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The Spiritual Business: Breathing Life into the Body, Mind, and Spirit of Organizations

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The Spiritual Business: Breathing Life into the Body, Mind, and Spirit of Organizations

Abstract

Spirituality and business are generally thought to be in opposition. Spirituality is considered private, sacred, unbounded, and religious in nature. Business, on the other hand, is thought to be practical, contained, and at times cut-throat. However, spiritual practices like yoga and meditation have shown positive benefits for employees and organizations. In this paper, I will be defining "the spiritual business" and utilizing the definition of spirituality to give insight into how businesses may overlap management and leadership training with spiritual principles. Spirituality, coming from the Latin word *spiritus*, is defined as that which breathes life into living systems. In this paper, we will use this definition to explore how spiritual practices not only breathe life into individual living systems, but also, breathe life into larger living systems like organizations. Yoga and mindfulness are ancient techniques that provide frameworks for how to most effectively generate sustainable energy for individuals. We will apply these same frameworks to show how organizations can effectively breathe life into employees and the entirety of the organization. We will look closely at the benefits of yoga, the research on mindfulness, and the effectiveness of appreciative inquiry for creating a sense of life for whole system flourishing. Utilizing the analogy that a healthy human is made of a vibrant body, mind, and spirit, the spiritual business aims to breathe life into the body, mind, and spirit of an organization.

The Spiritual Business: Breathing Life into the Body, Mind, and Spirit of Organizations

Henry Richardson

University of Pennsylvania

A Capstone Project Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

Advisor: Meghan Keener Opp, MAPP

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Spirituality and business are generally thought to be in opposition. Spirituality is considered private, sacred, unbounded, and religious in nature. Business, on the other hand, is thought to be practical, contained, and at times cut-throat. However, spiritual practices like yoga and meditation have shown positive benefits for employees and organizations. In this paper, I will be defining "the spiritual business" and utilizing the definition of spirituality to give insight into how businesses may overlap management and leadership training with spiritual principles. Spirituality, coming from the Latin word *spiritus*, is defined as that which breathes life into living systems. In this paper, we will use this definition to explore how spiritual practices not only breathe life into individual living systems, but also, breathe life into larger living systems like organizations. Yoga and mindfulness are ancient techniques that provide frameworks for how to most effectively generate sustainable energy for individuals. We will apply these same frameworks to show how organizations can effectively breathe life into employees and the entirety of the organization. We will look closely at the benefits of yoga, the research on mindfulness, and the effectiveness of appreciative inquiry for creating a sense of life for whole system flourishing. Utilizing the analogy that a healthy human is made of a vibrant body, mind, and spirit, the spiritual business aims to breathe life into the body, mind, and spirit of an organization.

Key Words: business, mindfulness, yoga, spirituality, appreciative inquiry, positive organizational scholarship, broaden-and-build, elevation, employee well-being, team performance, organizational performance, meditation, leadership, balanced leadership.

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

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THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

Table of Contents

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

Introduction

Introduction to Positive Psychology

In 1998 Dr. Martin Seligman made the declaration that his presidency of the American Psychological Association (APA) would be focused on regaining a sense of the positive within the field of psychology (Seligman, 2002). This statement was an indirect nod of gratitude to the previous decades of psychological research that had been focused on the pathologies of psychology, and a boisterous call to present day psychologists to focus their research on well-being. This new field dubbed, "positive psychology" honed-in on positive subjective experiences, positive individual characteristics, and positive institutions and communities by bringing a strengths and virtues focus, versus correcting weaknesses (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). From here, Seligman (2002) defined positive psychology as the scientific study of what enables individuals, families, and institutions to flourish. The quest for scientifically understanding the positive aspects of the human experience thus ensued.

Looking beyond the traditional psychological framework which asks what is wrong with a given population, positive psychology instead asks what is right. The idea is that positive psychology aims to understand how focusing attention on what one *wants* versus what one does *not want* effects well-being on an individual, familial, and organizational level. Although positive psychology is often referred to as "happy psychology", this inaccurate over-generalization undermines the rich scope of work that has been developed not only since 1998 but also in previous centuries.

Meliorism

Psychologist and philosopher William James (1892) is said to have been one of the first positive psychologists, who in the late 1800's prolifically wrote about his interest in

understanding humans' orientation to a higher purpose, and how subjective experiences effect well-being (Froh, 2004). Jane Clapperton (1885), also a late nineteenth century scholar, took inspiration from William James and other philosophers through her work known as *Scientific Meliorism and the Evolution of Happiness.* Her work attempted to solidify, with a scientific lens, the term known as "meliorism". Discussed by many late nineteenth century philosophers, including William James (1892), meliorism asserts that life is neither good nor bad. Instead, meliorism implies that life can be made worth living. Thought of somewhere between pessimism and optimism, the concept of meliorism which was popularized by George Eliot (Clapperton, 1885), can be thought of as making changes for the better under the assumption that individuals or groups can voluntarily make improvements to their life through effort (James, 1892/1984).

As one might expect, living our best life is not a simple comparison of positive emotion versus negative emotion. Living our best life requires reflection (Seligman, 2002). It requires awareness, and perhaps most importantly, it requires an understanding that there are times when we must embrace both the positive and the negative for optimal flourishing (Pawelski, 2005). The division of positive and negative when it comes to human flourishing is evident when looking at two terms: *mitigative meliorism* and *constructive meliorism* (Pawelski, 2005). Also known as "red cape" thinking, *mitigative meliorism* focuses on getting less of what we don't want (Pawelski, 2005). For example, if we are wanting to fight the spread of cancer, chemotherapy would be a *mitigative* response towards getting better. We want less of the cancer, so the *mitigative* approach is fighting the cancer with chemotherapy. On the other end we have *constructive meliorism*, or "green cape" thinking, because of its focus on getting more of what we do want (Pawelski, 2014). Using the example of cancer, "green cape" thinking

would be focusing on living the lifestyle that benefits our health. Factors such as eating a healthy diet, participating in physical exercise, and focusing on positive emotions are all examples of *constructive meliorism*. Ultimately, positive psychology believes in creating a balanced approach, known as *balanced meliorism*, with the goal of creating optimal flourishing (Pawelski, 2005). This means we consciously develop our skill of both "red cape" and "green cape" thinking, known as "reversible cape" thinking, so we are able to develop a dynamic set of responses towards the dynamic world in which we live.

<div align="center">

Ancient Philosophy Meets Modern Science

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Ancient Philosophy

The study of the positive in life has had prolific underpinnings throughout history. In recent decades, humanistic psychologists Abraham Maslow (1965) and Carl Rogers (1951) focused on helping individuals realize their full potential by focusing on what modern day positive psychologists are largely focused on, human strengths (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Aristotle, Socrates, and Epicurus were all great thinkers who more than two thousand years ago questioned what it meant to live a meaningful life (McMahon, 2013). Aristotle (1985) emphasized the difference between happiness as experiencing pleasure, *hedonia,* from happiness as living well, *eudaimonia,* with the former being a feeling, and the latter describing one's character (Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2006).

For the purpose of this paper, it is important to reiterate that western cultures are not the only cultures that have explored the understanding of well-being and happiness throughout history. Indian and East Asian cultures, for example, have complete philosophies and religions that take on the questions of how to release from the bondages and suffering of life in order to live a life that is in pursuit of one's own *dharma* (duty) (Dalal & Misra, 2010). Indian sages

were greatly interested in the mysteries of life that lead to purpose and meaning (Dalal & Misra, 2010). The hymns of the Vedas, the ancient sacred Indian texts from 1500 BCE, aim to provide meaning for individuals through a connection to a divine power, through nature, and through the human mind (Dalal & Misra, 2010). This approach looks at well-being through the lens of the personal, interpersonal, and communal levels of life. Eastern traditions are generally interested in human possibility as well as progress on the level of body, mind, and spirit (Menon, 2005). This nurtured world-view of Eastern philosophy and religion, therefore derives a connectivity across all of the layers of life, and emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of living a "meaningful life".

Yoga and Well-being

Yoga, a product of the Vedic texts, is thought of as a physical methodology for improving one's health. This is a partially correct statement, because yoga is an eight-branched discipline which takes into consideration our environment, our bodies, our minds, and our spirit in the pursuit of well-being (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947). Ayurveda, the ancient form of Indian medicine found in the Vedic texts, is a dynamic model of health which looks at the interplay between the individual and their environment (Manohar, 2013). Ayurveda defines health as an outcome of a continuous evolving adaptation of the individual within the changing situations of the external environment (Manohar, 2013). "Ayus" represents life, and "veda" represents knowledge, therefore Ayurveda is the knowledge of life (Manohar, 2013). Ayurveda seeks to preserve a balance in an individual's biology and psychology based on environmental demands (Manohar, 2013). Ayurveda is similar to the eudaimonic approach to well-being because of its focus on the continued development of the individual's character.

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

PERMA

Although history has shown interest in well-being, the philosophical frameworks were not backed by scientific research. Because of this, the scientific community had not embraced the idea of well-being as something that could be understood (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Thus, in his opening address to the APA, Martin Seligman (2002), now known as the father of positive psychology, in essence, recruited the next generation of psychologists to help merge these ancient understandings with modern-day science.

In developing a model for positive psychology, Martin Seligman (2011) defines the constructs of the "meaningful life" through a well-being model known as PERMA. PERMA stands for: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). These five categories create a foundation from which we can better understand what flourishing within an individual, family, or institution looks like. The PERMA well-being theory states that well-being is increased when we maximize all five constituent elements through objective and subjective measure (Seligman, 2011). Although there are other constructs besides PERMA that measure well-being (e.g. Prilleltensky et al., 2015), the main goal of all of the positive psychology constructs for well-being is to measure and increase human flourishing.

In this paper, I will be focused on how ancient non-western frameworks, such as yoga and meditation, can be used to benefit the third pillar of Seligman's and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) positive psychology triad: positive institutions (and communities). An emerging field called positive organizational scholarship (Dutton, Glynn, & Spreitzer, 2008) examines the positive states and processes that result in optimal functioning, as well as the life-giving dynamics of organizations. According to leading positive organizational scholarship researchers

Jane Dutton, Mary Ann Glynn, and Gretchen Spreitzer (2008), there are three core components

of positive organizational scholarship: 1) a concern with flourishing; 2) a focus on developing

strengths; and 3) an emphasis on the life-giving dynamics of organizations (Dutton & Glynn,

2008). My goal in this paper is to help organizations "awaken" to using yoga and meditation to

influence these components of positive organizational scholarship. I believe this will benefit

employees, managers, leaders, clients, and even have a ripple effect into families and

communities. Defined as employees, financiers, customers, employers, and communities

(Freeman, 1994), "stakeholders within an organization" deserve to benefit from the scientific

research of positive organizational scholarship, and the "spiritual business" aims at taking a

holistic approach that sees all stakeholders of an organization flourish.

I propose that the "spiritual business" look at these three components (concern with

flourishing, character, and life-giving dynamics) of positive organizations as the "body", "mind",

and "spirit" of the organization. I will show how ancient traditions such as yoga and meditation

have existing frameworks for body, mind, and spirit flourishing that can give guidance to

businesses that want to bring more vitality to their organizations. Using the analogy that a

healthy individual is made of a healthy body, mind, and spirit, a healthy organization is made of

healthy employees, that are healthy in body, mind, and spirit. I imagine the body of an

organization comprised of a bunch of moving cells, which happen to be employees. There are

different departments acting as different processing centers or perhaps organs of the body. I will

apply a *balanced melioristic* ("reversible cape") style approach to helping organizations be there

healthiest. We will fight against ("red cape") the cancers growing within their organization and

also promote ("green cape") positive interventions that will help organizations reach optimal

functioning (Pawelski, 2005). My mission is to help breathe life into all stakeholders of an

organization through spiritual practices in an effort to redefine what business means in the 21st century.

My Spiritual Journey

I am the founder and CEO of a boutique fitness and wellness studio called DEFINE *body & mind*, with 23 retail locations all over the United States and one international location in Dubai. I have more than 15 years of experience working in the field of yoga and more than 10 years working as CEO, managing the operations, finances, marketing, and training of our organization. With stores spread out across the United States of America, I also witness the differences between management and leadership styles and their effects on business. Watching managers who treat our locations as sacred spaces and our clients like nothing is more important than their presence, has demonstrated to me that our best performing locations treat our service-based business as a spiritual process. I ask the question, "What makes one location more successful than another?" every day. In each situation, I see the answer to this question is within the managers' ability to effectively breathe life into our staff, our clients, and the local community.

My initial experiences for pinpointing the effectiveness of bringing spiritual practices to places of performance have roots from my days as a teenager. Growing up, I was a springboard and platform diver. I was an All-American, Texas State Champion, National Champion, and National Team member for U.S.A. Diving - all by the age of 17. Diving from a ten-meter platform is a sport that requires a lot of, shall I say, faith. Diving is an amazing metaphor for the importance of physically leaping with full belief that you will be caught. This belief combined with the hard-work, precision, dedication, and guidance from a coach is required to be a

successful diver. Diving forces us to find a balance of managing fears and positive self-talk in order to safely and effectively perform the dive.

I began diving at the age of 12 as a naïve swimmer, envious of a beautiful sport that was in full action at the deep-end of the swimming pool. I continued diving for the next 12 years because diving taught me that commitment could get me through some of the most challenging times, which was particularly important when, as a senior in college, I broke my lower back. This injury changed the direction of my future and brought a decade-long quest to become an Olympic diver to an end. After going through a period of denial, anger, and depression, I ultimately resurfaced with a new sense of strength. I emerged because of the life-skills diving had taught me. I was committed to regaining my sense of strength physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, so I turned to yoga - and ultimately meditation, based on a doctor's recommendation. Although the sport of diving caused my injury, it also gave me the foundation to be able to resurface stronger than before.

In 2007, I began an MBA program at Rice University. Yoga had also become a part of my daily life, and it was in my second year of the MBA program that I came to the realization that I wanted to start my own wellness organization. In 2009, I graduated from business school ready to "DEFINE my role" in this world. DEFINE *body & mind* opened in late summer of 2009, and for the past almost decade, I have been discovering how spiritual practices not only affect our body, our mind, and our spirit, but also influence the people around us, which can lead to dynamic changes within groups of people.

The Power of Words

Defining Spirituality

In the past decade, the term "spirituality" has become an attractive word or what researchers are calling a "glow-word" (Unruh, Versnel, & Kerr, 2004; Bregman, 2006). When the word is used, it is often met with positive remarks and eyes that light up (Unruh, Versnel, & Kerr, 2004). However, the meaning of "spirituality" has become very fuzzy due to its multitude of definitions. Scholars of religion often trace the word back to the groundbreaking work of William James (1892), Stanley Hall (1917), and Edwin Starbuck (1899) (Hill et al., 2000). Through the history of modern psychology, William James' (1902) "firsthand" (p. 328) experience of religion helped scholars differentiate between spiritual experiences and secondhand institutional religion that we inherit (Hill & Pargament, 2008). Although distinct, the terms religion and spirituality have evolved in recent years to the point of polarization (Hill & Pargament, 2008). Religion is seen as institutional, formal, outward, authoritarian, and inhibiting expression, while spirituality is viewed as individual, subjective, emotional, inward, and freeing expression (Koenig et al., 2001).

Although there might be truths to this bifurcation, there are also dangers to this polarization of religion and spirituality (Hill & Pargament, 2008). With over 200 papers on the subject of spirituality and religion in psychology, Kenneth Pargament (2002) warns the reader of looking at spirituality as good and religion as bad. The overlapping concepts are grounded in the idea that there are events that are set apart from the ordinary thus creating deserved veneration (Hill & Pargament, 2008). Although any definition of a construct can be debatable, attempting to define spirituality may be a fool's errand.

Professor of Religion at Temple University, Lucy Bregman defines spirituality as a non-contentious term that exists somewhere between religion and scientific psychology (Bregman, 2006). Researchers Mitroff and Denton (1999) define spirituality as, "The feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe" (p.83). Ken Pargament (1997, 1999) defines spirituality as a search for the sacred in which people discover and hold on to and transform, when necessary, whatever they hold sacred in their lives. Although I hope to shed light on a definition that will satisfy the reader, I also want to remind the reader that trends can shift the meaning of words over the years. There have been basic shifts in the meaning of spirituality over the past twenty years (Unruh, Versnel, & Kerr, 2004); therefore, it is important to keep the definition of spirituality loosely-defined. Instead, spiritual practitioners need to attend to the application of spirituality and whether or not it is succeeding in transforming (Unruh et al., 2004).

For the purpose of the spiritual business, I encourage the reader to think of spiritual as the direct translation of the word *spirit.* The Latin root for spirit is *spir,* which translates to *breathe* (Spir, 2018). Spirit, therefore, means to be infused with breath (Spirit, 2018). The word spirituality comes from the Latin word *spiritus* or *spiritualis* which is defined as an animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms (Spiritualis, 2018). We will pay particularly close attention to understanding how spiritual principles give life to individuals and consequently to the world of business.

Defining Business

Earlier, we defined stakeholders as employees, financiers, customers, employers, and communities (Freeman, 1994). Businesses are enterprises that provide value through the exchange of goods or services to a variety of stakeholders. Businesses choose their business

strategy in which they are either providing a value that is of win/win, win/loss, or loss/loss to the organization's stakeholders. Depending on the approach, businesses have free enterprise to focus on one, many, or all stakeholders when making decisions.

Making money is essential for the vitality and sustainability of business. However, it isn't the only element of what defines business. According to Whole Foods Founder John Mackey and Conscious Capitalism pioneer Raj Sisodia (2014), making money is not the only or even the most important part of business. Businesses should focus on their purpose beyond profit (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014). Purpose-based businesses inspire, engage, and energize their stakeholders (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014). This holistic approach to business will be the overarching theme of how we will define business throughout this paper.

The Paradigm Shift

According to Fahri Karakas (2009), there are more than 70 definitions of spirituality in the workplace. Similar to defining the word spirituality, there is no singular definition for spirituality used for management and leadership that has been widely accepted (Markow & Klenke, 2005). Some of these definitions include an inner consciousness (Guillory, 2000), a specific feeling that energizes action (Dehler & Welsh, 1994), access to a sacred force that impels life (Nash & McLennan, 2001), or a process of self-enlightenment (Barnett et al., 2000). These definitions might satisfy some. However, many readers will see the same issues with defining the spiritual business as we saw defining spirituality. Here there are perhaps additional issues, in that one might assume the business is aligning itself with a particular faith. Or perhaps, that a business is trying to manipulate spirituality as a way to exploit spiritual principles as a commodity, versus a tool for enriching the stakeholders of the organization. For the purpose of this paper, we take inspiration from Fahri Karakas' (2009) definition of spirituality in the

workplace and say that spirituality is an *inclusive, non-denominational, private and universal human experience* rather than a set of beliefs, rituals, or practices of a specific religion or tradition.

Some of the titles that emerge when you google "spiritual business" are: *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America* (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), *Liberating the Corporate Soul* (Barrett, 1998), and *Leading with Soul* (Bolman & Deal, 1995). Companies like Google, Whole Foods, Nike, Goldman Sachs, and Apple are among a growing number of companies that have started incorporating spiritual practices such as mindfulness into their work settings (Gelles, 2015).

Mindfulness has been openly embraced by many organizations because it helps to curb the effects of stress (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). In David Gelles' (2015) book, *Mindful Work*, he states that highly stressed employees cost companies an extra $2,000 per year in healthcare in comparison to less-stressed peers. He further states that as mindfulness programs ramp up, health care costs are falling roughly seven percent. Health care giant Aetna partnered with Duke University School of Medicine and found that one hour of yoga a week over the course of a year decreased stress levels and showed productivity gains that were roughly $3,000 per employee, creating an eleven-to-one return on investment (Gelles, 2015).

There have been a number of scholars that have mentioned a "paradigm shift", or a shift in the predominant practices, of management theory and other organizational sciences over the past few decades (Capra, 1996; Giacalone & Dafna, 2000; Dutton, 2003; Harman & Hormann, 1990; Ray et al., 1993; Wheatley, 1992). This shift has included a shift from fear-based approaches to those engendering trust and empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988); from transactional leadership to transformational leadership (House & Shamir, 1993); and from closed systems to complex adaptive systems (Dooley, 1997). The overarching theme of the paradigm

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

shift is that organizations are shifting away from a purely economic focus to a balance of profits,

quality of life, spirituality, and social responsibility focus (DeFoore & Renesch, 1995). The late

Robert William Fogel, the Nobel Prize-winning economist from University of Chicago wrote

that we are in the middle of a "fourth great awakening" in which "spiritual" concerns like

purpose, knowledge, and community over "material" interests like money and consumer goods is

taking place (Smith, 2017).

Because of this shift, we have seen organizations experiment and utilize a variety of ways

of balancing work and family through flexible work arrangements (Gottlieb et al., 1998) and

telecommuting (Kugelmass, 1995). Work environments are aiming to be mind-enriching, heart-

fulfilling, and spirit-growing for employees, while still sustaining the financial outcomes that

businesses are aimed at accomplishing (Cotton, 1993). This new paradigm shift that is still

emerging has been called the "spirituality movement" of business (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Researchers from University of Nebraska, Ashmos and Duchon (2000), describe this movement

as an organization's shift to allow the concept of meaning, purpose, and a sense of community to

enter into their business. Are businesses ready to see a shift in leadership and management

practices that is life-giving?

The Spiritual Business

The spiritual business is one that recognizes the positive impact business practices can

have on the life, vitality, and well-being of an individual, an organization, as well as in the

community and society. Not only can business help be a part of diminishing the current levels of

stress experienced by modern-day work life, but it can also shift the focus to the positive, or life-

giving components, such as helping employees feel the physical benefits of increased health

through yoga and exercise, feel the mental benefits of life-giving practices such as mindfulness,

and receive the spiritual benefits of life-giving practices such as fostering social bonds within the

work place to further a sense of meaning and purpose for individuals and teams (Dent, Higgins,

& Wharff, 2005).

I define the "Spiritual Business" as: an organization that utilizes spiritual principles to breathe life into its employees, customers, and surrounding community. Through this,

there is a heightened awareness of the systems and procedures used to conduct business that

brings life-giving practices to all stakeholders. Breath is the life-force of our individual system,

and we will utilize this knowledge to bring life-giving energy to organizations.

Expansion and Contraction

An Analogy of Expansion and Contraction

Utilizing the definition of spirituality as being that which breathes life into systems is

more than a metaphor. Breathing is an integral part of many health and well-being practices,

including many Indo-Tibetan spiritual traditions and practices (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009). Breath

work is also well-researched for its health benefits in the West (Wood, 1993). Known as

pranayama, the Sanskrit term for the conscious practice of breathing, this breathing form

translates as the "life force" of our body, mind, and spirit (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009). In Sanskrit

prana = vital energy; ayama = to expand (Wood, 1993). Therefore, pranayama is an expansion

of vital energy. As a yoga instructor, I am reminded daily by the students I work with that

breathing is often overlooked in a western yoga practice. We see yoga as a physical practice,

giving more focus to the body versus the body, mind, spirit connection. However, it is when we

bring awareness to the full cycle of each breath, the expansion and the contraction, in every

posture that we enhance the physical benefits and integrate body, mind, and spirit.

According to research from University of Oxford (Wood, 1993), pranayama produced a significantly greater perception of increased mental and physical energy than visualization and relaxation amongst a group of University employees. The group consisted of 40 women and 31 men with a mean of 50 years old and an age range of 21-76. Participants were separated into three groups, 1) pranayama, 2) visualization, and 3) relaxation. Each group completed a total of six sessions: two sessions of pranayama, two sessions of visualization, and two sessions of relaxation where each session was lead by a professional.

The research resulted in both the pranayama and the relaxation groups having significantly more enthusiastic participants compared to visualization (Wood, 1993). Both relaxation and visualization made the participants feel sluggish compared to the pranayama group, and the pranayama group had the highest correlation of mental and physical energy, alertness, and enthusiasm (Wood, 1993). The researchers also noted that the results supported their hypothesis that the physically active intervention would have the greatest influence on energy and positive affect. Pranayama was, therefore, an excellent tool to invigorate participants in a short period of time, with a wide diverse group of people, in a relatively simple manner (Wood, 1993).

I am not necessarily advocating that companies participate in pranayama exercises. Although I do advocate the use of pranayama to produce an enhancement of health and well-being within individuals and groups, I recognize that it may not be appropriate for certain company cultures to participate in breathing practices. My goal is for organizations to ask where they can breathe more life or inspiration into the organization as a whole. In making the connection that expansion and contraction represents a full cycle of life-giving practices, we must ask ourselves if our organization is balanced between both states. **Are we creating an**

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

environment of expansion (innovation, creativity, progress, growth, open dialogue on processes) or are we focusing too much on contraction (policies, deadlines, procedures, top-down feedback)? Both the expansion and the contraction play an integral role in the strengthening process, whether it be for the human body, or for an organization. We simply need to bring awareness to making sure we are balancing both.

If the inhale is the process of opening, broadening, and receiving for our bodies and our minds, then the inhale can be thought of as the "green-cape", the *constructive melioristic,* the promotion of positivity, in our approach for breathing life into our experiences. Barbara Fredrickson's (2009) theory of Broaden-and-Build states that as we engage with positive emotion, we broaden our experience to more positive emotions. From here, we build upon our individual resources which creates an upward spiral of positivity (Fredrickson, 2009). This broadening effect results from consciously encouraging stakeholders to tap into a wide array of possibilities for increasing positive emotion.

One example I like to use at DEFINE body & mind is starting each team meeting with a client testimonial. As our company continues to grow, we also continue to focus on policies, procedures, rubrics, and standardization of our services. Although this has been an extremely important part of our growth, it doesn't go without its challenges. Over recent years, I noticed that staff members were feeling more burnt out than prior years. Although our jobs are filled with purpose, we have intentionally increased positive emotions through play at work (Lepper & Greene, 1975) and the use of client testimonials to remind staff members of the meaningful work they are practicing.

Conversely, as we exhale, we are contracting through the process of releasing, disposing that which is no longer needed within our body. In yoga, we are able to get deeper into the pose

through the exhale. The exhale in this analogy is the "red-cape" or the *mitigative melioristic* approach that is focused on getting rid of that which does not serve our staff, organization, or mission. At DEFINE, we are in growth phase, and there is a tension between productivity and self-care. Knowing that increased well-being of our staff members results in happier clients, we have had to use "red-cape" strategies to fight against the idea that self-care means "slowing down". We have developed workshops and trainings that are centered around listening to our body and mind. By taking a moment to "slow down", we can gain the insight needed to move faster when we are ready.

The most important note of this process is that it is a full cycle. If I were to ask you which is more important - the inhale or the exhale - it would be impossible to respond, since both are equally important processes within the same cycle. Expanding and contracting through breath serves both the individual as well as the organization. Both the inhale (expansion) and the exhale (contraction) represent the *balanced meliorism* that is at the core of positive psychology. Breathing life into the stakeholders of an organization, therefore, is about understanding how to empower stakeholders to flourish, whether they are in a state of expansion or contraction. Balancing both "red-cape" and "green-cape" strategies will therefore be helpful to fulfill the goal of the spiritual business, which is to breathe life into the body, mind, and spirit of the organization.

Expansion and Contraction in Business

Just like the breath is in a constant flow from expansion to contraction, businesses innately understand this process as a part of growth, and recognize that it is part of becoming a stronger business. In their seminal book from 1946, Arthur Burns and Wesley Mitchel describe their research on business cycles as an essential topic to understand when running a business.

They defined a business cycle as a type of fluctuation that is found in the aggregate economic activity of all nations that consists of expansions that occur with economic activities, followed by similar contractions which emerge into the next phase of expansion (Burns & Mitchell, 1946). This definition, which is still in use today, reflects the natural cycle of expanding and contracting of living systems like organizations. However, a major component of identifying a definition for this process is now asking business leaders to gain awareness of whether they are in an expansion or contraction phase. An even better question is to ask *which practices* are generating expansion, and which are generating contraction. Is there a balance? Is this causing the organization to flourish? Or perhaps there is too much contraction, causing individuals, teams, or perhaps the organization to suffocate.

Expansion and Contraction in Nature

Author and entrepreneur, John Hope Bryant (2010), states that times of contraction, the times of loss, and the times of a downturn are when leaders have a chance to be created. One example of this is to think of the human body and how we increase muscular strength. In the process of strengthening our biceps, for example, we go through a series of biceps curls where we contract and expand the muscle breaking down the muscle fibers and bringing new circulation into the muscle. After the workout, the body repairs where the muscles have been damaged. Through a cellular process, the muscle fibers fuse together to form new muscle proteins which increase the size and number of the muscle fibers creating muscle hypertrophy or growth (Leyva, 2017). The person experiences strength from both the expansion and the contraction called - eccentric and concentric movement - which also helps to create better functionality of the muscle. Although this cycle of expanding and contracting seems easy to understand in the body when exercising, when the cycle of expansion and contraction occurs

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

within an organization, feelings such as fear, repression, exclusion, anger, entitlement, cynicism, closed fists, and coldness (Bryant, 2010) can often emerge.

Because we are a service-based organization at DEFINE, my main job is control the quality of our services. However, the word quality-control doesn't necessarily lend itself towards a feeling of bringing "life" to our staff members. Because of this, we have developed a set of six pillars that help us to "define" what it means to interact with clients. The six pillars of DEFINE are: D – determination of spirit, E – empowerment of mind, F – fun in all things, I – intuition of body, N – noticeable presence, and E – excellence in service. We see these six pillars as bringing structure to our organization's values yet also offering the freedom of expression for each individual to fluidly navigate what it means to exceed our clients' expectations.

This broadening and then narrowing process is also a similar process we see in nature. Well-documented by researchers, a natural phenomenon known as the heliotropic effect explains how flowers are drawn to and expand towards the direction of the sun (D'Amato & Jagoda, 1962). Conversely, they close off, or contract, once the sun is no longer in sight. This implies that living systems naturally expand towards life-giving phenomena, in this case the sun. We also see this cycle of expansion and contraction seasonally through spring and summer harvests to winter hibernation. We also must recognize that valuing both the expansion and contraction are a part of this life-giving process. In our example of the sunflower expanding its petals towards the sun, it can be said that too much of anything good, such as the sun, is no longer good for the organism. Flourishing in nature is embracing both the expansion and the contraction.

This echoing of *balanced meliorism* through "red-cape" and "green-cape" interventions for all living systems is once again an integral element to the flourishing process. Within

organizations, we must look at how we can help effectively create the sense of *balanced meliorism*. The spiritual business gains awareness by constantly making sure that it is creating this sense of balanced meliorism for all stakeholders. This requires the organization to think of itself as a whole unit versus a separate system of individual parts.

Non-Duality and Love

Non-Dualism

Sanskrit, known to be one of the world's oldest languages, has a word, "advaita" which translates into English as "not-two". The early 8th century scholar, Adi Shankara, is said to have revived the word advaita in India by teaching the concept of dualism, the misperception of self versus the reality of the Divine within (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947). Buddhism, Vedanta, and Taoism all speak of non-duality (Loy, 2012), while Christianity, Judaism, Islam speak of atonement (Aulen, 2003). Although this paper is not focused on a comparative approach to the words duality and atonement, for the sake of this paper, we will use both non-dualism/non-duality and atonement interchangeably. Atonement can be thought of as the "at-one-ment" of the human experience to a divine connection, and non-duality represents a singular connection to the universal or Divine nature. According to Shankara, our reality is not-two, but a euphoric sense of oneness that is lost through our identification with ego and fear (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947).

In the spiritual book A *Course in Miracles* (Kolosov, 1976), it is stated that we have a false identification with fear versus our true nature of Divine love. In order to correct this, we must actively correct the misperception of reality by connecting to the love of God's presence. Known as the "Course", A Course in Miracles poignantly states that, nothing real can be

threatened while nothing unreal exists. Non-dualism in practical terms, is therefore summarized as *actions* that have true **love** as their *intention* towards another being.

I see non-dualism as the foundation for the "spiritual business". I have gone into detail about "red-cape" and "green-cape", expansion and contraction, all to show that the *balanced melioristic* approach, which we stated was "reversible-cape" thinking, is taking the best option that creates actions that leads toward a unification, a win/win, a sense of love for all stakeholders. By taking this balanced approach, businesses can start to recognize that the best way towards balanced meliorism is through techniques that strategically help build a sense of awareness of body, mind, and spirit across all levels of the organization. The spiritual business aims to use yoga to train the bodies, mindfulness/meditation to train the minds, and Appreciative Inquiry (Coopperrider, 2008) to train the spirit of the organization and its stakeholders.

Love

As any yogi knows, the way to body, mind, and spirit integration is through the act of love. If you are asking yourself - where does **love** fit into the dog eat dog, fear based world of business - be reminded of the many definitions of love that exist. One such term, *agape,* represents a feeling and an expression of love towards others that is a love for your neighbor, a love that means treating others as you would want to be treated (Templeton, 1999; Bryant, 2010). Love does not mean we need to admire each person, or even weaken ourselves to those who, for example, commit legal crimes against us (Templeton, 1999). On the contrary, agape is a strong unifying force that helps us see the humanity in others, clarifying our motivations and our goals to make better decisions, even if that means pursuing legal action.

Other definitions of love include the ancient Indian language of various Hindu text Pali's word, *saddha* which literally translates as "to place the heart open." (Fredrickson, 2013). Love

can also be the Buddhist notion of being willing to launch a journey with an active and open-hearted state that makes us willing to explore (Fredrickson, 2013). Or perhaps, as George Vaillant (2009), the Harvard psychiatrist, states, "Love is the shortest definition of spirituality I know."(pg. 16). Regardless of the definition, love is a binding force that connects body, mind, and spirit. Taking inspiration from George Vaillant (2009), the spiritual business applies this sense of love as a spiritual process because we know it makes good business sense to do so.

Love & The Spiritual Business

Marc Gafni (2012), the director of the Center for World Spirituality, states that the world of business is on its way to be a great cathedral of spirit. Businesses are places where meaning can be created, and the lessons of the great spiritual traditions (intimacy, trust, shared vision, cooperation, collaboration, friendship, and love) can be carried out (Gafni, 2012). Gafni (2012) further states that love is essentially moving toward higher states of unity and embrace. Although most corporate cultures don't value love (Gafni, 2012), there is a need for role models who are fully integrated beings, loving, as well as strong, who can show that there need not be a contradiction between these two characteristics (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014).

This intentional use of the word love helps draw attention to examples of humans that have showcased a positive deviance that has allowed them to stand out amongst a field of many (Dutton, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2012). Leaders like Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Mother Teresa who are great examples of bridging together the dualistic notion of being strong and loving (Macky & Sisodia, 2014). However, there are few prominent business leaders that come to mind when we think of exemplars that unite the qualities of an effective leader with that of someone who is loving and compassionate.

      Perhaps one of the more positive signs of business in today's society is a recognition of women's roles in leadership. Women are increasingly stepping into leadership roles. *Business Week* announced that women not only have the "right stuff" to lead organizations effectively, but that the future of business is dependent upon women (Heffernan, 2002). Further, it is also evident that women, on average, seem to be more comfortable with leadership styles that express care, compassion, and love (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014). Mackey and Sisodia (2014) also say that the men who are ascending to leadership positions in modern day business are the ones who appear to be most in harmony with the virtues of love, care, and compassion.

      However, Mackey and Sisodia (2014) also refer to the growth of fear as a motivator in modern-day leadership practices, rather than love. Fear, the opposite of expansion and the ultimate contraction, is said to be especially deadly for creativity (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014). To be creative, people must be in a flow state, an expanded state, which is not possible with fear (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014). Mackey and Sisodia (2014) further this exclamation of the destructiveness of fear by comparing fear and stress like a house infested with termites; it looks okay from the outside; however, it is being eaten away from the inside. As Adam Grant, Organizational Psychologist from University of Pennyslvania as well as a former springboard diver, reminds us that all of us are exposed to fear, and the outliers, or "originals" as he calls them, have a fear of not succeeding that exceeds the fear of failure (Grant, 2017). To use a springboard and platform diving analogy, the fear can ground the individual to an immediate level of respect. However, it ultimately comes down to a belief in one's ability, an expanded state of awareness, that ultimately allows the individual to succeed. The non-dualistic, or "whole business", is therefore a combination of love and strength whereas the dualistic, or fragmented,

organization has roots around trust and judgement causing people to contract and become fearful (Mackey & Sisodia, 2014).

Vedic texts speak of the importance of balancing between the masculine (Purusha-Shiva) and feminine (Prakriti-Shakti) in order to achieve the life-promoting state of balance (Lad, 1984). Masculine energy is rational, analytical, logical, and linear thinking, and feminine energy is intuitive, compassionate, creative, empathic, and spiritual (Lad, 1984). When there is an imbalance of masculine and feminine for lengthy periods of time, this leads to what Ayurveda, India's ancient form of medicine, calls *vikruti*, an imbalance that leads to disease. Positive psychology would call the non-dualistic organization an organization that has mastered *balanced meliorism*. The spiritual business framework would see this process of unification as a process of atonement - the "at-ONE-ment" - of connecting the states of expansion and contraction, "red-cape" and "green-cape", and masculine and feminine, of being "one" with love throughout the organization.

Leading with Spirituality

Many top executives already bring a sense of spirituality into their business decision making. Aaron Feuerstein (Malden Mills CEO), Max DePree (former Herman Miller Furniture CEO), John Marx Templeton (Templeton Growth Fund), James E. Burke (Johnson & Johnson), and Robert Haas (Levi Strauss & Co.) have all stated that they credit their success to their spiritual beliefs (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002). Others include Binta Niambi Brown, lawyer and senior fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School, where she credits leadership with a dying of self-interest and loving others into their true potential (Giang, 2014). There is an interesting dichotomy of openness to spirituality amongst leaders compared to the closed off implementation of spirituality in management due to the fear of how divisive this practice could

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

be perceived (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002). A very fair question in the implementation is:

"What can one do to maximize the benefits and minimize the problems of incorporating

spirituality in the workplace?" I think it is best to start this discussion by looking at some of the

key recipients of spirituality in the workplace as a way to demystify what this process looks like.

Employees

Several scholars (Rifkin, 2004; Gini, 1998), believe that workaholism is a serious

problem for many working Americans. A study conducted in 2005 found that 44 percent of the

U.S. workforce experienced overwork in just the last month (Galinsky et al., 2005), and one

could easily imagine that number has only increased since then. The level of stress that

overworking causes on the body leads to a loss of spirituality, chronic illness, fatigue, fear, and

guilt (Killinger, 2006). Spirit is the part of us that is seeking meaning and purpose (Myss, 2013).

Employees can often times confuse meaning and inner worth with external rewards, promotion,

and affluenza (Burke, 2006). Additionally, these signs of increased stress lead to higher

absenteeism, lower productivity, as well as higher health insurance costs (Karasek & Theorell,

1990). These patterns lead employees in today's workplaces to feel disconnected, lost, under-

appreciated, and insecure in their jobs (Meyer, 1997; Sparrow & Cooper, 2003). This spiritual

emptiness has caused organizations to incorporate a variety of services such meditation,

reflection, fitness, coaching, and sports as a way to cope with the increased levels of stress that

the current workforce is experiencing (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997).

There are also organizations that have incorporated spiritual practices into their

organizations which have been studied by several researchers (Reave, 2005; Emmons, 1998).

There is growing evidence from this research that shows workplace spirituality programs

increase levels of joy, serenity, job satisfaction, and commitment (Burack, 1999; Fry, 2003;

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

Giacalone & Jurkiwicz, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Paloutzian et al., 2003; Reave, 2005). Furthermore, these same programs have shown an increase in productivity as well as a reduction in absenteeism and turnover (Fry, 2003). One study found that there was a positive correlation between workplace spirituality and an employee's commitment to the organization, intrinsic work satisfaction, and job involvement (Milliman et al., 2003). One of the studies showed that management didn't need to do anything other than allow the freedom and acceptance for employees to express spirituality at work (Burack, 1999). This freedom of expression allowed employees to feel complete and authentic at their place of work (Burack, 1999). A few examples of the types of spiritual practices that these companies encouraged were yoga, multi-faith prayer sessions, and spiritual wellness and balance programs (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). The research (Kriger & Hanson, 1999) pinpointed *trust* as being the most important factors to forming the foundation of a successful spirituality in the workplace program, and that the spirituality increased the climate of trust within the workplace (Burack, 1999). These studies show initial support that spirituality in the workplace can increase the sense of morale, commitment, and productivity while at the same time decreasing stress and burnout (Karakas, 2010). Thus trust must be implemented at the level of the employee so that employees are provided with reassurance that practicing spirituality on-site is encouraged.

The Organization

On the macro-level, organizations must identify some of the key benchmarks that they would define as showcasing what a spiritual business looks like. Whether the goal is to increase employee engagement, increase the creative climate of the organization, raise the level of employee connection to the organizations mission, values, and purpose, or consciously increase the company's profits, each organization must ask where there is an opportunity for breathing

life into the organization. Organizations can do this through a process known as Appreciative

Inquiry (Coopperrider, 2008) which we will dive into deeply later in this paper. As one could

imagine, spirituality provides employees a deeper sense of meaning and purpose (Karakas,

2010). Although it has been stated that many of the organizations in the American workforce

have become increasingly spiritually barren, it has been stated that this is the result of the

Industrial Age's focus on creating wealth and putting economic goal and profitability before

social goals (Walsh et al., 2003).

In their book *Firms of Endearment,* Sisodia, Sheth, and Wolfe (2007) set out to explore

why companies were noticing an increase in utilization of resources, but they were delivering

less in terms of customer satisfaction and loyalty. In this process, they also noticed that there are

companies that have been spending less, but achieving more with marketing (Sisodia et al.,

2007). By looking at these positive outliers, Sisodia, Sheth, and Wolfe (2007) noticed that there

was a transition from material want to a "meaning want" within these companies. They termed

this transition as the "Age of Transcendence." This transition can be summarized by saying that

the assumption that material wealth automatically leads to individual and collective well-being is

in great question (Ryan & Deci, 2011). Instead, it appears people are desiring more meaning and

quality of life through their work (Cash & Gray, 2000; Wrzesniewski, 2003).

Research shows that separating work, family, life, and spirit into compartments may rip

authenticity away from employees, leaving an individual feeling stressed and alienated

(Cavanagh, 1999). Because of this, there is a saliency for satisfaction in today's workplace.

According to Renesch (1995), more than forty million people are said to be searching for more

intrinsic value in which their work and life are balanced. You can see examples of this in Silicon

Valley where companies are trying to build campuses that help integrate people's lives within

one center. There is also a trend of empowering employees through work-life integration

support such as life-coaches and supervisory support for work-life integration (Hopkins, 2005).

However, the forty million people (Renesch, 1995) aren't claiming to want to spend more time at

work. This staggering number gives rise to the thought that people's souls are seeking a deeper

meaning and deeper connection (Oldenburg, 1997).

Community and Stakeholders

Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders as a group of individual who can affect or happens

to be affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives. Further, stakeholders were

defined as employees, customers, suppliers, and society (Freeman, 1984). In looking at a

stakeholder mentality, the spiritual business takes into consideration its community and the

interconnectedness it has with each stakeholder and the planet. Spirituality is centered on the

idea that organizational members have a sense of community and connectedness, which happens

to increase their sense of attachment, loyalty, and belonging to the organization (Karakas, 2010).

Employees are in search for a sense of community as well as high quality connections (Dutton,

2003) because there is a noticeable decline of local communities, social groups, and connection

to church and family (Leigh, 1997). High quality connections (Dutton, 2003) are considered

short-term, dyadic, interactions that happen at work (Dutton, 2003). According to organizational

psychologist Jane Dutton (2003), these connections are positive with beneficial outcomes, and

can be experienced when encountering someone who expresses genuine concern for how you are

doing. This social connectedness at work is the primary source of community for many people

(Dutton, 2003).

Sisodia, Sheth, and Wolfe (2007) favor a stakeholder-focused business model as a way to

utilize a cooperative approach towards business that encourages community. In firms that had a

stakeholder focus, Sisodia, Sheth, and Wolfe (2007) noticed that these firms had returns eight

times that of the S&P 500 over a 10-year period from 1996 to 2007. Perhaps even more

convincing, these same firms when looked at including the years 2007-2009, known as the

"Great Recession", beat the S&P 500 by 14:1, which suggests that stakeholder-focused and

seemingly "virtuous" companies may also have more resilience. These firms have inspired a

movement called "Conscious Capitalism" (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013), which describes the idea of

consciousness within a workplace as creating value, the innate definition of business, through

elevating all stakeholders in the process of conducting business.

There is an overlap of conscious capitalism (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013) and the spiritual

business in that they are both wanting to help galvanize a higher sense of purpose and meaning

not only for the employees, but also for the entire organization (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013).

Companies like Tesla attract employees who are passionate about renewable energy not only in

the products they build, but in services, like planting trees for every car they sell, to help offset

the carbon emissions used to manufacture the cars (Green, 2012). At DEFINE we offer donation

classes where we raise funds for a variety of the different causes our instructors are passionate

about.

Additionally, conscious businesses have conscious leaders that are dedicated to the

company's mission, the people who interact with the company, and the planet that we all reside

(Mackey & Sisodia, 2013). Similar to spirituality, a conscious business aims to create financial,

intellectual, social, cultural, emotional, spiritual, physical, and ecological wealth for all their

stakeholders. However, the spiritual business emphasizes the role that spirituality has on

elevating individuals and societies. We will look at specific techniques that businesses can

incorporate into the workplace as a way to create a unification of employees, the organization, and community and stakeholders.

The Body, Mind, and Spirit of Business

Yoga and Vedic philosophy believe there are three main layers to our existence: the body, known as the *physical body*, the mind, known as the *subtle body*, and the spirit, known as the *causal body* (Chopra, 2004). Ayurveda, translated as the *science of life,* believes that the purpose of the 8 branches of yoga is to find the unity within the diversity of our multidimensionality (Chopra, 2004). The goal of yoga is to unify the layers of our existence, the body, mind, and spirit, as one unit that is energized by the practice of love. The science of Ayurveda then asks the very simple questions: what is contributing to this unification, and what is creating a barrier? Ayurveda looks for answers to these questions by looking at our environment, our cellular health, our actions, our thoughts, and even our spirit. This ancient system teaches us that man is a microcosm, a universe within himself designed to have happiness, health, and creative growth (Lad, 1984). The mission is to help individuals achieve subjective balance by bringing life and *prana* or energy, into the cells of the individual (Lad, 1984). Continuing the analogy that humans are made of a body, mind, and spirit, organizations are also made of body, mind, and spirits. There are practices that help the physical body flourish, and the spiritual business aims at incorporating body, mind, and spirit techniques to help individuals and the organization flourish.

We will look at the *physical body,* looking at ways in which yoga and exercise can become parts of the culture within an organization in an effort to establish healthy routines that diminish the negative side effects of stress. We will also look at the *subtle body* or mind of the organization which is centered around the ethos of the organization. We will explore

mindfulness (Wolever, Bobinet, McCabe, Mackenzie, Fekete, Kusnick, & Baime, 2012). And finally, we will explore the *causal body* or spirit of the organization by understanding the Appreciative Inquiry process (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008) to help organizations reconnect to the company's strengths, purpose and meaning for the company as well as the surrounding community in which the company is located.

Physical Body (Body)

According to Ayurvedic Doctor Vasant Lad (1984), western medicine tends to think in generalizations and categories, versus thinking about individuals. In the west, the concept of normality is that which is common in a majority of people (Lad, 1984). Ayurveda and most eastern philosophies hold that normal must be evaluated on an individual basis (Lad, 1984). The East places its value on experience and observation, which creates the principle of a holistic approach to well-being - which can be thought of as the sum of many elements to comprise the Truth (Lad, 1984). In the quest for the spiritual business to bring life and energy into all of the stakeholders within an organization, we will take inspiration from this Eastern mindset by looking at organizations on an individual and holistic level. We will do this by identifying the natural strengths of each individual and the organization as a whole in order to most effectively breathe life into the organization. We will look at each organization and the layers that exist within it. For the purpose of this paper we will categorize the three layers of business similar to that of our human existence as: a body, a mind, and a spirit.

The body of the organization can be thought of as a combination of all of the genes, cells, and DNA that makes up an organization's structure. Like the human body, organizations require healthy and vibrant cells in order to express healthy DNA. Businesses already talk about the "DNA" of an organization. Titles such as *Decoding the DNA of the Toyota Production System*

(Spear & Bowen, 1999)*, The Innovator's DNA* (Dyer, Gregersen & Christensen, 2011)*, and The*

DNA of Leadership (Glaser, 2007) are all examples of how organizations already buy-in to

seeing specific characteristics or qualities as being positive for the structure of organization. We

will classify the cellular health of an organization as the health of the employees, the true cells of

the organization.

In recent years there have been numerous studies surrounding the understanding of

healthy DNA within the human body and the adverse effects stress can have on an individual's

health. One of these key areas of research is centered around what is known as telomeres (Epel,

Blckburn, Lin, Dhabhar, Adler, Morrow, & Cawthon, 2004). Telomeres, DNA, and protein

compounds that are found in the body, are located at the end of chromosomes. Telomeres

protect the end of the chromosomes and help them to remain stable, similar to how the plastic

cap of a shoelace keeps the shoelace from unraveling (Chopra, 2004). As the telomeres weaken,

the structural integrity of the chromosome becomes weaker, causing the cells to shrink, age, and

eventually die (Cawthon, Smith, O'Brien, Sivatchenko, & Kerber, 2003). What causes the

telomere to weaken is chronic stress which, at the cellular level can promote the early onset of

age-related diseases (Epel et al., 2004). The spiritual business has a goal of creating stress

management programs to help build a sense of flourishing on this employee/cellular level.

The growing trend of people becoming more aware of the physical benefits of exercise

allows for more individuals to understand some of the other benefits that exercise produces,

specifically for the brain. According to Dr. J. Blumenthal (1999), physical exercise can be

equally if not more effective than Zoloft for helping treat depression. A group of 83 participants

were divided into three different groups. Each participant completed the HAM-D, Hamilton

Rating Scale for Depression and the BDI, Beck Depression Inventory, prior to their treatment

plans. The first group was given medication for their treatment plan. The second group was

given exercise, and the third group was given a combination of exercise and medication

(Blumenthal, 1999). The two groups that were assigned exercise completed supervised exercise

sessions each week for a total of 16 weeks, or four months. The participants who exercised were

asked to do 30 minutes of continuous movement, cycling, brisk walking, and jogging at 70-85%

intensity. The observed mean depression score before and after the treatments were statistically

significant for all three groups (P<.001 for all) (Blumenthal, 1999). The same groups were given

a clinical status six months after treatment, for a total of 10 months of treatment, where it was

discovered that both groups who were given the exercise control were more likely to be partially

or fully recovered and less likely to have a relapse (Blumenthal, 1999).

Neuropsychiatrist John Ratey (2008) has conducted research suggesting that the best way

to improve upon the fluctuations in hormonal changes due to stress as well as the potential onset

of depression due to high levels of stress is through establishing a routine in exercise. He

suggests four days a week of either jogging, briskly walking, playing tennis or any activity that

elevates the pulse up to 60 to 65% of your maximum heart rate for up to an hour. (Ratey, 2008).

Ratey (2008) further states that the real reason we feel so good when we have a steady exercise

routine is because we are moving oxygen to help make the brain function at its best. He further

states that the reason to exercise is to build and condition the brain (Ratey, 2008).

Traditionally, the goal of a yoga practice is to create a sense of union of body, mind, and

spirit. This union can be thought of as a process of reconnecting to the Divine sense of love that

is within each individual (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947). According to the Vedic texts,

there are *layers* that mask our ability to see the true Divine nature within each of us and these

layers are called *koshas* (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947). Koshas are translated as

"coverings" that create a veil of illusion blocking our true nature from emerging. These coverings happen on three main levels: body, mind, and spirit (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947). The way in which these layers get created is through the experience of stress. Our bodies respond to stress as either fight or flight, which causes a contraction, therefore creating a deviation from our true nature.

Hans Selye (1936) first introduced the term "stress", a word derived from the latin word *stringere,* into life science when describing the complex, dynamic process of interaction between a person and their life. *Stringere* is translated as to be drawn tight (Deshpande, 2012) and can be categorized as either distress or eustress. Distress is the degree of psychological, physiological, and behavioral deviation from functioning that is healthful, whereas, eustress is the experience of stress that motivates people to achieve their goals, change their environment, or take steps to learn from life's challenges (Deshpande, 2012). In work settings, it is common for employees to reference a feeling of stress, which is more commonly called job stress (Deshpande, 2012). Job stress is seen as harmful physical and emotional responses that lead to poor health and possibly injuries (Sauter et al, 1999). Job stress also leads to weak productivity of the individual as well as the organization in the form of lowered team morale (Bhattacharjee, 2009).

To better illustrate the balance of distress and eustress, Yerkes and Dodson (1908) developed an empirical relationship between arousal and performance. When levels of arousal are too low, boredom and sluggishness are prevalent. When levels of physical and mental arousal rise to a certain point, performance increases. However at a certain point, when arousal becomes too high, performance decreases. This relationship is illustrated in the inverted-U or bell-shaped curve, which shows the increasing level of performance up to a certain point with the diminishing performance thereafter. This relationship of optimal performance is said to be

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

unique for each individual (Yerkes and Dodson, 1908), however, there are certain causes and

consequences of workplace stress that are universal.

According to Deshpande (2012) there are three main stressors that enter into work: 1)

work related stressors, 2) non-work stressors, and 3) individual differences. Due to these

stressors, there are physical, psychological, and behavioral consequences. See *Figure 1*.

Because of the negative consequences that too much stress can have on an individual and the

organization, businesses have it in their best interest to arrange Stress Management Programs

that incorporate physical movement such as exercise or yoga to help focus on an employee's

unique needs.

Causes		Consequences of distress
1) Work related stressors: • Inter-personal stressors • Role related stressors • Task control stressors • Organizational-physical environment stressors	S T	1) Physiological • Heart diseases • Ulcers • High blood pressure • Head aches • Sleep disturbances • Increased illness
2) Non-work stressors: • Time-based • Strain based • Role based conflict	R E	2) Psychological: • Job Dis-satisfaction • Low commitment • Exhaustion • Depression • Moodiness • Burnout
3) Individual Differences : • Personal health • Knowledge-skill • Coping skills • Resilience work holism.	S S	3) Behavioral : • Low job performance • More accidents • Faulty decisions • Higher absenteeism • Workplace aggression • Turnover/Absenteeism

Figure1: Deshpande, R. (2012). A healthy way to handle work place stress through Yoga, Meditation and Soothing Humor. *International Journal of Environmental Sciences, 2 (4)* 2143-2154.

One stress coping systems that has been studied for its effectiveness of reducing the physiological impacts that stress can have on the body which has grown in popularity over the years is the practice of yoga. In 2008, approximately 80 million Americans did some form of yoga over the course of a year (Ratey, 2008). From my professional experience, and knowing how many new yoga studios are opening each year, that number has steadily increased over the past decade. Additionally, 75% of people that are practicing yoga also engage in other physical activities such as cycling, weight lifting, or running (Ratey, 2008). Yoga is one of the foundations of Indian philosophy that has been used for millennia to deal with the complexity of our human existence (Feuerstein, 1998). Yoga has also been shown to improve resiliency to stress in workplace settings by helping employees create constructive responses to stress when individuals are faced with pressure to achieve specific outcomes (Hartfiel, Havenhand, Khalsa, Clarke, & Krayer, 2011). Working in a yoga business, I experience that moving the body is like creating a release valve for the pinned up pressure that we experience from staring at computer screens, sitting in meetings, and dealing with co-worker stress. Yoga melts away all of that stress and tension.

One particular study looked at a group of 48 university employees who were randomly placed into a yoga intervention group or a wait-list control group (Hartfiel et al., 2011). Twenty-four participants were placed in each group, where the 24 participants in the yoga control group were asked to participate in at least one of three sixty-minute lunchtime classes per week for a total of six weeks (Hartfiel et al., 2011). Each class consisted of flowing movements, directed breathing, and relaxation techniques that included visualization and affirmation exercises. The researchers selected to measure well-being and resiliency to stress by utilizing the Profile of

Mood States Bipolar (POMS-Bi) as well as the Inventory of Positive Psychological Attitudes (IPPA).

In both groups, the majority of participants had practiced yoga rarely or never. Eighty percent in the yoga group and 85% in the control group stated that they rarely or never practiced yoga. The remaining percentage said they practice yoga less than once per week (Hartfiel et al., 2011). Participants in the yoga group attended on average roughly 1.15 classes per week, and the results were interesting. The individuals who attended the yoga classes showed a significant difference compared to the control group in feeling less anxious, confused, depressed, tired, and unsure. The yoga group also showed a greater sense of life purpose and satisfaction and reported feeling more self-confident in stressful situations (Hartfiel et al., 2011).

Although the number of studies utilizing yoga in the workplace aren't as abundant as the effectiveness of yoga in other environments, yoga has shown similar effects in other groups. In another study by Lavey, Sherman, Mueser, Osborne, Currier, and Wolfe (2005), these researchers found that even a single yoga class had a statistically significant effect on improving the mood of 113 psychiatric inpatients. After one class patients were significantly less tense, anxious, hostile, and confused. They also demonstrated less fatigue (Lavey et al., 2005). Another study of 24 emotionally distressed females also reported to have less depression/anxiety over the control group that did not practice yoga (Michalsen et al., 2005). At DEFINE, I am lucky to experience the daily message of what movement and yoga can do for the body and mind of our clients. Clients of every age, every fitness level, and gender walk into our studio one way, and leave feeling transformed in some way.

Eastern and western philosophies are often said to be opposed in that the Eastern traditions value acceptance and collectivism while the West focuses on striving and

individualism (Haidt, 2006). As any leader knows, the collective is stronger than the individual.

It is my opinion that yoga in the workplace can be a joining agent of eastern and western

principles to help breathe life into the cells/physical bodies/employees of organizations. Because

yoga is done in a social setting yet also founded on the principle of self-awareness, yoga has the

ability to collectively bond groups while also helping individuals discover personal truths.

Martin Seligman's (2011) PERMA model appears to be directly in-line with the

experiences that happen within a yoga class: P-positive emotions, E-engagement, R-

relationships, M-meaning, A-accomplishment. In looking at a yoga class experience, you can

see PERMA within the hour of taking a class. Positive emotion – the experience of moving your

body and building endorphins for a better day. Engagement – the attentiveness on breath, the

asanas (physical postures), and on the instructor's words. Relationships – participating in a

group activity where you take inspiration from the people around you. Meaning – having an

instructor asking you to set your intention on why you want to be healthier, and for whom do you

want to be healthier. Accomplishment – spending the last several minutes of class in your

savasana (final resting pose), relaxing on your back, reflecting on all that you have accomplished

in the hour, while experiencing a sense of gratitude for showing up and preparing your body,

mind and spirit for a better day. PERMA is at the heart of every yoga class, and corporate yoga

programs can incorporate the knowledge of PERMA into yoga as a way of creating more

measurement of the benefits of yoga beyond the physical body.

By integrating western science of exercise with an Eastern application of yoga,

organizations can further the mission of helping individuals, groups, and institutions flourish. As

a long-time practitioner of yoga, I have seen yoga build relationships, promote inner strength,

improve concentration, build self-awareness, reduce anxiety, change people's food and nutrition

habits, and help people with their physical health all because of its non-competitive, loving, and heart-opening qualities. These qualities, in my opinion, represent the need for our society to experience a greater sense of expansion versus what feels like a more ubiquitous state of contraction. Although yoga is not a modern invention for stress management, it is an effective way to help individuals deal with the physical stress that exists from modern day work life. Each breath we take is the process of expansion. Each exhale we let out is a process of contraction. If our goal is to breathe life into the physical bodies within an organization, exercise and yoga are two research-backed activities that I cannot recommend enough to promote healthier physical bodies.

Subtle Body (Mind)

We noted that highly stressed employees are subject to greater health risks than those whose stress levels are more regulated (Hemingway & Marmot, 1999). Stress also adversely effects mental health of the organization such as poor morale, absenteeism, high staff turnover and reduced productivity (Limm, Grundel, Heinmuller, Marten-Mittag, Nater, & Siergrist, 2011). High levels of stress have also been shown to impair memory and the ability to learn (Lupien et al., 2005). The International Labor Organization has estimated that 30% of all work-related disorders are due to stress, which amounted to approximately $6.6 billion worldwide (Mino, Babazono, Tsuda, & Yasuda, 2006). Previously we looked at yoga as a powerful tool for guarding against the consequences of stress for both the body and the mind, and because different interventions may be appropriate for different organizations, we will now explore *mindfulness* as another possible tool that organizations can use to fight ("red-cape") against the symptoms that mental stress creates in an organization and help grow ("green-cape") the well-being of the individuals and the organization as a whole unit.

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

Mindfulness has experienced a surge of interest and acceptance due to the increased research and findings on its benefits (Wolever, Bobinet, McCabe, Mackenzie, Fekete, Kusnick, & Baime, 2012). Research shows that highly stressed employees incur productivity loss, and generate higher health care costs than those who are less stressed (Baime, Wolever, Pace, Morris, & Bobinet, 2011; Goetzel et al., 1998). Thus, organizations are highly motivated to lower levels of stress through evidence-based interventions. Furthermore, stress management programs need to be accessible, convenient, engaging, as well as cost effective and supported by management in order to be effective (Wolever et al., 2012).

When referring to mindfulness, we are referring to a form of meditation, a non-religious based practice of developing awareness. One form of meditation that has been extensively studied by western researchers is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). The research over the past decade has shown very favorable results in randomized controlled trials of the effectiveness of *mindfulness* meditation to: aid in coping skills, promote feelings of well-being, and produce favorable changes in physiology, such as better immune functioning (Greerson, 2009). Mindfulness meditation interventions have also resulted in a reduction of anxiety (Smith, Hancock, Blake-Mortimer, & Ecker, 2007), relief of chronic lower back pain (Sherman, Cherkin, Erro, Miglioretti, & Deyo, 2005), as well as lowered fatigue and improved energy and flexibility (Oken et al, 2006). The evidence of mind-body stress reduction interventions' effectiveness seems to be emerging in a variety of different fields, specifically in the workplace.

In four recent randomized controlled trials, workplace stress reduction programs that utilized mind-body techniques reported improvements in self-reported mood (McCraty, Atkinson, & Tomasino, 2003) and increased well-being (McCraty et al., 2003). These trials also

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

saw improvement in individuals' systolic blood pressure three months after the intervention

(McCraty et al., 2003) as well as improvements in sympathetic activation (Limm et al., 2011)

which refers to the sympathetic nervous system's ability to deal with stress more effectively. All

of the four studies were specific to workplace settings, and all of them utilized mind-body

interventions such as mindfulness meditation training.

According to researchers Brown and Ryan (2003), *mindfulness* is a state of

nonjudgmental attentiveness and awareness of moment-to-moment experiences. Mindfulness

has ancient roots in meditation, but modern-day pioneers like John Kabat-Zinn (1982) brought

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) to the medical world by integrating mindfulness

into clinical practices to treat a host of disorders. What was once pioneering has now become

status quo because of the growing body of empirical evidence that showcases the effectiveness of

mindfulness interventions.

One particular area on which mindfulness has focused is *emotional exhaustion* (Leidner,

1999). Emotional exhaustion is common in the service sector of the economy. Service sector

work is said to hold highly *interactive* jobs - jobs that require employees to directly interact with

clients. Because of this, employees are confronted with what is known as *emotional labor* (Cote

& Morgan, 2002). These employees face emotionally charged encounters, which create

emotional fatigue, which can lead to chronic stress (Cote & Morgan, 2002); therefore, managing

emotions becomes a key component of the individual's job (Hochschild, 1983). As Maslach,

Schaufeli, & Leiter (2001) state, emotional exhaustion is at the core of burn-out - which often

results in turnover, absenteeism, and lowered performance on tasks. Therefore, a tool is needed

to help to boost emotional regulation and reduce the onset of emotional turbulence.

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

Mindfulness has its roots in Eastern spirituality, but it has several key characteristics that make it an effective tool for employees in the western world (Brown, Ryan, & Cresswell, 2007). The first characteristic is that *mindfulness involves sensory awareness*. An individual registers their inner experiences such as emotions and thoughts, and decides whether they are positive or not (Brown et al., 2007). In the example from the service sector, an employee can recognize when his or her emotions are starting to escalate, giving them an opportunity to choose how they will respond. Mindfulness teaches individuals tools to help regulate the emotional turbulence of, for example, a performance review, a difficult colleague, or a presentation (Brown et al., 2007). The second characteristic of mindfulness is that *cognition is in pure observance mode*, versus evaluating, analyzing, and reflecting. We tell our clients to observe their thoughts as if they are watching a movie. You are merely observing them versus taking them personally. Using the same example from the service sector, employees can recognize that a thought is literally just a passing thought. This flexibility allows employees to express a sense of ease when dealing with what would normally be an emotionally charged situation (Cote & Morgan, 2002). Thirdly, mindfulness is said to be a *present-oriented consciousness,* in which individuals focus on moment-to-moment experiences, rather than focusing on the past or the future. This focus on the present has the power to, as researcher Barbara Fredrickson (2009) states, sever the link between negative thoughts and negative emotions. When we accept that a thought is just a thought we have essentially "disarmed" the negative thought (Fredrickson, 2009). Finally, mindfulness is said to be an *inherent capacity of humans that varies amongst individuals* (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Researchers have argued that the skill of mindfulness is a natural human capacity that can be experienced by any layperson (Brown & Ryan, 20003). Although it is a skill that according to John Kabat-Zinn (1982) must be re-learned, there is an innate

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

understanding of mindfulness that can be learned by all. I have personally witnessed this

statement to be true from people who *never* thought they could "meditate".

These characteristics help us to understand where we can utilize a mindfulness practice,

and potentially, what a mindfulness practice can help produce in a workplace setting. In one

particular study, mindfulness showed an increase in job satisfaction and diminished the

emotional exhaustion that predicts the lower levels of job satisfaction (Weinstein et al., 2009).

When individuals at work are confronted with challenging situations, mindfulness is said to

facilitate an adaptive response that is less attached to an individual's character, and instead

perceived in a present moment, temporary, non-judgmental way (Weinstein et al., 2009). One

DEFINE client described mindfulness as her buffer of her judgement of self and judgement of

others. Therefore, she became less attached to her thoughts and knew that the truth would

"stick".

Mindfulness has also been related to job satisfaction by helping to promote self-

determined behavior (Glomb et al., 2011). This happens by helping employees become more

aware of habitual and automatic functioning which then draws the attention of the employee

towards a sense of self-concordance with the individual's values and goals (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

With this sense of greater self-determination, job satisfaction is seen to increase because self-

determined behavior is shown to improve job performance and job functioning (Shapiro,

Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006). Perhaps this is reflected in an increase attendance at

company socials or voluntary staff trainings. What was once seen as apathy within an employee

population steadily moves towards a committed work force with greater self-determination (Deci

& Ryan, 1985).

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

The early 8th century Vedic scholar Adi Shankara believed that the mind, defined as all that we perceive through our senses, consists of the mind, the intellect, and the ego (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947). The Sanksrit term we used earlier, *kosha*, describing the veil blocking us from seeing our inborn truth of love and Divine energy (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947), is said to be its most constricted at the layer of the mind. These three layers of the mind known as the three koshas of the mind, are known in Sanskrit as *manomaya kosha* (mind), *buddhimaya kosha* (intellect), and *ahankara* (ego). These three layers, in the Vedic spiritual tradition, are said to be restricted because we perceive information, make decisions, and therefore establish our egoic mind through words like "I", "mine", "me", and "my". These benign words, however, are at the root of our separation from love, Truth, Divine, Spirit, Soul (Chopra, 2004). An interesting overlap of the use of these pronouns is in psychologist James Pennebaker's book "The Secret Life of Pronouns" (2011, p.174). He states that, "higher status people in social hierarchies actually use first-person singular pronouns (I, me, my) much LESS and first person plural ones (we, our, us) much MORE than people lower in status." So actually a part of leadership seems to be seeing ME as US.

In work environments, these veils of restriction can be seen through the emotional exhaustion, negativity, and burn-out that is increasingly common in many work environments. If you recall the situation facing employees that work in the service sector, emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983) is an example of the restriction an employee perceives due to the way they feel and the way they must comply based on the work, role, or organizations rules in how emotions are expressed with customers (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Known as "surface acting" (Grandey, 2000), employees must act in a certain way that is not consistent with how they are feeling (Cote & Morgan, 2002). Research shows that surface acting negatively affects

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

employees' job satisfaction and enhances emotional exhaustion, due to the fact that an employee

is suppressing negative emotion and consequently faking positive emotional expression

(Grandey, 2000). This process of a) encountering a negative stimulus b) experiencing a negative

response trigger, and c) overriding the negative response by faking or suppressing emotions is

where mindfulness and meditation can be a powerful tool to help prevent the emotional

exhaustion and long-term burnout. It does this by allowing the individual to pause and replace

with a new healthy response which can be reinforced over time.

The effectiveness of meditation and mindfulness is centered on, in Vedic terms, lifting

the veil of *manomaya kosha* (mind) by promoting the experience of the internal or the external as

an event without evaluation or judgement (Glomb et al., 2011). As the employee deliberately

turns their attention to the present moment with a non-judgmental attitude, a mindful individual

can witness their thoughts or feelings without getting immersed in them to the point of being

closed off (Hulsheger et al., 2013). Mindfulness, therefore, creates a separation between the ego

and the internal/external events (Glomb et al., 2011), or in spiritual terms, mindfulness creates a

non-dualism of agape between the employee and the *customer and/or situation*. Here we define

ego as the part of the mind that interconnects the conscious and unconscious mind which is

responsible for our personal identity (Jung, 1951).

What makes mindfulness so rich is that with training and practice an employee may be in

a situation where they are fully aware that a customer is insulting them – however - with the

implementation of mindfulness an employee will realize that the situation has nothing to do with

the individual (Hulsheger et al., 2013). Instead, the employee can observe the situation and

perhaps with spiritual mindedness, turn their focus to expressing feelings of compassion and

caring towards the customer. The core of positive psychology believes that when you plant

seeds of positivity, these seeds grow and multiply. If you are nourishing them, these seeds

flourish. And although sending love and compassion to those who are attacking is one of the

most difficult challenges we as humans face, I believe that our goal is to remove the layers of the

contracted ego, and align ourselves into the Divine energy of love that is not only healing for

ourselves, but also for those around us.

Love researcher Barbara Fredrickson (2009) reminds us that the intensity of our positivity

matters much less than its frequency of our positivity. We must become like a plant and turn

toward the light in order to broaden our experience (Fredrickson, 2009). The more positivity that

we decide to plant into even the most challenging situations, the more positivity we can harvest,

thus creating more prospects for flourishing moments (Fredrickson, 2009). Mindfulness and

meditation are techniques for developing our skills of paying attention to the present moment

without any judgement (Zinn, 1982). The skill of paying attention is like giving the soil, water,

and sun to individuals and organizations so they may learn to thrive in both "red-cape"

(avoiding) and "green-cape" (building/growing) scenarios.

In order for organizations to truly expand their missions throughout the world, they will

need to learn to harness the true spirit of the organization. One technique used to harness this

spirit is a process called Appreciative Inquiry. Similar to the human body, once organizations a)

address the restriction of the physical body and its limitations caused by stress, b) look at the

subtle body and its limitations created by fear and the ego, organizations can c) create a spiritual

union of all members of the organization to reach the organization's highest potential. We will

now look at how to enhance the *causal body*, or spirit, of the business by allowing the natural

breath that "caused" the creation of the business to come through to all of the organizations

stakeholders.

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

Causal Body (Spirit)

Abraham Maslow (1965) states that there are five basic levels of needs in the human experience, which move from lowest to highest: physical (survival), security, social, achievement, and self-actualization. He believed that these needs are hierarchical in that the lower levels of needs must be met before the higher order could become a focus. Several scholars have connected these human hierarchical needs to the way our existence has unfolded (Tischler, 1999; Hurst, 2014). In the agrarian age, for example, most people spent the majority of their time focusing on supplying their physical survival and security needs through farming and trading (Tischler, 1999). The Industrial Revolution, which evolved over a two-hundred-year time frame, brought about machines which were invented to allow more goods to be made, transported, and sold at significantly lower costs (Tischler, 1999). Although the industrial age brought about new economic prosperity and security for the working class (Tischler, 1999), social structures such as unions and anti-trust regulation were established to keep an equalization of power between the wealthy and the masses (Tischler, 1999).

More recently, we have been in an "information" age where an increase in knowledge has lead to empowerment and participation amongst the workforce in order to see the advancement of safe, secure, and balanced working conditions (Deming, 1993). As Aaron Hurst (2014) states, we are now in a "purpose economy" where businesses are moving toward an era in which businesses focus on customers, fair treatment of employees, teamwork, initiative, and innovation for the betterment of society (Gardner, 1990; Greenleaf, 1973; Magretta, 1997; Renesch & Defoore, 1996). This shift is a sign that businesses are entering the fifth level of Maslow's hierarchy. Business are in the process of realizing their full potential. Self-actualization is a

process by which an individual or a group not only realize their full potential, but also have the desire to share this positive transformation with as many people as possible (Tischler, 1999).

Joseph Campbell (1988) famously stated that you can tell what is informing a society by which buildings are the tallest in that society. When you approached a medieval town, the cathedral was the tallest building in site. When you approached an eighteenth-century town, it was the political palace that was the tallest building. And when you approach a modern city, you can see that the tallest buildings are office buildings that represent the economic life as the center of our modern day (Campbell, 1988). Although there are those who will see this shift towards the economic life and the focus of business informing societies as a negative, with the appropriate shift towards self-actualization within businesses, there is an opportunity for businesses to breathe life into the bodies, minds, and spirits of all stakeholders as a way to positively shape our society.

It may sound idealistic. However, making the world a better place through business is not only possible, it is practical. Aristotle (1985) and Maslow (1965) seem to converge on the idea that making the world a better place is practical by agreeing that humans become most human when we choose to live beyond oneself. Since the dawning of time, humans have been examples of how to positively shape the way we live in this world. Philosophers, artists, politicians, doctors, businesses, and more have shown examples of what living beyond oneself looks like. Because of the powerful impact our actions have on the way this world evolves combined with the magnitude that businesses influence our globe, I believe cultivating the spiritual, a positive energy force that breathes life into all stakeholders, is the foundation for effectively applying positive psychology for greater well-being in individuals and organizations.

An interesting theory known as multilevel selection theory states that morality and cooperation within a tribe gives the tribe an immense advantage over other tribes (Wilson & Wilson, 2007). This theory shows examples throughout nature - such as bees, ants, and later humans - that have been successful in creating social structures that align group-interest and self-interest so well that natural selection happens at the group level while it simultaneously happens at the level of the individual (Wilson & Wilson, 2012). The term for this prosocial structure has been termed, "eusocial" (Wilson & Wilson, 2012).

Similar to the human body which is made up of many different groups of cells, where each cell serves a specific purpose, these "eusocial" organisms work collaboratively for a common goal that none could achieve alone (Wright, 2000). Because of this collaboration, group traits can be analyzed in a Darwinian framework (Haidt, 2006) which shows that a group operating collaboratively will outcompete rival groups when individuals align their interests with the group's interests. This creates a non-zero-sum situation, or a win-win scenario, where everyone is better off than if the individual had isolated themselves to focus on self-interest (Wright, 2000).

This idea runs consistent with Social Entrepreneurship professors Cooperrider and Godwin's (2011) model of positive change at the group level. The model is represented as a double helix, with *elevation* of inquiry, in which strengths are appreciated and then extended, on one dimension, and *extension* of relatedness, where strengths are combined and connected, along the other dimension. This inquiry of strengths based intervention lends, as Cooperrider (2012) states, not so much on individual strengths as on configurations and chemistries of strengths, as a way of connecting and combining enterprise-wide strengths for advancing opportunities. In a multi-stakeholder world it isn't about isolated strengths. It is about bringing out the best in

human systems consistently and effectively to harness the power of the whole (Cooperrider,

2012). We must treat these systems as living networks that influence each other beyond what the

eye can see. The "spiritual business" will use Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, 2008) as a

construct to capture this process of *unification*, which is at the heart and core of a spiritual based

business.

Appreciative Inquiry

You may recall that according to yoga, the most effective way of giving life, or *prana,* to

a living system, is through breath (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1947). The full cycle of

breathing brings nourishment from the expansion (inhale) and cleansing through the contraction

(exhale) to the cells of the living system. However, if our cells, like any living system,

experience an imbalance of stress or over-nourishment, they deplete. This integration of the

living system is explained by the evolutionary principle of the "fray-out", which is said to cause

higher-level living systems to emerge from lower-level systems (Swanson & Miller, 1989). The

evolution that takes place can be compared to the dead skin cells on the body replenished with

the new cells to keep the living system evolving across all levels. This shedding process is

critical because as Friedrich Nietzsche states, "The snake which cannot cast its skin has to die."

(as cited in Wawrytoko, 2008).

Our quest in breathing life into the body, mind, and spirit of an organization is a

grounded, holistic approach towards understanding how to best execute the strategic

implementation of an organization's purpose and goals. A research-backed technique from the

field of positive organizational scholarship called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider, 2012)

acts as a "co-evolutionary" search for discovering the best in people, their organizations, and the

relevant world around them (Cooperrider, 2012). When systems are co-evolutionary, as David

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

Cooperrider (2012) states, they are integrated to bring out the best in each other. AI is an alternative to change management that entails bringing the whole system into the room in an effort to create this co-evolutionary growth.

We approach integration of the system by bringing about its strongest and most vibrant self, through an inquiry process. AI takes a look into the deeper corporate spirit (Cooperrider, 2012) within, and deliberately seeks to tap into the untapped inspiring resources within an organization. Once individuals start seeing themselves as directly linked to the core of the organization - whether the core is the organization's mission, products, or services - changes that were never thought to be possible suddenly begin to emerge (Cooperrider, 2012). As Cooperrider (2012) states, "Human systems grow in the direction of their most persistent questions"; therefore, once the individual feels appreciated by the whole system by virtue of complete inclusion in the process, the structured guidance of positive inquiry helps integrate the organization towards its highest mission (Cooperrider, 2012). Appreciative Inquiry operates under the idea that great organizations have great leadership whose main purpose is to "align the strengths of the organization in such an effective way that the system's weaknesses become irrelevant" (Drucker, 1998).

This focus on the positive is achieved via the Appreciative Inquiry "4-D" Cycle framework. Its four key stages are: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Deploy. Each stage is focused on bringing internal and external stakeholders together in a concentrated way to work on tasks that are strategic and creative (Cooperrider, 2012). At the core of this 4-D process is *Affirmative Topic Choice,* which is the initial step and considered one of the most important parts in the AI process, because the "seeds of change are implicit in the very first question that is asked" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999).

A question that is relevant to our DEFINE team and prompts a topic choice would be, "How can we most effectively structure our team meetings for efficiency?". Most research begins with identifying a problem; however, AI requires participants to start from appreciation. This affirmative topic should reflect the positive core of the organization, and according to Cooperrider *et al. (2008)*, it should be: affirmative, stated in the positive, desirable, able to be identified with the objectives people want, a topic that the group wants to explore, and move in the direction that the group would like to move. At DEFINE, we came up with three possible options for our topic choice around staff meetings: happiness at work meetings, exceptional efficiency with meetings, exceptionally efficient and authentic staff meetings. We selected the last option as our topic choice.

Once the affirmative topic has been chosen, the next phase of AI is the *discovery* phase. Discovery entails exploration and asking when we were at our best (Stavros, Godwin, & Cooperrider, 2009). The assumption is that each person or possibly group has positive experiences to be discovered. The facilitators are looking for what gives life and energy to the organization. The focus of this phase is centered around gaining insights through affirmative stories (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Typically, this is conducted through interviews, storytelling, and discussion groups. During the *discovery* phase of our example, we would ask questions such as, "What gives life to our organization and allows it to function at its very best?" In the example of how to most effectively structure our team meetings, we would take into consideration that we are a service based company. Our staff has an unwavering love for our clients, so we could share stories of exceptional interactions, and consider asking, "How can we recognize our clients and the service our staff offers to our clients in our weekly team meetings?"

The *dream* phase asks participants to think about 'what might be' and builds on the results from the discovery phase (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Groups work to develop ideas on what the future will look like, a vision of the ideal organization. This is the phase where participants are asked to think big as if a 'magic wand' may be used. Cooperider et al., (2008) call these magic wand statements, 'provocative propositions' that the organization hopes to achieve. This phase leads to higher levels of enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment to the organization's future (Stavros et al., 2009). The *dream* phase is often a graphical representation of what it is we are trying to accomplish. The graphic could be a picture that represents our clients and their best interest. The most recent example of the *dream* that we used at DEFINE was a picture of one of our clients with her daughter. Her daughter was recently told that she had scoliosis. The client decided to start bringing her daughter to class over the past six months. Within the past month, the doctor told our client that the scoliosis had been reversed, and that they needed to continue doing whatever she is doing. You can imagine the excitement in our client's voice when she told us. The picture of the two of them represented our love for what we offer at DEFINE, and it helped initiate a beautiful *dream* conversation on how we can most efficiently continue to reach out to more clients through productive meeting times.

The third phase is the *design* phase. In this phase, there is a focus on 'what should be'. The goal is to create the ideal organization based on the past success of the organization (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The groups will come together to figure out how to make the provocative propositions a reality. The goal is to leverage the best of the past as discovered in the stories that will help the organization transition to its desired state. The design phase is thought of as a two-step process 1) brainstorming, and 2) rapid-prototyping (Stavros et al., 2009). Prototyping represents an initial iteration of what one element of the brainstorming looks like.

One of the results that emerged out of DEFINE's *design phase* of brainstorming and prototyping, was coming up with a way our staff could feel empowered to stay on track to help our clients and also build in time for our team to share and then respond to what is important to our team members, both personally and professionally. Focusing on precision and efficiency is great, but it can also lead to negative responses when a staff member dismisses another staff members comments because they are "off-topic". To deal with this, we came up with a *design* idea that was inspired by the work of Shelly Gable et al. (2004) called *active constructive responding (ACR)*. ACR is a technique used in dyads and groups where participants speak knowing that others will actively respond in a way that demonstrate a sense of authentic care. Instead of, "Very cool. Good for you." and moving on. The response could be, "Very cool. How did that feel?", and then connecting. This level of active and constructive enriches the connections with staff members, and even if it gets us somewhat off topic, we know that we are continuing our mission of loving our clients by generating a sense of love and respect from within our group.

The final phase of the AI process is *deploy,* which is focused on results and capturing value (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The goal is to deliver value - or stated in another way, to deliver the *dream* and *design* by leveraging the strengths that were lifted up during the *discovery* discussions (Stavros et al., 2009). The question in this phase is, "How do we continue to leverage our strengths?" The organization has asked participants to think big, so this phase is centered on ensuring that the dreams are delivered. This final phase is often carried out uniquely across many organizations. Many organizations will carry out a process that is a continuous *deploy* phase which causes the organization to adopt a culture of appreciation which continues the cycle of appreciative inquiry (Starvos et al., 2009). At DEFINE, we have decided to deploy

the process of reading client testimonials to our staff members. We have found that this continues to reenergize our staff. This process will often give an element of appreciation to specific staff members, and it allows newer staff members the ability to inquire how they can also become leaders of change within our organization by focusing on our clients' needs.

Compared to the deficit based-management culture that has existed since the 1940's, AI posits that organizations need not be fixed. Instead, organizations are heliotropic systems that grow in the direction towards which they most persistently ask questions (Stavros et al., 2009). Organizations need constant reaffirmation and opportunities to be solution-seeking. The AI process creates an architecture inside which organizations find a *constructive melioristic* approach (or green-cape approach) towards self-actualization. By focusing on a strength-based approach, AI supports the process of change by helping an organization become the best it can be for all of its stakeholders.

Other Areas of Research

There are future areas of research that I would like the "Spiritual Business" to incorporate into its mission: an understanding of ego and fear in the workplace, elevation, awe, and spiritual-intelligence. These four topics, although discuss briefly below, hold relevant information that can also be applied towards helping organizations breathe life into individuals and organizations.

Ego and Fear

The "reptilian brain" is said to be wired for our ego-driven emotions and cognitions. This part of our brain is responsible for the self-interested responses that seems to be part of our inborn conflict of fear and love (Godfrey, 2012). According to a research study in behavioral economics, Sheskin, Bloom, and Wynn (2014) looked at a group of children between the ages of

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

five to ten years old to see if children would choose win-win situations over self-interest. The

study gave each child two piles of five chips. One pile was for them to use as a currency to

exchange for toys, and the other pile was to give away to strangers that they did not meet. In one

scenario, the experimenter gave the children two options: Option 1) keep one chip and give one

chip away. Or, Option 2) keep two chips and give away three chips. According to Sheskin,

Bloom, and Wynn (2014), the best option for the individual was to receive two chips (Option 2);

however, over 73.9% of children of all ages chose Option 1 showcasing a Disadvantageous

Inequity (DI) versus Advantageous Inequity (AI). Essentially, the children preferred to take

fewer chips in order to gain what seemed a relative advantage. Some would state that this is

evidence to back the argument that people are inherently selfish. However, does this give us the

full picture?

In later studies, Yale University developmental psychologist Paul Bloom (2013)

discovered that humans are not only born with the capacity to be selfish, but also born with the

capacity for altruism. In a study looking at babies' reactions towards a story, the researcher

presented three objects portrayed as acting out three different scenarios. One object was trying

to accomplish a task, the other object was prosocial and helping the first object, and the third

object was anti-social by hindering the task of the first. From here, the objects were placed on a

table, and the babies were able to choose one of the characters (Hamlin & Wynn, 2011). In this

study, more than 80% of the infants selected the prosocial character. This study along with

several other studies looking at human nature and our predisposition to good or bad, resulted in

the idea that humans are not born either altruistic or selfish. We are born with the capacity for

both (Hamlin & Wynn, 2011). We have a so-called *moral axis* which can vertically ascend and

descend, in which the upper end of the axis is altruism and the lower end is selfishness (Haidt,

2000). We are dynamically maneuvering up and down depending on our thoughts and actions in our present state (Haidt, 2000). So how do we navigate a life that leads towards the upper-end of this axis - towards prosocial behavior that not only helps our personal well-being, but perhaps, also helps the world's well-being?

Elevation

Holocaust survivor and author, Victor Frankl (1985), stated that each and every one of us experiences a brief moment between stimulus and response. In that space is our power to choose. Within this space lies our growth and our freedom (Frankl, 1985). It could be said that we have the lifelong challenge of learning how to navigate these moments between stimulus and response in order to make the most effective decisions for our life. It is my belief that over time, and with appropriate reflection and awareness, we start to develop our moral compass on how to move along the continuum of altruism and self-interest. Swami Vivekananda (2015) references this upward and downward movement by referring to the "Godward action" as our duty and the downward of evil as something we all face. According to moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt (2000), this upward and downward movement is known as "elevation and degradation". Like most pioneers of positive psychology, Haidt (2000) agrees that there has been an overemphasis on the negative aspects of traditional psychology, represented by the downward movement along the axis. Elevation, on the other hand, is a recognition of the more beautiful side of life. It is elicited by acts of virtue and moral beauty. That feeling we get when we see someone doing something beautiful in the world - that is the upward movement of elevation (Haidt, 2000).

In 2001, research suggested that elevation has practical applications for inducing altruism. Compared to a happiness group "elevated" participants who were exposed to videos of altruistic acts, such as watching Mother Theresa, were more likely to report physical feelings in

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

their body, and they were also more likely to report wanting to help others, to better themselves,

and to be prosocial (Haidt, Algoe, Meijer, Tam, & Chandler, 2001). With this research,

elevation could be seen as a tool for helping individuals move toward the upper-end of this axis

of altruism. Therefore, our question pivots from asking *if* a good world is possible, to asking

how can we ethically apply this into organizations to help businesses see the powerful influence

they can have on individuals, communities, and all stakeholders.

Awe

According to researchers Keltner & Haidt (2003), awe is an ultimate collective emotion

because it motivates individuals to enhance the greater good. The research shows that awe helps

bind us to others and creates collaboration that develops cohesive communities (Keltner & Haidt,

2003). Keltner & Haidt (2003) argue that awe infuses people with a different sense of

themselves, someone that is smaller, yet importantly part of a larger system. Keltner & Haidt

(2003) show that awe can be induced simply from being amongst trees. This intervention could

have a lot of interesting implementations. Daily activities as well as all-company retreats could

benefit from this research.

Spiritual Intelligence

One area of effective implementation of spiritual principles within an organization is

through the development of Spiritual Intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2004). Spiritual

Intelligence (SQ) is the intelligence that we use to access our deepest meanings, values,

purposes, and higher motivations. Researchers Zohar and Marshall (2004) state that SQ is the

moral intelligence that helps us to distinguish between right and wrong, and it is the intelligence

we use when we are exercising goodness, truth, beauty and compassion in our lives. This

understanding of the word *spiritual* emphasizes the idea that spirituality is not about religion or

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

theology. Spirituality is what brings life to individuals, families, institutions, and communities.

The spiritual in humans has us ask *why* we are doing what we are doing. It then asks us to look

at what we are doing, and see where we can live better, and how we can make a difference as an

individual or as a group (Zohar & Marshall, 2004).

Conclusion

Joseph Campbell (1994) is credited with saying, "Awe is what moves us forward." This

sentence can be interpreted to mean that the power of an elevated experience moves us forward

to a new phase of growth. Perhaps this growth is a step forward along Maslow's (1965)

hierarchy of needs. Or perhaps this growth is a process that Peter Singer (2011) describes as a

"collective evolution" of growth that is a natural part of the process of expansion we experience

when body, mind, and spirit are unified.

Whether we are looking at the powerful influence that yoga has on the bodies within an

organization, the positive impacts research-focused programs like mindfulness have on an

organization's "mind", or practical systems that help organizations bring life to every part of its

"spirit" through Appreciative Inquiry, the goal of the spiritual business is to broaden the positive

growth that is our nature, while learning tools that will help us continuously adopt a mindset of

resiliency and meaningfulness.

Life-giving systems such as AI create a relationally and rapidly empowering

transformation within organizations (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2015). Known to bring out the

best in business, people, and society, AI is a tool for the next generation of leaders and

entrepreneurs. This paper was a process of asking - what are organizations capable of

accomplishing? What happens when you not only bring life, *prana*, and energy to the cells of an

organization, but you create a unification of body, mind, and spirit within the entire

organization? Ancient spiritual systems such as yoga and mindfulness along with modern-day change-management practices like Appreciative Inquiry offer us insight into the capabilities of an organizations path to evolution. David Cooperrider and Lindsey Godwin (2015) call this unique evolution of positive change within organizations "conscious co-elevation", where we are not only elevating ourselves, but we are consciously creating an elevation for an organization and all of its stakeholders.

I believe that organizations of the 21st century have a moral obligation to help all of their stakeholders experience vibrant health, engaging work, meaningful connection, and a sense of purpose. Knowing that it is not only good for stakeholders, but that it is also good for business, *positive deviance* within organizations is at the fingertips of every business leader and manager. It is in this knowledge that businesses can move away from the fear-based management principles that the previous generations applied. In times that are constricting, we can embrace the belief that these are the times that make us all stronger. We can remember that at the very bottom of the exhale, we are able to deepen into the pose that starts the process of opening and expanding into our next step. The life-giving source of breath is more than a metaphor for organizations. Breath is the inspiration that brings business to life, and a full breath is the balance of expanding and contracting in order to process that which fuels our bodies, our minds, our spirits, and our lives.

THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

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THE SPIRITUAL BUSINESS

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