring it to. "You don't have to change the world to change the world..." One person at a time. We have to live and model the practices in action - that's the best "sales tool."



# Scaling a Mindfulness Program

*“Become a curator for the curious. Nurture their interest and provide support to your internal champions.”*

## Key Questions

- What are we scaling and how will we do it?
- What does the program look like beyond the launch phase. Beyond early adopters?
- Money/resources are necessary for scaling. How can we prove the business case for what we’re doing to get the funds to do more of it?
- Beyond Mindfulness: What additional mindfulness-based tools and practices can enhance a program as it scales? Non-Violent Communication...Emotional Intelligence...Empathy...Team dynamics... Psychological safety...

## Insights & Aha Moments

- The process of scaling is organic and depends on the culture of the organization: no one-size-fits-all approach.
- Connection between data/metrics and scaling your program: Proof of impact, results lead to greater investment
- The metaphor of a tree (presented by Google) for building and scaling a program:
  - Roots: Find champions, they will form your strong roots and foundational allies
  - Trunk: Begin to build a program with the help of your champions: identify the content and refine it for your organization, a community of support (it takes time!)
  - Limbs: moving beyond the choir, programs, outreach  
Leaves: the seasons, things change, you adjust, there will be highs and lows
- The employees themselves are your greatest asset; look for allies on the intranet, create affinity groups around mindfulness
- [rework.withgoogle.com](http://rework.withgoogle.com) – Open source info on how to run employee-to-employee trainings
- Marketing tactics such as contests, games, challenges can be marketed to build awareness for your program and can normalize engagement—on trend right now: wellness challenges, fitness challenges, etc. Can foster team feeling and encourage people who would normally be reluctant to try mindfulness



- Normalizing and Socializing: Marketing programs internally can be a great step towards normalizing and socializing mindfulness in the culture (“Oh, leadership must be supportive of this if they’re promoting it.”)
- Communicate to people in their language (i.e., if you’re talking to engineers, use their terms and reference points...tailor the language)
- Internal Resources and Champions: Your internal champions can be great support and advocates for what you’re doing. Identify and tap into the internal resources you already have. “Closet meditators” come out of the woodwork.
- Be a part of conversations that are already happening. Ride the wave. Leverage existing momentum within the company:
  - Tie mindfulness into the broader language of Self-Care. How it can help with stress reduction, diet, sleep?
  - Tie mindfulness into the conversation about innovation, decision-making and creativity that’s happening at many companies.
- Communities of practice can hold each other accountable and provide support/structure to the expansion of a program
- Virtual and digital tools can help: Headspace, Calm...Help people know which options are good. Become a curator for the curious. Nurture their interest.
- Mindful meetings, mindful listening, mindful driving and flying (Boeing): incorporate mindfulness and integrate it into activities the company already engages in. Integrated practices work really well for those who don’t like a sitting practice.
- Go slow. Pilot first and collect metrics and then refine over and over.
- Branded merchandise is helpful.
- Word of mouth is critical.
- An internal product can become an external offering ultimately (Google, Naropa, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care)



# The Relationship Between Mindfulness & Compassion

*"Mindfulness is not necessarily compassion, but it can lead to it."*

## Key Questions

- What is the best language to use when talking about compassion?
- What is the relationship between mindfulness and compassion?
- How do you teach compassion?
- What is the [real] level of interest in compassion in the corporate world?
- Where and how does self-care fit in?
- What is the difference between compassion and empathy?

## Insights & Aha Moments

- Mindfulness is not necessarily compassion, but it can lead to this.
- Mindfulness allows greater capacity for empathy. Empathy plus mindfulness leads to compassion.
- Compassion training is a different thing than mindfulness.
- Embodiment and empathy are important foundational skills for bringing compassionate action into the culture.
- "You can't give what you don't have." Especially in environments like healthcare providers and hospitals...customer service frontline, teachers in the classroom, etc. People need the tools to find compassion and relate with empathy. Mindfulness is the building block here.
- Mindfulness: a skill providing a physiological calm—which leads to ability to focus attention, deepen awareness and recognize emotion
- Empathy: an emotional response to an awareness of suffering (or another state); feeling the feelings of another as one's own: "I feel your pain."
- Compassion: A deliberate response to alleviate the suffering of another or others with personal balance. Allows a healer to heal in a healthy manner.
- Bring compassion and empathy into existing leadership curriculum; lay the foundation with mindfulness
- This feels like the next frontier of mindfulness in the workplace because we're needing to have more compassionate conversations about difficult topics at work. It can also help with the stress and difficulties of change management.
- Recognizing studies and teachers on the frontline of this topic: Fierce Compassion, Kristin Neff, etc.



# Change Management & Mindfulness

*"We have to be aware of the ethics here: Mindfulness is for liberation, not coercion."*

## Key Questions

- Living in this time of radical transition and chaos: How explicitly do you make mindfulness a part of change management at work?
- What role could mindfulness play in the change/transformation process?
- Can a focus on team dynamics be the next frontier of mindfulness training in the workplace?

## Insights & Aha Moments

- Often change happens at the organizational level with little attention to the needs and experience of the individuals or even teams.
- Mindfulness can help ease transition and change at all levels (three concentric circles—from inner to outer):
  - Individual level
  - Team level
  - Organizational level
- Mindfulness and the mechanics of change management:
  - Desire to change
  - Mechanisms to change
  - Actual behavior change
- Mindfulness has focused on the individual within a company, while change management has focused on the organization. Can we meet in the middle?
- Helping individuals to build interpersonal skills and relationships within small teams can help create safe spaces to “metabolize” change and reduce the perceived threat level.
- We have more work to do to show management the practical relevance and impact of the work we do as mindfulness educators and program directors.
- We must be aware of the ethical issues here – we can use mindfulness to inspire a new relationship to change, but not to coerce. Mindfulness is for liberation, not coercion.
- Change is often perceived as a negative, so the role of mindfulness in change management must be protected with integrity.
- Essential to sustainable and successful transition: integrate, empower, embody, ground in the body.



- Time to shift from bringing impact to individuals to bringing impact to teams: communities can work to make change happen more smoothly and with less disruption: Western mindfulness, the way we teach it, is frequently focused on the individual and must now include more of a group experience.
- Compassion: A deliberate response to alleviate the suffering of another or others with personal balance. Allows a healer to heal in a healthy manner.
- Bring compassion and empathy into existing leadership curriculum; lay the foundation with mindfulness
- This feels like the next frontier of mindfulness in the workplace because we're needing to have more compassionate conversations about difficult topics at work. It can also help with the stress and difficulties of change management.
- Recognizing studies and teachers on the frontline of this topic: Fierce Compassion, Kristin Neff, etc.



# Metrics & Buy In

*"Think early and often about ways to capture data...Start small and measure it all... Measure what matters."*

## Key Questions

- How and where can we learn more about how others are measuring the success of their programs?
- How can we share tools?
- How in depth or "academic" do the measurements need to be?
- How validated do the tools for measuring programs need to be?
- What are the ways we can get a "quick read" on programs?

## Insights & Aha Moments

- Know what the organization cares most about and how mindfulness can contribute to that bottom line. Measure what matters:
  - At Boeing: Engineers care about Safety, Engagement, and Collaboration
  - At Harvard Pilgrim Health Care: the conversation was about morale and engagement
- Metrics drive the business case: Correlation between metrics and proving the business case and getting the money needed to build, support, and scale programs.
- Value of longitudinal tracking - watching individuals and groups over time; year-over-year metrics. Is attendance in programs up or down?
- Quick reads (from BuzzFeed):
  - Surveys with just 2-3 open-ended questions
  - Use of Slack
  - Polling, pulse surveys after every program—"Our employees love to give feedback."
- Good quick read questions:
  - Was this a good use of your time?
  - Would you recommend this to someone else?
  - Did you gain skills that will help you do your job better?
- Tough to attach an ROI to wellness programs - avoid if possible. Evaluations versus benchmarks, peer review.
- Some sample metrics:
  - Absences
  - Productivity



- Turnover
- Healthcare spend
- Employee engagement
- Fewer errors or injuries
- Customer satisfaction
- Types of questions/measurement:
  - Pre/post program
  - Scales
  - Self reporting (i.e., How often did you practice this week?)
  - Open-ended questions



# Qualification & Credentials Conversation

*"Understand what your company considers a quality offering. It will be different for everyone."*

## Key Questions

- What are important qualifications for mindfulness teachers and how do they differ by setting?
- Is it better to do something (if you are resource constrained) than nothing?
- What are some solutions that can be a bridge to a better-funded program? Open source? Digital resources?
- Where does this conversation intersect with the diversity and inclusion conversation? If we only recognize limited and expensive Western-oriented credentials, we lose.

## Insights & Aha Moments

- Qualifications will differ depending on where you are and what the tolerance for experimentation is. Schools and healthcare companies have a lower tolerance for un-credentialed teachers and programs.
- Make sure you're measuring feedback on teachers through surveys. Know how your teachers are doing at all times. Supervision is critical.
- Beyond credentials there are the important intangibles: does this person fit our company culture?
- Learning to teach mindfulness does not necessarily make you an expert.
- # of hours of practice. What is their personal practice? (i.e. At least 10 years of personal practice and at least 3 silent retreats...)
- IMTA: International Mindfulness Teachers Association ([www.imta.org](http://www.imta.org))
- Could include:
  - Humility, beginner's mind
  - Demonstrations of their skills
  - Participation in silent retreats
  - Depth of personal practice
  - Facilitation/teaching/public speaking experience
  - Perhaps, relevant industry experience
  - Formal training in a respected program
  - Ethical and moral alignment/integrity
- Depends on culture and budget for your program
- Mentoring your teachers is important – help them grow and develop
- Assess their credentials and levels of accreditation
- Understanding what your company considers a quality offering.



- We need to respect the delicacy of this work for many people. We were reminded by the UN delegate that many people in her programs have experienced a great deal of trauma. We need to know if the teacher is capable of working with trauma.
- Diversity of opinions present as to how credentialed a teacher needs to be. Consensus agreement that we need to be clear what we are and are NOT teaching in our respective programs.
- Acknowledgment by the group of the tensions in this question. We can't also just look through a Western scientific lens and only recognize the validity of credentials from expensive training programs. Becoming a mindfulness teacher requires a lot of money and time that many don't have. Where does this question intersect with the diversity and inclusion conversation? This is an important point.



# Diversity & Unconscious Bias

*"Diversity is the answer, not the question."*

## Key Questions

- How do we honor diversity without making anyone feel "less than" or unwanted/threatened?
- How do we awaken interest in those who are currently unaware of our systems of oppression?
- How do we incorporate justice training into our mindfulness programs? Is this the place for it?
- How can mindfulness uncover bias? How do we make the invisible visible?
- Can we see our internal thoughts around this without shame and with compassion?
- What role could mindfulness have in supporting cultural fluency?
- How do you bring students from diverse backgrounds into an environment where exposure to contemplative practices isn't a privilege, but a birthright?
- What is the role of mindfulness in breaking through hate and enabling civil conversations?
- How do we use our mindfulness program/practices to raise awareness and wise action for unconscious bias and social justice?
- How do we invite more diverse-identified persons into the work?
- How do we undertake the task of decolonizing mindfulness?

## Insights & Aha Moments

- Diversity is the answer, not the question. Diversity can be seen as a monoculture problem. Example of the monoculture of corn versus the indigenous wisdom of planting "the three sisters" together to diversify and call on the strengths of each plant to create an ecosystem. Better together. Stronger and more resilient when we can incorporate and leverage our differences.
- Key leaders in the mindfulness movement originally were white, American males. We're now seeing the results of this: blind spots are coming into focus.
- Intersection of political literacy and emotional intelligence
- Biases (known and unknown) are foundational and need to be well-understood.
- Cultural appropriation and the secularization of mindful practices.
- What are community practices that are truly inclusive?



- In some corporate cultures there is a low readiness for conversations regarding racial diversity. How to bring them along?
- There are 1000s of teachers who don't fit the usual profile...we have a lot of discovery to do
- Spiritual bypassing—using one's personal journey to disconnect and avoid tough issues
- Awareness that people of color can experience resistance when in a teaching situation with a white teacher
- We have to/get to hire more people of color, women, indigenous people as teachers. We need to make this a priority.
- Develop specific communications for minority audiences: understand their specific needs and barriers.
- Seek to understand what other cultures bring to this work: be open, vulnerable. Be the student.



# Shared Resources & Tools

*How to Read Nature*, book by Tristan Gooley

Mindful Magazine

Center for Mindfulness, UMass: <https://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>

Hotline to Peace: 360-385-2200 x2238

[enaropa.org](http://enaropa.org): Mindful at Work, 8-week online course (also free 7-day course)

Mindfulness-Based Emotional Intelligence Facilitator's Guide

*Becoming a Resonant Leader*, book by McKee, Boyatzis, Johnston

*The Mind of the Leader*, book by Hougaard and Carter

*Awakening Compassion at Work*, book by Worline and Dutton

Center for Healthy Minds: <https://centerhealthyminds.org/>

*Shakti Leadership*, book by Raj Sisodia and Nilima Bhat

Greater Good Science Center: <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

Palouse Mindfulness Online Free MBSR Materials: <https://palousemindfulness.com/>

TED: "Color Blind or Color Brave", Melody Dobson

TED: "The Danger of a Single Story", Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

TEDx: "Sit Up and Pay Attention", Deborah Hendricks

[TheCalmMonkey.com](http://TheCalmMonkey.com): Change management and meditation (Wendy Quan)

Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, UMass: <https://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>

Healthcare and Society MBSR Curriculum:

<https://www.umassmed.edu/globalassets/center-for-mindfulness/documents/mbsr-curriculum-guide-2017.pdf>

[rework.withgoogle.com](http://rework.withgoogle.com) (open source employee training)

Mindful of Race, Ruth King (also an interview on Good Life Project Podcast):

<https://ruthking.net/mindful-of-race/>

*Radical Dharma*, book by Angel Kyodo Williams

CTZNWELL podcast (see Angel Kyodo Williams' interview to begin)

[mindfuleducation.com](http://mindfuleducation.com) - Daniel Rechtshaffen

Harvard "Project Implicit" IAT : Implicit Association Test:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

*BlindSpot*, book by Banaji, Greenwald, Martin

Rhonda Magee - How Mindfulness Can Defeat Racial Bias:

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_mindfulness\\_can\\_defeat\\_racial\\_bias](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_mindfulness_can_defeat_racial_bias)

Lueke & Gibson, "Mindfulness Meditation Reduces Implicit Age and Race Bias"



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Black Lives Matter - Healing Justice Toolkit

IMTA - International Mindfulness Teachers Association

UCLA, MARC - the Mindful Facilitator Teacher Training Program

Public health dissemination and implementation science tools/frameworks

Cohen's Perceived Stress Survey (PSS):

<http://www.mindgarden.com/documents/PerceivedStressScale.pdf>

Work Limitations Questionnaire (WLQ)

Mindful Education Resources: [in.mcpasd.k12.wi.us/mindful/](http://in.mcpasd.k12.wi.us/mindful/)

AMRA: [goamra.org](http://goamra.org)

*Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness*, book by Treleaven

Work on Unconscious Bias: <https://www.bemoreamerica.org/>

## For More Information:

Mindful Leader

[www.mindfulleader.org](http://www.mindfulleader.org)

The Garrison Institute

[www.garrisoninstitute.org](http://www.garrisoninstitute.org)



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# Sample images & graphics to create interest around activity

Images provided following this page, but links are provided below for ease of use.

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-quotes>

<http://goodthinkinc.com/memes/>



# FOCUS

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FOCUS ON THE MEANING IN THE WORK YOU DO. FOCUS ON THE WAYS IN WHICH YOUR BEHAVIOR MATTERS, ON THE POSITIVE CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR IN YOUR LIFE.

MICHELLE GIELAN

#BroadcastHappiness

# FLIP IT

INSTEAD OF ASKING  
"SO WHAT DO YOU DO?"  
TRY ASKING,  
"WHAT'S ONE THING THAT  
YOU'RE EXCITED ABOUT  
RIGHT NOW?"

MICHELLE GIELAN

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The greatest predictor of success and happiness at work is social support. And the greatest way to increase social support is to provide it to others.

**SHAWN ACHOR**