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Leading at the Edge of Uncertainty: An Exploration of the Effect of Contemplative Practice on Organizational Leaders

Stephen D. Romano

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LEADING AT THE EDGE OF UNCERTAINTY:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE EFFECT OF CONTEMPLATIVE
PRACTICE ON ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS

STEPHEN D. ROMANO

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership & Change Program
of Antioch University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled:

LEADING AT THE EDGE OF UNCERTAINTY:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE EFFECT OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE ON
ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS

prepared by

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the courageous souls willing to meet uncertainty with clarity and to lead and live in ways that cultivate stillness and purpose.

Acknowledgements

This study involved the support, encouragement, patience, and wisdom of many people. Special thank you to Lauren Lambert Romano, my best friend. Thanks for taking this incredible journey with me. And to Sophia and Paige, may your love for life always be present and belief in you remain strong. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for your adventurous spirit, for taking my head and heart to parts unknown.

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deepest appreciation to the six adventurous people who participated in this study. Thank you for your willingness to take a risk in working with me and for your courageousness. May the seeds we planted lead to a liberated and centered life for each of you.

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to investigate how organizational leaders cultivate focus and calm in moments of uncertainty. There is significant literature discussing how individuals manage stress and enhance well-being through formal meditative practices, but few studies investigate informal strategies. Through single subject with multiple subject design, the research examines how specific mind body practices affect an individual's ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and enhance perspective-taking. This study suggests that being a leader, and by extension, leadership, is not merely a series of actions; rather, it is a way of thinking and being. The capacity to notice breath and listen deeply is understood as a pathway for increasing the mind body connection, and serves as an instrument for the practices. Six participants were selected and introduced to specific mindful practices. Participants applied these practices daily over a 10 to 12-week period. Participants met weekly with the researcher for coaching and developing reflective habits. The Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire and the Mindfulness Survey were administered, along with weekly self-assessments and journaling, to measure leader ability before, during, and after the intervention. All six leaders improved their relationship to breath, and as a result, their overall well-being and effectiveness. All participants reported decreased body stress by week eight or ten, respectively. The findings suggest meaningful change can occur over four months with consistent practice. This study may hold promise for innovative and holistic approaches to leader development, and specifically, how informal contemplative practices enhance effectiveness during times of uncertainty. This dissertation is accompanied by an MP4 author introduction video. The electronic version of this dissertation is at OhioLink ETC Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd

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List of Supplemental Files

Filename	Type	Duration	Size
Author_Introduction_Romano.mp4	MP4	01:37	22.5MB

Chapter I: Introduction

Wrestling With Change and Uncertainty

Are some people better able to deal with change than others? If so, what qualities might be more important, and how does one go about developing them? I believe it is fair to suggest that we are witnessing significant global shifts ranging from climate change to financial instability to social unrest—movements that no longer affect just one area of the world and spare another; we are all in this together. We are in the early stages of coming to terms with the significance of just how interconnected we are as a global community. Nowhere is this more evident than in the workplace where leaders must weave together policies and practices that span continents and cultures. On a smaller scale, the need for leaders to develop the capabilities, or the qualities and abilities, to respond to these conditions is increasing. Today's pace or even type of change is not necessarily more dramatic than any other period; after all, it can be argued that the startling shift that the United States underwent after slavery was abolished in 1865, was far more significant than anything we have experienced in modern times. Depending on one's criteria, other historical epochs could be judged just as, or even more, chaotic than what we are witnessing in our modern world. Yet, reflective and meditative approaches, often referred to as contemplative practices (contemplative meaning deep concentration to quiet or still the mind and practices meaning habits or repeated performances to acquire a skill), are emerging as practical ways to deal with the ambiguity that can result from uncertain circumstances. The paradoxical nature of contemplative practices is that it requires that we slow down and take notice of both our surroundings, and ourselves, before we act, or in some instances, remain static. The personal quality one cultivates or improves upon to deal with uncertainty and the stress that results, is the

focus of this study; and more specifically, to understand what effect, if any, contemplative practices have on organizational leaders.

Mindfulness draws on a 2,500-year lineage that can be traced to the beginning of Buddhism. A key tenant of Buddhism is what is referred to as, “right mindfulness,” the seventh of eight “Noble Eightfold” paths. Mindfulness can simply be understood as having the awareness necessary to be fully present in a given moment; that is, the ability to keep alert to the mind and body, its thoughts, sensations, and emotions. To stay alert, even among difficult circumstances, may seem uncannily simple, and is easier said than done. Paying attention in a deep way requires training to quiet the mind and the ability to notice one’s breath. The breath is considered a primary anchor in keeping one attuned to a given moment, and its effect on leaders is a major part of this study. The ability to suspend judgment, that is, to withhold evaluation of self and others so that one can be fully present, is also important for right mindfulness. By withholding judgment, space for deep listening can manifest and reinforce the ability to focus. Christian traditions also draw on Buddhism’s long legacy, and mindfulness in general, to create more confident and open hearts, including Centering Prayer as a method of silent prayer.

The desire to know that we are secure permeates our very being. Yet, control is an illusion that often appears just out of our grasp, often resulting in states of uneasiness (or restlessness of the mind or body). For thousands of years, the notion of treating the mind and body experience has been one of separation. This thinking can be traced to philosophers such as Plato and Socrates from ancient Greece, and later Descartes in the 1600s in Europe, who advocated that the mind and body are distinct – later to be referred to as mind-body dualism. This philosophy was subsequently reinforced by Rousseau in the 1700s who posited that the mind exists as an extension of the body, suggesting that the body is non-thinking in nature.

Today, the Western construct of the mind body relationship, or lack thereof, still holds, although with growing exceptions. These departures can be experienced at the thousands of yoga studios now found throughout the world, renewed interest in the martial arts, mindfulness-based programs at schools, in prisons, the workplace, private practices, and holistic approaches to health. The need for resilient (meaning rebounding or coming back to) and agile (meaning the ability to anticipate or adapt to unpredictable circumstances) leaders has always been paramount; the difference now is that contemplative practices are better understood and accessible.

A consequence of uncertainty and change is stress and hesitation. Leaders are grappling with new skills to cope and minimize commotion so they can learn to thrive. Consequently, people who are aware of the potential of contemplative practice, or who are simply curious, are increasingly turning to mind body practices as a way to develop their potential. Research is showing evidence of the positive effect contemplative practice can have on tension and well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Chang et al., 2004; Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004; Shapiro, Oman, Thoresen, Plante, & Flindes, 2008). There is an increasing need for leaders to demonstrate greater adaptability, flexibility, and perspective. The focus of this study is grounded in becoming fully aware of these dynamic circumstances which are giving rise to a new type of leader—one grounded in the ability to reflect and lead consciously (Drey, 2011; Carroll, 2008; Goleman, 2002; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Sinclair, 2007; Wheatley, 2005; Wilbur, Patten, & Morelli, 2008). This study investigates the effect of contemplative practices on organizational leaders. My view point is that through the cultivation of habits rooted in increased contemplative practice, a leader's ability to pay attention (concentration and focusing of the mind), make connections (building relationships through attention of mind body states), manage stress (responding to external stimuli through mind body awareness), and

multiply perspectives (ability to see viewpoints in a mind body context) may result. In one sense, these practices are abilities (a quality or mental state of being able, including a skill), but in another they are intermediary forces that may increase one's effectiveness. This study suggests that being a leader, and by extension, leadership, is not merely a series of actions; rather, it is a way of thinking and a way of being. By leadership, I mean a way of being that is reflective and thoughtful about self; that values relationships and the present; that is connected to others and embodies; that is not narrowly striving or ego-driven, and that is liberating in its effects (Sinclair, 2007). This perspective facilitates the ability to respond with calmness and resiliency in the face of uncertainty and complexity. This definition contrasts with the idea of leaders only as doers where a specific outcome is expected. Contemplative practice and mindfulness, in contrast, is what leadership and being human is all about.

Many leaders lack the internal resources to successfully navigate uncertainty and do not see the link between contemplation and leadership. Some associate contemplation with religion or view it as too soft as a construct of leadership. Contemplation is first about awareness, and developing the attention and focus to take on challenges with clarity. A contemplative approach is akin to mindfulness and can be practiced either formally or informally. Weiss (2004) understands formal mindfulness that includes setting aside a specific time period to sit silently with mindful awareness of breathing. Informal mindfulness, by contrast, are daily life activities like paying attention while eating or during conversation with another, and being able to reflect and question, if mindful qualities are occurring. The literature bears out considerable findings for formal mindfulness, but gaps exist in respect to the effect of informal practices. Revealing insights into informal mindfulness in the context of organizational leaders shape the research.

Leading as a Way of Being

The workplace and life in general lend itself to distraction. The compulsion to multitask, toggle between the iPhone and a conversation and pretend to listen is familiar to many. This can manifest in all sorts of mindless behaviors and poor habits, and increase restlessness, even rigidity. One's inner resources to direct attention may simply be too limited to sustain disciplined listening habits. And while this perceived division of mind and body has been reinforced through the ages, people are increasingly turning to approaches that break down the barriers of dualistic thinking. Walt Whitman was one of the first modern western poets from the 19th century to reject the two-part notion that separate the mind and the body. He wrote (1885),

Was somebody asking to see the soul?
See, your own shape and countenance...
Behold, the body includes and is the meaning, the main
Concern, and includes and is the soul

At the time, his ideas were revolutionary and he was met with rejection. He believed that emotions were generated from the body, a departure from conventional thinking. Whitman gained his insight from his lived experience. In this way, his thinking aligns with the phenomenological, drawing evidence from the first-person view point. Herein lies the opportunity for today's leader to notice how daily interruptions show up emotionally in the body, rather than as solely rationale from the mind. Many leaders feel stretched by emotional demands and are seeking new tools to increase their effectiveness. The idea to be open to discomfort or chaos seems counterproductive and almost unnecessary. Yet, in the midst of turmoil and change, stillness, and perhaps even peace, can be encountered, giving rise to a new way of seeing and being.

Contemplation, as a practice, appears counter-intuitive: slow down, reflect and deliberately pause before acting. This approach rubs against conventional thinking that values

speed and decisiveness at the expense of quality or buy-in. Falling into the trap of either or positioning can be equally challenging, such as assuming that one can either be contemplative or a dynamic leader. Drey (2011) stated, “Yet it is the very contradictions that are created by contemplative leadership that seem to hold the potential to address the leadership crisis found throughout

Contemplative practices quiet the mind in order to cultivate a personal capacity for deep concentration and insight. Examples include many forms of single-minded concentration including meditation, contemplative prayer, mindful walking, focused experiences in nature, yoga and other contemporary physical or artistic practices.

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Society*

the guiding institutions of our society today” (p. 345). In the space between reflecting and acting, or being and doing, a new kind of leadership is offered. Often the response to meet these shifts in the workplace is through rapid-fire decision-making. This state of mind is exemplified in the “hurry up so we can get something done” attitude. This is not, however, a mutually exclusive proposition. Contemplative thinking is underutilized and underdeveloped; its potential to promote well-being has remained untapped. Key to cultivating these new behaviors is the ability to develop

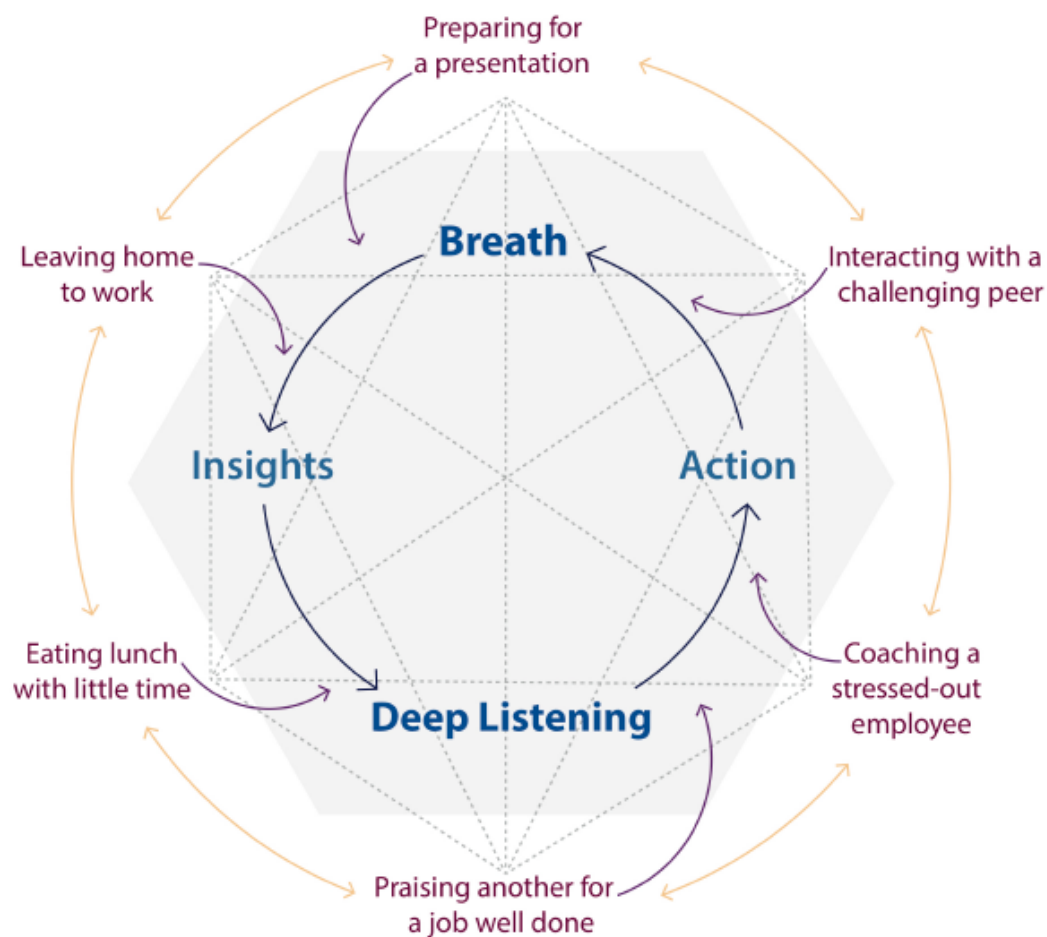
habits of noticing, and experiencing ourselves through a wider lens so increased self-awareness and objectivity can take hold. The case for contemplative leadership is bolstered by developments in neuroscience that are confirming that meditation leads to increased cortical thickness as well as brain and immune functioning (Davidson et al., 2003; Lutz et al., 2004; Slagter et al., 2007). Neuroimaging (Holzel et al., 2011; Lazar, 2005) is revealing how meditation practices increase brain matter density in regions involving learning and memory processes, emotion regulation, self-referential processing, and perspective taking. These studies offer promise for developing new capacities to lead.

The Literature

The elements of the breath and deep listening are articulated in Figure 1.1. Breath consists of two elements: awareness and coordination. Awareness is paying attention to habits and barriers in the context of self and others. Coordinating is the ability to synchronize the four-

Leadership as a Way of Being:

A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Source: Influenced by the work of Bhikkhu (1997); Carroll (2006, 2008); Hahn (1976); Kabat-Zinn (1994); Langer (1989); Rock and Page (2009); Silsbee (2010); Sinclair (2008); Vaill (1996); Weiss (2004); Wheatley (2005); Wilbur et. al (2008)

Figure 1.1. Leadership as a way of being: A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence.

part breath cycle continually and consciously. Deep listening has three elements: observing, suspending judgment, and opening. Observing is about developing the capacity to reflect on personal behavior, while at the same time being removed from it. This idea is akin to watching a movie, but at the same time being in the movie. Self-awareness is a key ingredient to increasing objectivity. As the ability to self-observe deepens, so does the capacity to notice the breath, and therefore, access to different mind states. A chief benefit of experiencing reality from arms-length is that it allows one to self-correct behaviors because they are seen with greater equality; in turn, this can result in more openness in interacting with, and responding to, others and different circumstances.

In reviewing the literature, peer and practitioner reviews were conducted. Peer review themes from the mind body literature were researched in the context of stress, anxiety, change, and organizational leaders. Three themes were identified: stillness, movement, and relational practices.

Stillness practices for individuals have significant research interest. Research is focused on finding effective approaches that impact state and trait changes, and promoting well-being. Research conducted is largely quantitative (Carmody, Baer, Lykins, & Olendzki, 2009; Hollis-Walker & Colosimo, 2010; Shapiro et al., 2008), with many studies focusing on psychopathologies that are not included in this study (Harrison, Manocha, and Rubia, 2004; Miller, Rathus, & Linehan, 2007).

Stillness practices in organization-based roles for mind body approaches have promise. Transcendental meditation (TM) is a long-standing approach due to its simple technique that requires no lifestyle change outside of up to two 20-minute daily sittings. Findings consistently suggest (Alexander et al., 1993; Alexander, Langer, Newman, Chandler, & Davies, 1989;

Broome, Orme-Johnson, Schmidt-Wilk, 2005; Schmidt-Wilk, 2003) that TM is effective in managing stress and conflict.

Movement practices are growing. Yoga and tai chi are practices are now commonplace. Research focuses on state vs. trait changes in short-term and long-term meditators. The findings suggest (Davidson et al., 2003; Kjellgren & Taylor, 2008; Lazar et al., 2005; Taylor & Mireault, 2008) that there is an immediate increase in concentration abilities with shorter-term meditation practice, but to sustain longer-term state changes, on-going practice is needed. More research with larger sample sizes could point to differences between experienced and novice practitioners.

Relational practices research is limited. Consciousness studies focus on strengthening awareness (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Marques, 2010; Schneider, Zollo, & Manocha, 2010), but are inconclusive in terms of results. Future focus connecting relational practice to deep listening would be beneficial.

In reflection, there is a significant amount of quantitative, randomized, controlled samples using self-report assessments. Articles that addressed mindfulness and psychopathologies, such as anxiety or depression, were excluded from this study (Biegel, Brown & Shapiro, 2009; Bogels, Hoogstaf, Van Dun, De Schutterm, and Restifo, 2008; Greco, Blackledge, Coyne, & Ehrenreich, 2005). This is not surprising given that mindfulness studies spring from issues relating to stress and mental health. In addition, there are a small and increasing number of publications looking at organizational mindfulness, ideas akin to engagement and organizational health.

Mindfulness wakes us up to the fact that our lives unfold only in moments. If we are not fully present for many of those moments, we may not only miss what is most valuable in our lives but also fail to realize the richness and the depth of our possibilities for growth and transformation.

Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4

There are few studies which specifically relate to organizational leaders using mind body strategies while experiencing stress. These studies, however, largely center on individuals rather than workplace leaders. Role-based mindfulness studies are still emerging in organizational contexts. The practitioner-reviewed literature is abundant with respect to stillness and mindfulness practices. Definitions of mindfulness vary, but tend to overlap in certain areas. Kabat-Zinn (1994) suggests that mindfulness means purposefully paying attention in a particular way, in the present moment, in a state of non-judgment. This definition emphasizes both seeing and being. In other words, the focus is on the now. This understanding underscores the inward process of noticing, and is the definition used throughout this study.

Mindfulness can be an indispensable aide in supporting leaders encountering chaotic conditions. An underlining assumption of this perspective is that the old methods of stress management and approaching change in increments, are no longer sufficient. Individuals in general, and leaders in particular, make in the moment decisions, and therefore, require mental and emotional dexterity. Mindfulness embodies this approach and promotes emotional learning.

The literature reveals (Carroll, 2008; Sinclair, 2007; Weiss, 2004) that breath is essential to a contemplative way of being. Findings suggest that with increased breath work and the ability to pay attention, an increase in self-awareness results. Self-awareness can manifest in new knowledge and consciousness and promote sound judgment.

The practitioner reviewed literature primarily focuses on stillness and meditation practices, and did not have the same amount of material pertaining to movement practices. Most of the literature focuses on the workplace and leadership in general, in the context of mindfulness.

There are notable gaps, including a clear understanding of what is meant by mindfulness, the relationship between mindfulness and worker productivity, organizational learning, consistency in vernacular, synthesis between concentrations based meditation, such as transcendental meditation, and a better understanding of the neurological benefits of mindfulness. These areas offer fresh opportunity for future research.

Situating the Researcher

The opportunity to investigate contemplative practice carries personal significance. Experience has taught me that it is far too easy to become preoccupied with the demands and responsibilities of work, and life in general. Sometimes this supports my intentions to keep focus on what matters most, and other times, it manifests in mindless behaviors like doing house chores without remembering what I just did (because I did not pay attention) or reaching for a snack when I was stressed, even though I was not hungry. The more I notice these tendencies, the less dis-ease I experience, and the better equipped I am at staying centered and able to connect with others. Knowing and accepting my own tendencies helps me to empathize with others, and build a shared understanding of the struggles we all encounter in our daily life.

My observation in working with both leaders and organizational behavior, is rooted in 20 years of corporate, not-for-profit, and consulting experience. I have partnered with executives and teams alike who have fallen into unhealthy behaviors, helping them to recognize where blockages exist, and formulate a shared response so they might get unstuck and align themselves with more healthy ways of being and doing. These efforts require that I support leaders in being able to see things in ways that they might have not considered, or asking them to question long-held assumptions. Much of the work I do is about helping others reframe a set of assumptions so that they might envision new possibilities in unforeseen ways. One of the

greatest challenges in doing this work is simply getting leaders to take the time to slow down and deeply reflect. This often requires that leaders begin to develop observational habits and skills. Taking time to critically consider, and if necessary realign, values and priorities is an investment, and one that I have found personally challenging. This is one reason I am deeply drawn to this subject matter. Completing this dissertation in the context of a demanding job provides daily reminders of just how much is expected of others. It also gives me the added burden of remaining objective, while still a part of an organization. At the same time, I feel that there are significant steps to be taken to turn the tide of how we choose show up at work and lead our lives. There is a substantial and growing body of evidence that has found that the practice of mindfulness can result in a better quality of being, less stress, reduced anxiety, and greater connectedness with others (Alexander, et al., 1993; Chaskalson 2011; Shapiro, Astin, Bishop & Cordova, 2005; Styhre, 2002; Tan, 2012; Valentine, Godkin, and Varca, 2010). These ancient approaches are re-awakening the promise that resilient leadership can be cultivated, and underpin one motivation for this study.

The process of developing others is, at best, uneven and messy, and often marked by regression and surge in attempts to forge new beginnings. I began a formal meditation practice about ten years ago when I was experiencing significant life stressors including the birth of two girls, an unstable job, and financial pressures. I experimented with several forms of meditation including centering prayer, mindfulness meditation, tai chi, Qigong, and yoga. My centering prayer experience was rooted in a year-long program that deepened my meditation and spiritual practice. I also took an eight-week mindfulness meditation course modeled after the Kabat-Zinn program. Around the same time, I invested in a two-year executive coaching program that sharpened my abilities to develop others. Meanwhile, I have remained committed to a daily

practice because of the benefits I experience. The results speak for themselves including increased calmness, a better listener, less attachment to ideas and material things, and more generally, feeling present and alive. My own personal experiences led me to think deeply about how these practices can help others, and leaders in particular, achieve a standard where *being* is valued as much as knowing or doing.

Mind body attention as a leadership strategy is not frequently discussed. Increasingly, workplaces offer wellness programs such as healthy eating, pilates, ergonomic reviews, and in some instances, formal meditation. Google's program, *Search Inside Yourself*, or Genentech's wellness program which integrates mindfulness and meditation, are exceptions. There are other organizations turning to these practices, but they are in their infancy and the significance to leader development is not well understood. The connection between mindful acts and leadership is still evolving. A first step is deepening an understanding of what mindfulness is, and exactly how it can support leader development.

An assumption I make is that individuals can grow, have the capacity to adapt and change, and that leadership can be learned. This perspective is rooted in my experience in working with countless leaders. Many of them made significant efforts to grow, while others never fully committed to the process. Regardless of the level of decision-making authority, the ability to increase focus, manage stress, and connect with others is an invaluable skill set for leaders at all levels both within the workplace, and beyond.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is an inquiry into the effectiveness of contemplative practices on organizational leaders that experience uncertainty. My goal for the study is to:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of how informal contemplative practices affect leader capability.
2. Expand the knowledge base of leadership through the lens of informal contemplative practice.
3. Reveal how a set of distinct informal contemplative practices can be applied to conditions of uncertainty.

The literature review unveiled a gap in terms of how informal practices influence leader abilities. Research (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Shapiro, et al., 2008) is replete with the benefits of formal practices, but few studies show the efficacy of how mindfulness can be practiced outside of structured bounds.

This study contributes to an understanding of how informal practices are cultivated on a daily basis. The research question is: What is the effect of contemplative practice on organizational leaders? This focus reveals ways in which leaders develop themselves and increase their effectiveness. It provides insight into the way turbulent environments may factor into how leaders respond and interact with others within an organizational context. A series of informal practices, developed for this study, were introduced to participants; the effect of these practices on participant abilities will be the focus of the evaluation.

Practices

Sinclair (2007) viewed breath as a significant way in which a leader can improve his capacity to lead. Breath awareness facilitates openness for self and others and is the pathway to connecting the body with the mind. She stated, “What is needed in leadership may be simply stated but is hard to give: the capacity to not react impulsively from our own immediate needs; to be really present to others; to relinquish our need for control or mastery to the requirements of

the challenges in front of us.” She further stated, “Breathing consciously supports a leadership that steps back to reprioritize and reframe” (p. 123). This theme of opening up and managing internal change is echoed in Carroll’s (2007) mindfulness work – which stated, “Leading others requires that we first open to the world around us” (p. 20). Carroll understood this to mean leaning into life’s unpredictability. In order to let go of, or at least to lessen resistance, leaders require mindsets of openness, and a willingness to consider outcomes that may differ from the original intention. Using breath as a vehicle to center and connect is a compelling starting place.

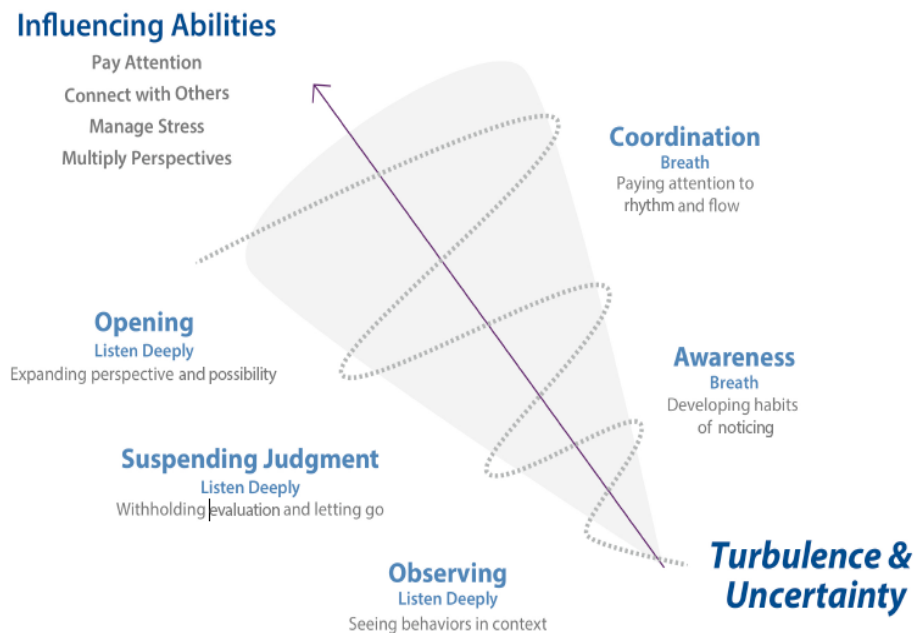
Practitioner publications revealed many studies of breath and deep listening in the context of leadership. Numerous themes pertaining to breath and awareness and consciousness emerged. The ability to notice breath and develop awareness of its rhythm was addressed. In particular, breath coordinating was presented as a four-part cycle: inhalation, pause, exhalation, and pause. Deep listening related to observing: paying attention to habits in the mind body context. It was also about withholding or suspending judgment so that in the moment attention is directed to the person and new possibilities emerge. The integration of these practices gives rise to leading as a way of being. The interplay between breath and deep listening is illustrated in Figure 1.2. Through the dynamic interaction of these practices, one is creating an integrated mind and body framework from which to experience the world. This idea of leading as a way of being may mean that leadership is not simply about actions, but rather, a way of thinking and being so that focus, and in-the-moment presence, is commonplace. The practitioner literature provided clarity about the influence contemplative practices may have the way one experiences uncertainty with composure.

Suspending judgment is about withholding evaluation. An example could include, thinking that I am right and the other person is not, or I have experience and therefore know

better, therefore I judge. People appraise for a host a reasons, including insecurity or defensiveness, or because, as some suggest, it is a hard-wired reaction for survival. Suspending judgment helps to keep focus on the person, allowing her to feel heard, while the listener increases attunement with the mind body connection. As a result, it opens space for more curious thinking, which can lead to seeing challenges in new perspective. In time, a decision may need to be made, but in the context of suspending judgment, it invites a new sense of clarity. This may mean that unexpected ideas emerge because the old, conditioned thinking, begins take new shape. Beginning to notice how emotions and feelings are experienced in the body spurs openness and encourages risk-taking.

Leadership as a Way of Being:

A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Source: Influenced by the work of Bhikkhu (1997); Carroll (2006, 2008); Hahn (1976); Kabat-Zinn (1994); Langer (1989); Rock and Page (2009); Silsbee (2010); Sinclair (2008); Vaill (1996); Weiss (2004); Wheatley (2005); Wilbur et. al (2008)

Figure 1.2. Leadership as a way of being: Interplay between breath and deep listening.

This study's approach evaluates informal contemplative practices in a daily context. The practices are guided by four abilities, embedded in weekly measures, and include the ability to:

1. Pay attention (concentration and focusing of the mind).
2. Connect with others (building relationships through attention of mind body states).
3. Manage stress (responding to external stimuli through mind body awareness).
4. Multiply perspectives (ability to see viewpoints in a mind body context).

The abilities are intermediary forces that may increase effectiveness. Rather than measuring specific leader outcomes, these abilities were continually assessed throughout the study. The researcher sought to understand how the practices affect change.

In summary, breath is the core construct of contemplative leadership. Breath practice is found to both increase the ability to focus, and decrease impulsivity. It is a way to cultivate calmness and lessen the need for immediate gratification. Breath practice holds promise as a method for increasing self-awareness and strengthening the mind body connection. It is not expected that challenges will go away, but rather, be experienced in a new way which allows the individual to see through a fresh lens. The practices presuppose that through daily application, new habits will be adopted, similar to an athlete or performer who relies on repetition and practice to fine-tune their craft and prepare for peak performance.

Study Methodology

The research method is single subject with multiple subject design. I am interested in understanding the effect of contemplative practice as it relates to the abilities. I am curious as to the effect of the abilities and if they instigate change. I am also eager to learn how the frequency of the practice (i.e., number of activities practiced daily) influences behaviors. I want to know

how the organizational setting is experienced in terms of perceived stress. To answer these questions, a suite of assessments and tools will be introduced.

Both quantitative and qualitative survey data will be collected. The Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and the Mindfulness Survey (MS) will be administered pre- and-post the research. A body mapping tool will be introduced as a way to assist in increasing mind and body awareness. One-on-one coaching support will support the integration of the practices. Journaling and field notes will be included to capture insights and trends as the learning unfolds. The self-assessments will be continual so that subtle changes are uncovered.

The research approach will identify seven participants from a variety of organizational backgrounds and manager roles. Given the small sample size, generalization beyond the participant is not possible. The selection criteria consists of: managers and above; direct report responsibility; public, private or not-for-profit organizations; white collar workers; and those with limited meditation and mindfulness training. Participants will be drawn through a network of contacts; all will be located in the metropolitan area of San Diego, California. Selection criteria and research design protocols is provided in detail, in Chapter III.

Communicating Mindfully

How one speaks is a good indicator of how one thinks. Communicating mindfully means thinking and speaking with intention, which in turn, supports authenticity. One can remain alert to the situation at hand and sustain deep listening. In contrast, mindlessness can present with rigidity and stiffness, as is the case with shallow breathing. A sense of tightness can manifest in a variety of ways, including being closed to the viewpoints of others.

A self-aware person notices when communication is halting or out of sync. A closed and misleading posture becomes apparent, for example, when interest is lost. Chapman (2012) used

the metaphor of the traffic signal as a way to notice when communication working, or not functional. She stated, “When the channel of communication closes down, we imagine the light has turned red. When communication feels open again, we say the light has turned green. When the communication is in-between, or on the verge of closing down, we say the light has turned yellow (p. 4).” This red light, yellow light, and green light metaphor is an effective way in representing when one is communicating mindfully.

A mindful vernacular is sensitive to the words one uses because it affects how one feels. Word choice is powerful, and can either bring individuals together or push them apart. Being nonjudgmental, and cognizant of how one thinks and speaks, bolsters mindful communication. This is particularly true during difficult conversations where one misguided word can disfranchise an otherwise intentional discussion. Speaking with transparency and compassion facilitates a meaningful way of relating.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study. The intent of the research is to gain a deeper understanding of how contemplative practices affect one’s abilities, expand the knowledge base of leadership through the lens of informal practice, and reveal how a series of practices can be applied to conditions of change and turbulence.

A literature review is presented in Chapter II and includes a presentation of the major findings and corresponding themes. The review is presented in three parts: a peer review of contemplative literature, a practitioner review, and a conceptual presentation of the study. Presenting the peer and practitioner based literature separately helps to spotlight how different they are in orientation and more clearly distinguishes their unique contributions. Each of the themes is discussed in detail establishing a clear connection to the study. The chapter is

designed to reveal salient gaps in the literature so that a clear rationale for the research question is clarified. The conceptual framework presented is an extension of the findings from the gaps found in the literature. The framework is revealed in Chapter II and sets the stage for specific exercises unveiled in Chapter III.

Chapter III introduces single subject with multiple subject design as a methodology. The participant serves as his or her own control, rather than using another individual or group. The methods include the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, the Mindfulness Survey, body mapping, interviews, observation, weekly reflections and journaling, and personal coaching. Emphasis on reflection is embedded throughout the study and facilitates sense-making. The reader will also find a description of the participants from the study, along with protocol and procedures.

Chapter IV will present the findings based on the research question. The results from the methods are meant to justify conclusions, including rationale and description. An integrative analysis of the findings from the study is presented first. Each of the participants is presented as unique and includes overarching trends and findings. Part of the findings will include possible implications for the individual systems and the organizational setting.

Chapters V and VI bring the purpose of the study to a final analysis and present the conclusions for consideration and implications for leadership and change. Future research based on the findings will be introduced. Concluding thoughts of contemplative practice for leader effectiveness will be discussed.

Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions and descriptions may be helpful to reader:

1. *Contemplative awareness*: Refers to an appreciation of our lives that often develops out of, and can be strengthened by, contemplative practice. It includes the potential to lead us to more compassionate and wise behavior and the development of deep insights into issues and problems in our lives.
<http://www.contemplativemind.org/about/faq.html>
2. *Contemplative practice*: Contemplative practices are methods incorporated into daily life as a reminder to slow down, focus, and feel more connected to yourself, your work, and your environment. <http://www.contemplativemind.org/about/faq.html>
3. *Capabilities*: The term refers to qualities or abilities such as being able to develop, or having the potential to gain, proficiency or effectiveness. In this study, capabilities are the qualities or abilities that can be gained to increase competence as a leader.
4. *Difference between meditation and contemplation*: The difference is often dependent on the cultural or religious context in which the words are used. For example, in a traditional Buddhist context, meditation is essentially (although it has many forms) a formal exercise used to calm and focus the mind without being distracted by thoughts, while contemplation is focused thinking on a particular topic. In a Christian monastic context, the meanings are generally reversed; contemplation is considered a more intimate experience or exercise than meditation. Both meditation and contemplation can be performed while sitting, standing, lying down, or moving, and can have different (or multiple) intentions, such as improving concentration, generating feelings of love and compassion, or calming anxiety. But, because the word "meditation" frequently evokes certain practices (a meditator with legs folded, practicing vipassana, zazen, TM, etc.) at the exclusion of others (creative arts, dance,

council circles, etc.), the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society states, “we feel it is often more useful to use the word “contemplative practices” to encompass meditation, contemplation and similar practices.”

<http://www.contemplativemind.org/about/faq.html>

5. *Emotional intelligence*: Addresses the emotional, persona, social, and survival dimensions of intelligence. It is concerned with understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands (Bar-On, 2002).
6. *Flow*: The state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).
7. *Leadership*: A form of being (with ourselves and others); a way of thinking and acting that awakens and mobilizes people to find new, freer, and more meaningful ways of seeing, working, and living. This form of leadership is anchored to personal self-awareness and mindfulness toward others. (Sinclair, 2007).
8. *Learning agility*: The ability to learn from experience, and subsequently apply that learning to perform successfully under new or first-time conditions (Eichinger, Lombardo, and Capretta, 2010). This suggests that learning agile leaders can anticipate or adapt to uncertain circumstances; they face complexity in flexible ways so as to learn from them, yet carry a sense of mission or purpose to carry out their task.
9. *Mindfulness*. Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Mindfulness is a way

of learning to relate directly to whatever is happening in your life, a way of taking charge of your life, a way of doing something for yourself that no one else can do for you; consciously and systematically working with your own stress, pain, illness, and the challenges and demands of everyday life. Center for Mindfulness.

<http://www.umassmed.edu/Content.aspx?id=41254&LinkIdentifier=id>

Weiss (2004) understands there to be two forms of mindfulness: formal and informal. *Formal mindfulness* can be understood as meditation; that is, setting aside a specific time period to sit silently with mindful awareness or while walking, and noticing the breath. *Informal mindfulness*, by contrast, consists of daily life activities that involve paying attention while eating or during a conversation with another, and being able to reflect and question, if mindfully based qualities are occurring (while in the moment).

10. *Mindlessness*. State of rigidity in which one adheres to a single perspective and acts automatically. When one is mindless, one is trapped in a rigid mindset and is oblivious to context or perspective (Carson and Langer, 2006).
11. *Resilient*: One who is resilient has the ability to come back from a challenge or failure and, in effect, rebound. It suggests that an event was overcome by remaining flexible while dealing with adversity.
12. *Uneasiness*: The term refers to a restlessness or feeling of being uncomfortable, as it relates to the mind and body. A state of uneasiness occurs within, and may result from, a host of reasons, such as not feeling in control or having a difficult encounter with another person.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to present contemplative and mindfulness-based literature as it pertains to organizational leaders. The chapter is organized into three sections: peer reviewed contemplative literature, practitioner-based mindfulness literature, and a presentation of a conceptual framework based on the literature. These first two areas are complementary and together add depth to understanding the research and its gaps. The third area articulates a framework based on the literature gaps. The literature draws from interdisciplinary sources and therefore has relevance in multiple fields. Presenting the literature in a unified way helps to establish a common lens and language to explore the contemplative terrain.

Section one will discuss how contemplative practice impacts leader's abilities to manage stress and commotion. The search design included three dimensions: turbulence and stress, contemplative practice, and organizational leaders. A key contribution was identifying three distinct themes: stillness practices, movement practices, and relational practices. The majority of the studies (Carmody, Baer, Lykins, and Olendzki, 2009; Hollis-Walker and Colosimo, 2010; Shapiro, et al., 2008) reviewed were randomized, controlled samples, using self-report assessments (see citations in Appendix A). Stillness practices relating to individuals in non-organizational roles were prevalent. Opportunities to augment quantitative studies, including exploring how organizational leadership is cultivated in the midst of chaos, was an identified gap. Detailed review of each of the three practices, the findings and implications, and technique strengths and limitations, are included.

Section two will examine a select body of practitioner-based mindfulness literature relating to leaders experiencing uncertainty and turbulence. Stillness, movement, and relational

practices were common themes. Mindfulness literature pertaining to leadership was overwhelmingly represented, as were its various forms. The section was organized in two ways: the first approach covered a broad terrain of mindfulness and leadership literature, including how brain imagery is uncovering positive neurological effects, while the second discusses the connection between mindfulness as it related to breath and awareness, emotional intelligence, authentic leadership, adaptive leadership, and spiritual leadership. Opportunities for future research identified the impact of contemplative practice on organizational leaders experiencing turbulence, and understanding how it can be cultivated.

Section three presents a conceptual framework as it relates to breath and mindful listening. Based on the literature review, numerous themes pertaining to breath and awareness emerged. In particular, two areas of contemplation were revealed, including breath awareness and breath coordination. Another major theme that emerged was mindful listening. Mindful listening includes several areas such as the ability to observe oneself and others, passing judgment of others, and providing a clearing space for listening by opening one to new possibilities. Each of these elements is expanded upon in section three. These specific areas of contemplative practice provide opportunity for future research and are foundational for the study's direction.

Last, a practitioner-based perspective is added to the peer-reviewed literature. A primary reason for this addition, is the incomplete peer-reviewed literature as it relates to assimilating studies for organizational leaders. The practitioner-based literature included mindfulness-based approaches and strategies for how contemplative behaviors can be practiced in an organizational setting. Despite a lack of research-based studies for practitioner literature, it added an essential lens for the mindfulness terrain. Each leadership dimension was explored in detail.

Additionally, the practitioner-based perspective is germane to today's organizational leadership practices and was often progressive in outlook, adding to or challenging conventional leadership thinking. Through this in-depth investigation, the intention was to gain a clearer understanding of how the literature informs ways of knowing and ways of being.

Section One: Peer Reviewed Contemplative Literature

Seeking predictability appears to be common human nature. Shareholders want their stock price to grow, executives re-engineer organizational structures providing new order, and leaders use rehearsed messaging to manage perceptions. All of these measures seem to represent a false notion: chaos and uncertainty can be controlled. Work, like life, is messy and unpredictable, and in the end, command structures are a losing proposition. Global integration of economies, social change, and technology continue to move at break-neck pace. The rise and fall of major corporations like Enron, and the re-birth of organizations like Ford and General Motors, are contemporary examples that exemplify sudden change. The impact on industries and people are significant. Long gone are the days when leaders can stay a steady course of executing against well-established plans—long-term plans now have a shelf life of just a few years. Herein lies the opportunity for leaders to exhibit presence of mind and body in the midst of ambiguity and despite on-going feelings of anxiousness.

At the center of being able to navigate turbulence and uncertainty, is the ability to manage stress. Traditional strategies for dealing with stress include interventions such as relaxation techniques, which often treat symptoms at the periphery. However, stress can be used to catapult energy and direction if intentionally channeled. In the research, literature pertaining to psychopathologies was not included. At the center of the research, however, was an investigation uncovering how states of calm and focus manifest. In particular, mind body

literature, as it related to cognitive states, was uncovered so that gaps and implications could be understood.

Situating the Literature

There are several assumptions I wish to acknowledge in approaching the investigation. The Center for Contemplative Mind and Society defines contemplative practice as a “practice designed to quiet the mind in the midst of the stress and distraction of everyday life in order to cultivate a personal capacity for deep concentration and insight.” The Center revealed several forms of contemplative practice including: stillness, movement, creation process, activist, generative, ritual/cyclical, and relational (see Appendix B). The study revealed that stillness, movement, and relational practices intersected with the subject area and aligned with contemplative practices.

The knowledge structure is shaped around two other ideas: mind body philosophies and stress and well-being. In particular, Western mind body theory can be traced to Greek and European thought; thinkers included Plato and Socrates from ancient Greece, and Descartes, in particular, from European scientific-rational thought. According to Rakoff (2010), “Western body-mind theory is based on Cartesian dualism: the idea that the body and the mind are two distinct things, and that they emanate from wholly different sources” (p. 62). The Western paradigm still holds, often treating mind and body illness as distinct entities. Diet, for example, is often seen as a technical problem that can be corrected by food modification or restriction without addressing the underlying emotional connections.

In contrast, Eastern mind body thinking pre-dates Christianity, and has roots based on ancient Hindu traditions. Distinct to Eastern theory is the connection between mind and body. According to Yasuo, Nagatomo, and Hull (1993), “Eastern mind body theory holds the mind and the body are one, and is primarily focused on self-development or self-cultivation” (p. 7). In

particular, cultivation is a key element of Eastern thought and through many centuries has expressed and refined itself through practices such as Qigong and tai chi. In the stillness practices, meditation is a channel to connect the body and mind and has direct lineage to Buddhist traditions, including mindfulness that is identified as the seventh step of the Noble Eightfold Path, as taught by the Siddhartha Gautam. Today, mindfulness and meditation, in the western sense, draw on both western and eastern thought and have been mainstreamed by thought leaders such as Kabat-Zinn (1994) and The Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts. The attention to scientific research has since proliferated, resulting in new knowledge that has proven useful in treating various diseases and disorders, as well as inducing positive states of well-being.

A final assumption is in respect to how stress and turbulence are understood. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), “the definition of stress emphasizes the relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being” (p. 21). It is when these resources overburden the capacity to deal with emotion and stress, that the body’s system and mind are overextended resulting in diminished coping skills. Turbulence refers to significant disorder and environments flush with uncertainty, bordering on chaos, which often results in high rates of stress. Turbulence represents a messy and surprising situation that organizations and their leaders encounter on a daily basis.

Stillness Practices: Individual-Based

While investigating peer-reviewed literature for stillness practices at the individual-level, three sub-themes emerged. Each of these areas overlaps with another, yet is distinct. The three areas include: mediators vs. non-meditators, stress reduction and well-being, and an emerging,

but lesser known area, centering prayer. A brief overview of mindfulness definitions provide context for the investigations.

Stress reduction through mindfulness meditation is one of the major stillness practices. Therefore, establishing context regarding how mindfulness is understood is valuable. Bishop (2004) viewed mindfulness as being defined as the observing of mental phenomena in a non-judgmental manner. Kjellgren and Taylor (2008) asserted that mindfulness practice allows thoughts, feeling, or sensations to arise while maintaining a stance of attention. Hollis-Walker and Colosimo (2010) suggested that mindfulness is non-judging, and a non-identifying attitude. Shapiro, et al. (2008) defined mindfulness as intentional and nonjudgmental awareness of moment-to-moment experience. Last, Kabat-Zinn (1994) asserted that mindfulness means purposefully paying attention, in a particular way, in the present moment, and without judgment. Clear threads connect the definitions: being present, centered, acting with intentional awareness, and being non-judgmental. All the while, these qualities are practiced moment-to-moment regardless of surrounding circumstances. These definitions provide a foundation from which to measure the sub-themes and findings.

Several studies compared meditators with non-meditators, and explored an association between well-being and meditation. Kjellgren and Taylor (2008) explored the participation of experienced and inexperienced meditators. The study was based on eight semi-structured interviews and used a five-step Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). According to Kjellgren and Taylor (2008), the results revealed that some experienced meditators reported differences in the ability to remain conscious in the dream and deep sleep state, as well as experience greater clarity, serenity, and more compassion in the waking state. Interestingly, inexperienced meditators perceived greater differences between meditation and a normal waking

state than did experienced ones, documented through a follow up quantitative questionnaire. A possible interpretation is that experienced meditators develop trait changes, whereas less experienced meditators may be state related.

Recent studies have provided insight into the differences between experienced and non-experienced meditators, particularly in respect to studies using neuro-imaging devices to measure brain activity. A recent study by Holzel et al. (2011), documented brain gray matter density in regions involving learning and memory processes, emotion regulation, self-referential processing, and perspective taking. In fact, Holzel et al., provided an overview of five morphometric studies of meditation spanning six traditions (Insight, Zen, and Tibetan Buddhist, Zazen, Vipassana, and Samatha), where all showed various activity signs ranging from the right anterior insula to the left inferior temporal lobe as regions showing greater concentration in meditators than controls. All of the participants were taken from a mindfulness meditation course at the Center for Mindfulness. In a study by Slagter et al. (2007), results from a three month intensive mental training concluded a smaller attentional blink and reduced brain-resource allocation, all pointing to evidence for plasticity in brain and mental function. Another study by Lazar et al. (2005) indicated that long-term meditation practice is associated with altered resting electroencephalogram patterns, indicators associated with increased cortical thickness. Last, in a study by Lutz et al. (2004), results involving long-term meditators demonstrated positive changes in cognition and emotion, including self-induced high-amplitude gamma synchrony that appeared during mental practice. This growing evidence of long-term vs. short-term and experienced vs. non-experienced meditators is providing ample evidence of meditation's positive impact on brain resources, matter density, cognition, and emotional functioning. Further studies controlling for factors such as past meditation experiences, may provide additional insight.

In another study that attempted to distinguish long-term meditators (>5 years) from novice meditators measuring self-regulatory skills, the data proved inconclusive. According to Taylor and Mireault (2008), “several plausible explanations why novice and experienced meditators appeared not to differ on self-regulation, some of which, such as small sample size and the use of a single measure, are deficits of this study” (p. 93). The Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) was used, and the sample size included 61 attendees at meditation retreats held at a Buddhist retreat center in rural Vermont. Hollis-Walker and Colosimo (2010) explored the relationship between mindfulness and happiness in non-meditators, using the Five-Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) construct. As hypothesized, the findings showed significant correlation with happiness-related constructs (i.e., self-compassion, agreeableness, and openness) and negatively with neuroticism. Increased well-being and happiness in the study context all reported positive correlation. More broadly, the data is producing significant results in respect to health-related indicators, but mixed results in respect to comparing long-term vs. short-term meditators. Furthermore, the development of neuro-imaging is revealing differences in brain activity that may accelerate the understanding of meditation and its effects.

Numerous studies sought to correlate mindfulness meditation programs with well-being and self-efficacy. Carmody, Baer, Lykins, and Olendzki (2009) found partial support for the mediating effect of four variables (self-regulation, values clarification, cognitive and behavioral flexibility, and exposure). Overall, the study (as measured by scales of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire), showed significant increases from pre-to-post interventions, with overall stress reduction and increased well-being. Chang et al. (2004) examined the effects of mindfulness meditation on pain, positive states of mind, and self-efficacy. Findings included

significantly higher levels of self-efficacy and positive states of mind at post-intervention measures. The Positive States of Mind (PSOM) assessment was used to measure focused attention, productivity, responsible caretaking, restful repose, and sensual/non-sexual pleasure. The approach was similar to other mindfulness meditation programs discussed.

Shapiro, et al. (2008) provided evidence that as participants become more experienced and effective in engaging in the practices, their levels of mindfulness continued to increase. This conclusion is consistent with the previous discussion comparing long-term vs. short-term meditators, and, in particular, suggests that with time, greater likelihood of trait change, as compared with short-term state change, can result. The study represents a first of its kind that examined the mediating effects from two approaches, the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), and a second program called the Eight Point Program, or EPP, which focused on Passage Meditation, a spiritually oriented, nonsectarian approach. According to Shapiro et al. (2008), "Passage Meditation involves choosing a meaningful passage to recite during meditation practice" (p. 841). The researchers investigated the cultivation of mindfulness as distinct from mindfulness-based interventions and were measured using the Mindful Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS). They relayed, "treatments effects on the MAAS were larger at eight-week follow-up than at post-test, significantly so, ($p < .05$) for the EPP intervention" (p.857). The study's strength is the inclusion of a two-month follow up assessment, which measured the degree to which practices were taught during the intervention and post-intervention, unusual steps for similar-type studies. The author's offered a noteworthy critique of similar studies, suggesting that the cultivation of mindfulness techniques are often blended, but the findings are typically and wholly attributed to mindfulness. This observation also reveals the need for a clear

operational definition of mindfulness (Baer, Smith, and Allen, 2004) and capturing the multi-faceted aspects.

Similar studies also found increases in mindfulness and well-being, and decreases in stress and related symptoms (Astin, 1997; Birnie, Speca, and Carlson, 2010; Carmody and Baer, 2008; Grossman, et al., 2004). The typical design included randomized, controlled approaches modeled after Kabat-Zinn's eight-week program, combined with varying forms of meditation (i.e., yoga, body scan, sitting meditation), and use of self-report assessments such as the Symptoms of Stress Inventory. In all cases, positive findings were reported, and suggested that with practice, mindfulness meditation can lead to being more present-focused. An emerging area of meditation is the impact practice has on self-compassion. Birnie, Speca, and Carlson (2010) found, "individuals high in self-compassion also tended to have high levels of spirituality and mindfulness and exhibit low levels of stress symptoms and mood disturbance" (p. 365). This finding suggests several assumptions, including that mindfulness is a pre-condition to heightened self-compassion, and there may be a link between the two, as well as correlation with spirituality.

Consciousness may be viewed as another path toward well-being akin to mindfulness and spirituality. According to Brown and Ryan (2003), consciousness encompasses both awareness and attention. They continued, "awareness and attention are intertwined, such that attention continually pulls "figures" out of the "ground" of awareness, holding them focally for varying lengths of time" (p. 822). The intersection with mindfulness and stress reduction is that awareness is about opening oneself and being receptive, key qualities for being present minded. The authors asserted, "mindfulness is inherently a state of consciousness" (p. 824). In their study, Brown and Ryan sought to understand the association between mindfulness and well-being, and how this relates with consciousness. Using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

(MAAS), the results indicated a “pattern of associations that higher scorers on the MAAS tend to be more aware and receptive to inner experiences and more mindful of overall behavior” (p. 832). Unlike other studies modeled after Kabat-Zinn, the present study did not seek to cultivate behaviors, but rather, was an investigation that included four other studies using the MAAS. The MAAS is a reliable and valid instrument in college student and general population samples, and to different degrees, showed consistent associations between mindfulness and well-being. In a related, but different study, Alexander, Langer, Newman, Chandler, and Davies (1989), examined the role of consciousness through an experimental study with the elderly. They used specific mental techniques associated with Transcendental Meditation, or TM, to measure changes in consciousness that potentially extended human life and reversed age-related declines. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi founded TM as a discipline and introduced mental techniques derived from the Vedic tradition of India, and proposed that through this procedure, a fourth major state of consciousness can be experienced. The fourth state was expected to help one move beyond typical states of being and into a higher level of awareness and consciousness. The study included 73 volunteers, most of whom were women from retirement homes, and introduced a series of structured trainings in specific mental and emotional activities over a period of three years. “The most striking finding of the study is the apparent increase in longevity (survival rate) with TM: All TM subjects were alive after three years, in contrast with other groups initially equivalent in chronological age and physiological and psychological health” (p. 961). An underlying theme of the study is the opening up and awareness building that TM develops, which in turn, increases the possibility of self-empowerment. This may be one plausible explanation for the finding and its impact on longevity and overall well-being. In sum, consciousness and mindfulness do overlap, particularly where they focus on attention and

awareness building. An underlying theme for future investigations is whether, and to what degree, TM and mindfulness techniques lead to greater levels of consciousness and waking states, and what implications for well-being.

An emerging, but lesser known, area of meditation is a contemporary form of Christian prayer called, Centering Prayer (as a method) and Contemplative Prayer (in respect to the overall process). According to Keating (2006), “Contemplative prayer is a process of interior transformation, a conversion initiated by God and leading, if we consent, to divine union” (p. 1). Many aspects of contemplative practice mirror mindfulness meditation (i.e., awareness and a focus on being present-centered). However, Ferguson, Willemsen, and Castañeto (2010) asserted that a principal difference, in contrast to Eastern oriented approaches, is that contemplative prayer is built around a relationship with God” (p. 306). Thus, the aim is a purification process, rather than achieving higher-states of consciousness. The study evaluated the impact of centering prayer on everyday stress and on Christians’ approach to communicating with God. Similar to methods employed by Kabat-Zinn, the design involved workshops and a closing retreat over a period of 10-weeks, and included 15 parishners. Several self-report measures were used including the Trait-Anxiety Inventory, the Religious Problem-Solving Scales, and the Personality Profile. The results showed “statistically significant changes in three different styles of relationship to God: Collaborative, Deferring, and Self-Directing” (p. 324). Qualitative measures suggested a decrease in stress, but the data from the Trait-Anxiety measure was not statistically significant. Moreover, the study represents an underdeveloped area of research and offers an alternative, albeit similar, process to mindfulness meditation.

In conclusion, literature addressing stillness practice for individuals has much to offer. There is high interest in understanding the impact of long-term and short-term meditators and

how this shapes trait vs. state change. Research is looking at the differences between the meditation traditions with the aim of understanding effectiveness. Increasingly, brain-imaging technology is helping to understand neurological changes that occur as a result of meditation. The majority of research interest is squarely focused on exploring stress, coping ability, and enhancing wellness. The eight-week mindfulness meditation approach is frequently researched. There are few qualitative study designs in this genre. Last, centering prayer offers a complementary, but alternative approach to Eastern inspired traditions, and is an area ripe for future exploration. In tying the findings to other forms of leadership, such as parenting, where high stress and ambiguity are commonplace, the research is scant. There appears to be significant potential for future research addressing the effect of mindfulness and meditation in these contexts. Next, an exploration of stillness practices focusing on workplace roles is investigated.

Stillness Practices: Role-Based

The stillness practices for role-based studies revealed three sub-themes. First, several of the studies addressed Transcendental Meditation as a way to reduce stress for managers and employees. Next, studies specific to the health care field emerged. This was not surprising given the amount of turbulence the environment experiences, as was the case with the stillness practices for individuals. These studies typically sought to evaluate mindfulness meditation as a way to manage burnout and deal with commotion. Last, Buddhist practices and consciousness in the workplace are evaluated. These themes make for an interesting mix of role-based studies.

A case study evaluating a TM program in a Swedish management team reported two breakthroughs: becoming more open-minded and creative in thinking, and being able to comprehend issues better in the context of resources and strategy. Schmidt-Wilk (2003) stated,

“the team members also described an abrupt change in their behavior in the months just preceding the final interview. They described an unexpected shift in their behavior in which they stopped blaming each other and focused instead on the substantive issues” (p. 223). TM was established decades ago, largely due to its straight-forward approach and easy to apply technique. Schmidt-Wilk (2003) reflected, “the TM technique is a simple and easily learned procedure practiced for 20-minutes twice a day sitting quietly with eyes closed. The practice requires no change in lifestyle, no special beliefs, and no effort” (p. 221). This overview lends credence to why it can be so easily adopted, despite the report that the managers were highly skeptical of the approach.

In a three-month prospective study by Alexander et al. (1993), TM was implemented in two settings: the automotive industry and a small distribution sales company. The study focused on employees who learned TM and were compared to controls similar in roles, job, etc. According to Alexander et al. (1993), “regular meditators improved significantly more than controls (with irregular meditators scoring in between) on multiple measures of stress and employee development” (p. 245). Several self-report questionnaires were used, including the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), the short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), and the Center for Management Research Questionnaire (CMRQ). The employees who practiced TM regularly all improved significantly in respect to occupational coherence (adaptive capacity, physiological feeling of being settled, and job and life satisfaction), which contributed toward effectiveness on the job and personal relationships. These findings suggest that individuals who practiced TM increased their ability to self-actualize and manage turbulence.

Some doubt has been cast over the efficacy of TM compared with relaxation techniques. Broome, Orme-Johnson, and Schmidt-Wilk (2005) researched this concern head on. In their study focusing on worksite stress and uncertainty, they experimented with the TM technique and the Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), conducted at a South African firm with 80 employees. According to Broome, Orme-Johnson, and Schmidt-Wilk (2005), “psychological stress decreased significantly over 5.5 months for the TM group ($p < .002$) with 67% of the decrease in the first two weeks” (p. 235). Both TM and PMR group’s decreased stress over the course of the study, however, the TM stress level was much greater than the PMR group over the six weeks of practice. Blood pressure decreased significantly only for the TM group. Interestingly, the majority of the changes occurred within the first two weeks of practice. This suggests that the initial jolt to one’s psyche has immediate and dramatic effects. This also suggests that near-term state changes take hold quickly; trait changes require sustained and regular practice, as discussed earlier in the Kjellgren and Taylor (2008) study.

The second theme focused on health care professionals and burnout. The most common approach these studies took was mindfulness meditation with physicians, nurses, and health care professionals. Health care is a field filled with distraction and unpredictability. Krasner et al. (2009) set out to determine if a program in mindfulness and self-awareness is associated with improvement in physicians’ well-being and burnout. According to the authors, “the intervention consisted of an intensive phase (eight weekly 2.5 hour sessions, plus an all-day seven-hour session between the sixth and seventh weekly session) and a maintenance phase (10 monthly 2.5-hour sessions following the eight weekly sessions)” (p. 1285). The intervention is a standard approach for mindfulness meditation, with the exception of the 10-monthly follow-up meetings. Several self-report assessments were used including the 2-Factor Mindfulness Scale and the

Maslach Burnout Inventory. In addition, the Jefferson Scale of Physician Empathy was used along with the Physician Belief Scale. The results included increased “self-awareness and improved personal well-being, including lower levels of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) and improved mood (total and depression, vigor, tension, anger, and fatigues)” (p. 1288). Other factors, such as the ability to relate with patients and empathy, were also reported to improve.

The results of the Krasner et al. (2009) study seem to mirror those of Galantino, Baime, Maguire, Szapary, and Farrar (2005), who measured the consequences of commotion in health-care professionals during an eight-week MBSR program. The study consisted of 84-employees from one institute within a university hospital. Similar assessments to those used in the Krasner et al. (2009) study including the Maslach Burnout Inventory measuring stress and coping attitudes were administered. One of the study’s measures included taking saliva samples pre-and-post intervention. The saliva results did not bear out and were inconsistent. It was not clear why the saliva results proved not significant. One plausible explanation may be that the collection time and heterogeneity of the group affected the results. However, “subjects reported significant improvement in mood and emotional exhaustion” (Galantino et al., p. 21). These results were also in line with another health care study by Shapiro, et al. (2005), who again, using a similar MBSR approach, found that “in the MBSR group, 88% of the participants improved their stress scores while 90% demonstrated increases in self-compassion” (p. 170). The self-compassion scores are particularly interesting due to the daily interface with patients and consistency with other studies (Cohen-Katz et al., 2005). One critique of the Shapiro et al. study includes the small sample size of 10 participants. Overall, however, the health care

environment provides an ideal research audience for the MBSR interventions due to significant confusion.

In an interesting phenomenological study involving a small sample size of eight, Marques (2010) evaluated the applicability of Buddhist practices in today's workplaces. The theme of consciousness in business and the workplace guided the author's interest. Consciousness expressed through awareness was a cornerstone of the subject matter. The study participants were drawn from a combination of Eastern and Western Buddhist masters. Marques asked a central question of all participants: "What are the main elements of Buddhist practice that can elevate personal and professional well-being in contemporary organizations" (p. 215)? The results from the study included,

when implemented to a greater degree, the application of Buddhist practices could lead to greater organizational performance and wellbeing without crass politics; to greater acceptance without narrow-mindedness, to greater satisfaction without feeling exploited, and to a better view of the company's long-term direction and contribution to the well-being of humanity without obsession with short-term profits (p. 224).

The study revealed several Buddhist practices that do not appear compatible with modern capitalism. Global capitalism, after all, is a winner-take all system. The win-lose equation is difficult to reconcile since capitalism is founded on the principle of competition. The study attempted to reconcile these dichotomies by focusing on the collaborative spectrum of the workplace, but in critique, failed to provide adequate explanation. The overarching conclusion presented could be found through what was presented as the "middle way." In other words, finding balance and moderation in all of life's pursuits was emphasized, and seemed to be common ground for the Buddhist working in for-profit environments epitomized by high states of excitement and uncertainty.

In another consciousness study, Schneider, Zollo, and Manocha (2010) explored how to develop socially responsible behavior at four companies. The authors' asserted that "the self-monitoring capacity developed via meditation might be particularly useful in complex ethical dilemma situations or when faced with strong pressures to act in ways that are not aligned with one's own values or even identity" (p. 27). Voluntary participants used a meditation technique called Sahaja Yoga, during a six-week training program. In another group of managers, participants were randomly assigned; the first group attended the Sahaja Yoga program, a second group attended training in Hatha yoga, and the third group was on an active waiting list. Results from the meditation groups indicated significant changes in positive affect such as increased happiness and well-being, a decrease in feeling tired and nervous, and increased self-confidence. Further, "managers who went through the meditation program reported a significantly larger improvement ($p < .001$) in the extent to which they 'make decisions easily', compared with the same pre-post variation in the Hatha yoga group" (p. 33). The results favor the meditation practice over the yoga approach, which emphasized stress reduction and relaxation. Moreover, the study's intent was to evaluate the likelihood that social consciousness and heightened awareness in managers plays a role in day-to-day decision-making. The results support programs integrating self-reflection and meditation for managers as a way to deal with commotion.

In conclusion, stillness practices in the workplace are growing. Transcendental Meditation is the most established form of meditation due to its ease of implementation. Results have been positive in reducing stress and confusion as well as increasing job satisfaction. The second theme relating to mindfulness meditation for health-care professionals has drawn attention, and is not surprising given the turbulent environment many practitioners encounter.

Last, studies addressing consciousness in the workplace have some interest, including how Buddhist practices fare in a capitalist system of high competition and a winner take all approach. Findings suggest that moderation is the best antidote to conflicting values. Moreover, role-based stillness practices offer a compelling perspective into how mind-body practices are integrated into the workplace, and offer direction for future research.

Movement practices. The movement practices include elements of the body, such as posture, positioning and motion, in combination with intent to quiet the mind and focus on breath. Qigong and yoga are examples of movement practices. Mindfulness-based art therapy (MBAT) was grouped in this theme because of its unique multi-modal approach. Movement practices have overlap with stillness practices in the areas of breath and awareness, but are unique in that they use the body as a mechanism toward opening the mind and cultivating attention.

Mindfulness-based art therapy is an emerging approach to stress reduction through artistic activity and reflection. In the Monti et al. (2006) study, 111 women were identified with various forms of cancer. The approach included an eight-week MBAT intervention group or a wait-list control group. Several self-assessments were used including the Symptoms Checklist Revised (SCL-90), the Global Severity Index (GSI), or the Short-form Health Survey (SF-36). In addition to mindfulness meditation activities, a mindful art activity was offered, which included self-picture assessment, self-care imagery, and free art-making activities. Self-regulation theory provides the conceptual framework for the approach, which helps to explain coping and adapting mechanisms. According to Monti et al. (2006), “subjects who received the eight-week MBAT intervention demonstrated statistically significantly greater decreases in symptoms of distress as compared to subjects in the wait-list control, as measured by the SCL-90

and depression subscales” (p. 14-15). Significant improvements in quality of life were demonstrated. The method fills a niche in how mindfulness is typically practiced, allowing for participants to explore emotions through a hands-on creative process. The study offered a compelling perspective where few randomized control studies exist. It also challenges the typical approaches to cancer care that often involve group therapy.

In another study involving middle managers, a two-day yoga intervention was evaluated. Vempmati and Telles (2000) assessed stress symptoms involving 26 male managers working at an electronic goods company. The primary assessment measuring pre-and-post stress level change was the Occupational Stress Index (OSI) along with a polygraph to measure physiological change. The intervention consisted of yoga postures interspersed with relaxation (an approach to activate and pacify) the mind and body. In addition, five hours of lecture on ancient Indian philosophical concepts about stress were introduced. Results indicated that,

at the end of the two-day yoga based stress management program, the breath rate was lower, with no other change. However, when subjects were categorized based on the OSI greater or less than the median, the two categories showed different trends. The OSI greater than the median groups showed a decrease in breath rate. The OSI less than the median group showed no change” (Vempmati and Telles, 2000, p. 36).

At face value, it would seem reasonable that those with higher occupational stress and disorder would demonstrate decreased breath-rates. The study demonstrated efficacy in respect to a movement practice, but it provided only a brief moment in time which data could be evaluated. A second yoga practice evaluated state of anxiety before and after a yoga practice session. The data was based on 300 persons attending a yoga therapy center in north India for stress relief. The yoga sessions were two-hours in length. Two groups were created, one for yoga practice, and the second for yoga theory. The two baseline groups coupled with the State-Trait Inventory were used to assess levels of anxiety. According to Telles, Gaur, and Balkrishna (2009), “the yoga practice group showed a significantly greater decrease in state anxiety scores after the

session (14.7% decrease), compared to the decrease after the yoga theory session (3.4% decrease)” (p. 927). Similar to MBAT, the comparison of a practice to theory group offers compelling evidence that knowledge without practice may do little to lower state anxiety levels. It also highlighted the power of breath as a way to foster health. A study looking at longer-term yoga practitioners measuring state vs. trait changes could offer a compelling understanding of anxiety and stress management, as did the Kjellgren and Taylor (2008) study presented earlier.

Lee, Ryu, and Chung (2000) examined the effects of ChunDoSunBup (CDSB) Qi-training and stress. CDSB is said to be a 6,000 year-old Taoist system of martial arts training. The study consisted of three kinds of exercise: sound exercise, motion, and meditation, and was practiced for one-hour, six times a week and included 92-control subjects and 180 volunteer participants, drawn from Qi-training seminars. In addition, a Korean version of the Symptoms of Stress (SOS) self-assessment was used. According to Lee, Ryu, and Chung (2000), “Qi-training involves various stress coping methods that result in psychological, physiological, and immunological benefits.” They continued, “although Qi-training is different from other meditative techniques in its composition, the therapeutic effects of Qi-training are similar to these” (p. 162). The study dismissed individuals involved in other relaxation programs or because they were involved in regular exercise programs. The Qi-training was separated into two parts (100 hours each), with each part consisting of 12 stages, lasting for 7-12 days. Results found “a significant negative relationship between training periods and all of the SOS subscales. Participants who practiced the CDSB Qi-training, especially for more than five months, tended to have good control of their stress responses” (p. 164). One plausible explanation may be that trait changes begin to appear after a sustained period, thereby increasing states of anxiety and psycho-immunological functioning. One difference between CDSB from MBSR is that the

training not only leads to increased awareness, but more consciousness of feelings and sensations as it relates to the body. The research for CDSB, and other movement practices such as yoga, is demonstrating positive impact in reducing stress and anxiety.

Last, the Nishino breathing method measured immune activity and stress levels. Similar to CDSB, the Nishino breathing method is a way of developing internal energy, as presented by Qi-training in the Chinese definition or Ki in Japanese. Other martial art forms, such as aikido, draw on Ki as a form of energy, and usually involve breathing and visualization practices to channel energy, in combination with gentle body exercises. Kimura et al. (2005) drew from 21 subjects who had practiced Nishino for two to three years. Mood and stress were benchmarked using heart rate monitoring, the Lorish face scale (a pictorial scale containing 20 drawings of a single face, each depicting slightly different moods), and blood samples to measure cell activity and cell lines. The authors hypothesized that even after one class changes in immune function occurred. The results demonstrated that the “NK cell activity increased after 90 minutes of practicing the Nishino method ($p < .003$). They also found that a decrease of stress during the practices was associated with an increase in NK activity” (p. 289-290). The authors suggested that one of the aims of Ki energy is to modulate the immune activity and stress levels, providing evidence that the mind and body are connected, not separate, and may influence how one can modulate and moderate stressful activity.

In summary, movement practices combine forms of physical activity with mindfulness meditation, with the breath as the intermediate factor. Art forms were evaluated, including the MBAT, which highlighted how art activity, coupled with MBSR, can be a powerful therapeutic tool. The method showed promise as a novel approach for treating stress in cancer patients. The yoga studies demonstrated that breath rate could be modulated and result in decreased anxiety.

More research in state and trait changes for yoga practitioners would be helpful. Finally, several ancient Korean and Japanese martial art forms (CDSM and the Nishino breathing method) showed a relationship between exercise, motion, and breathing in interventions as short as 90-minutes. Movement practices hold promise as a contemplative practice in reducing states of unrest and disorder, and increasing clarity and calmness of mind. More research, with larger sample sizes, may point to longer-term effects between novice and experienced practitioners.

Relational practices. Relational approaches such as storytelling, deep listening, and dialogue relate to how organizational leaders influence and mobilize others. These acts provide opportunities to make sense of confusion and agitation that are a part of daily organizational life. At the heart of relational practice is relationship building. In other words, influencing and motivating others toward a common and purposeful goal is done in communion, not isolation. The essential way that this is accomplished is through association; leadership and culture can thus be found through the thousands of daily exchanges in the form of ideas, signs, and symbols. As such, relational practice is an ideal landing spot for leadership. At the same time, research on leadership in the context of contemplative practices and turbulence is scant. Institutes such as the Contemplative Mind in Society, the Cape Cod Institute, and the Center for Mindfulness all offer practitioner-based leadership programs. Despite the shortage of peer reviewed literature, several compelling studies are noteworthy: two evaluating leadership development and Transcendental Meditation, and two cutting-edge dissertations addressing organizational leadership.

Harung, Heaton, and Alexander (1995) studied the experiences, attitudes, work habits, techniques, and insights of what they claimed were world-class leaders. The sample included 22 subjects from around the world from a variety of industries, and was compared with a control

group consisting of 55 university students. The qualitative approach included four key questions that were based on the notion of consciousness from the Vedic tradition that suggests beyond self-actualization is trans-humanism, said to be the fifth state of consciousness. This might be understood as detaching from thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with the lower self. A chi-square statistic was used to distinguish overall patterns of responses and was compared across three categories within each sample. Results found “that not all the world-class performers reported experiences of higher states of consciousness” (p. 54). For example, one response included: “There is a deliberate attempt to try to take an outsider’s view in the most hectic work period. Step aside, detached witnessing is a good description of the phenomenon” (p. 52). This example appears to be in tune with non-attachment behavior. At the same time, the study had limitations which included not fully explaining the assumption that higher performers were assumed to have higher states of consciousness, and using a brief self-report questionnaire. Qualitative analysis would have been helpful, too. Last, there appeared to be a gap between the research question and the method of choice, and while the subject matter made a contribution to Vedic psychology, it relied heavily on comparison with other samples.

In another study, McCollum (1999) explored the empirical relationship between self-development and leadership development using Maharishi’s transcendental meditation technique. According to McCollum,

a small, preliminary eight-month pretest-posttest control group study in one-company, 24 subjects who learned a standard self-development technique, Transcendental Meditation, grew more in their expression of leadership behaviors, measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), and expressed in individual and group interviews (0.05 and 0.01) significance (p. 149).

Philosophically, McCollum argued that a large part of leadership development is paying more attention to the leader within, and focusing on cultivating the ego, or the self. Subjects were

expected to practice TM for approximately 15-20 minutes twice daily. As in similar studies, the researcher did not appear to include a way to measure if this actually occurred, which may pose challenges for the findings. Measures will be utilized to if, and to what extent, the intervention is effective. There were monthly follow-up meetings during this eight-month period that served as a check-in and provided an overview of TM theory. No other leadership training was required. In addition to the LPI, the Social Desirability Response Set-5 was used as a measure to control for people's tendency to respond in a socially desirable direction. The LPI measured five leadership factors that included: 1) challenging the process, 2) inspiring a shared vision, 3) enabling others to act, 4) modeling the way and, 5) encouraging the heart. The results indicated that all correlates grew significantly for all variables. According to McCollum (1999), "especially high in significance are the encouraging the heart and the modeling the way scores. These results are remarkable given the difficulty of getting significance with small sample sizes (in this case 14 experimental subjects and 10 controls)" (p. 151). The interviews also demonstrated significant change in the meditators compared to the control group, with the greatest response in greater effectiveness in work and increased energy for work, greater comfort showing initiative, and last, increased evenness in stressful situations. The research question, and the methodological approach, appears to be a good match.

Last, two leading dissertations addressing building capacity and expanding leader capability added to the body of knowledge in this field. Trahan's (2010) grounded theory study focused on "elucidating the experiences and consequences of organizational leaders integrating principles derived from Buddhist theory and practice in organizational settings" (p. 3). The theme has overlap with the phenomenological analysis presented earlier by Marques (2010) that found Buddhism's influence in the workplace intersecting with efforts to moderate hyper-

competitive behaviors. Trahan's (2010) interview question was, "can you describe one or more occasions that capture your experience of integrating what you have learned from your study and practices of Buddhism (or mindfulness) in your organization?" (p. 127). From this question, a process of three successive stages for building capacity in organizational leadership emerged including: 1) the stage of being, 2) the stage of relating and, 3) the state of engaging skillfully. Each of these stages provided a compelling understanding of how one "shows up" in the workplace in order to influence, and the findings are consistent with other leadership studies (Sinclair, 2007; George, 2003; Boyatzis and McKee, 2005). Part of the challenge with Trahan's research is that there is little extant research in the area, and thus, limited information available to compare to theory. Sample size was also small, rendering little generalizability. Overall, the methodological approach was compelling and yielded significant data resulting in three emergent themes.

Rakoff (2010) took Trahan's (2010) research a step further when he asked, "How can individuals cultivate the skills, characteristics, and abilities that are fundamental to engaging in positive leadership relationships" (p. 1)? The study offered an interesting perspective by examining a specific approach to individual leader development through the practice of aikido. According to Merriam-Webster online, "aikido is a Japanese art of self-defense employing locks and holds and utilizing the principle of nonresistance to cause an opponent's own momentum to work against him." The study used a series of daily practices such as merging with traffic, or following another car, to test the approach. According to Rakoff (2010), "Because merging involves use of the physical body, the act itself provides detectable somatic indicators that can be used to increase awareness of habitual patterns and tendencies when interacting with others" (p. 104). Rakoff essentially translated an ancient self-defense art into daily possibilities through

practical application. Through the mixed method design that included a 360-degree leader assessment, the study results demonstrated that skills can be cultivated and be applied for leadership development. The study's link between the research question and the methodological approach was clear, and while the sample size was limited, it offered evidence that over a relatively brief 12-week period, change is possible.

In summary, relational practices applied to organizational leadership are about deep listening, dialogue, and engagement. Research in this area is limited. Several studies provided context and direction for this emerging area. Harung, Heaton, and Alexander (1995) looked at world-class leaders compared to a control group and found inconsistent, albeit limited evidence, that high performing leaders have higher consciousness levels. McCollum (1999) focused on the cultivation of the self and leader development through the application of TM and found evidence of individual leader development. Trahan (2010) found three overarching themes of cultivating leadership awareness and attention including: being, relating, and engaging. The data showed consistency with other research, but fell short in terms of testing the findings. Rakoff (2010) tested individual leader development through the application of daily aikido principles. A 360-degree leader assessment provided a compelling study uncovering how seemingly random exercises related to organizational leadership. Moreover, relational practices are poised to accelerate as a research interest, particularly as it relates to organizational leaders experiencing instability.

Section one summary. The purpose of section one was to understand what the research revealed in terms of how individuals and organizational leaders manage stress and turbulence and cultivate the ability to act with clarity. Stress, as a concept and behavior, was often cited as the measure that revealed states of confusion and disorder.

The study used the lens of contemplative practice to investigate how organizational leaders perform in complex roles. Skills such as the capacity to be present, allowing chaos to reveal new paths, and making sense of disturbance, hold potential for self-efficacy and creating states of intention.

Stillness practices for individuals hold significant research interest. Research is focused on finding effective approaches that promote well-being and impact state and trait changes. Research conducted is largely quantitative, with many studies focused on psychopathologies that were not included in this study.

Stillness practices in role-based mind body approaches hold promise. Transcendental Meditation is a long-standing approach due to its simple technique requiring twenty minutes of time twice a day with no significant change in lifestyle. Findings consistently suggest that TM is effective in managing stress and conflict.

Movement practices have grown steadily with yoga and tai chi now commonplace. This research focused on state vs. trait changes in short-term and long-term meditators. More research with larger sample sizes can point to differences between experienced and novice practitioners. The research of this study, however, will focus on a small sample size that investigates the effect of mindful practices combining both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Relational practices research with respect to organizational leaders experiencing turbulence is limited. Consciousness research focused on awareness building, but was inconclusive in terms of results. A future focus on connecting relational practice to deep listening would be beneficial.

In conclusion, the future offers significant possibilities for contemplative practice research, particularly for organizational leaders on the edge of chaos. The robust focus on

individuals will continue to flourish, and the implications for how individuals conceptualize their being and how organizational performance in the 21st century, may prove transformative.

Section Two: Practitioner Based Contemplative Literature

In reviewing the practitioner-based literature, contemplative practices are embodied through stillness, movement, and relational practices. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society viewed stillness practices as a “focus on quieting the mind and body in order to develop calmness and focus.” Movement practices are exemplified through activities such as yoga and tai chi. Relational practices include dialogue, storytelling, and deep listening as ways to create stillness of mind and body. Within this context, mindfulness, as a practice, is significantly presented in the practitioner literature. I have chosen to use the term mindfulness because researchers use this in the broader sense of contemplative practice. In brief, mindfulness is about clearing the mind of life’s daily, and often needless, transmissions. There is no formal dogma or spirituality attached to mindfulness, but it can help you to become a better listener and increase the ability to focus attention. Mindfulness has related terms that show up in the literature including, emotional intelligence, authentic leadership, adaptive leadership, and spiritual leadership. As a result, each of these areas is discussed. It is my intent to draw from an examination of select literature pertaining to contemplative practices and bring forth salient themes and their significance.

At the heart of contemplative practice is breath. Much of the practitioner-based literature suggested that breath led to heightened self-awareness. Many contemporary leadership programs include ways of increasing self-awareness through assessments or 360-degree surveys. These approaches can provide significant insight into the individual. However, what they often lack is a connection to the mind body relationship. Often, ideas are kept at the cognitive level and fall

short of integration with the whole person. Although most of the literature reflected this bias, there are notable exceptions (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Smalley and Winston, 2010; Wheatley, 2006; Wilber 2001; Wilber, Patten, Leonard, and Morelli 2008). Yet, despite being underwhelmed by the lack of mind body connection in comparison to the peer-reviewed literature, there is strong movement integrating contemplative and mindfulness approaches to leadership. When reflecting on the term leadership, many leading scholars view leadership as a process, not a particular individual trait or predisposition, consisting of influencing, goal setting, and mobilizing others (Jackson and Parry, 2008 p. 13; Northouse, 2007 p. 3; Sinclair, 2007 p. xviii). I resonate with Sinclair's (2007) version when she noted that "leadership is a form of being (with ourselves and others), a way of thinking and acting that awakens and mobilizes people to find new freer and more meaningful ways of seeing, working, and living" (p. xviii). This definition puts self-awareness and mindful qualities at the center of the leader-follower process. Further, leaders who practice contemplative or mindful approaches often do so in the context of turbulent conditions. Mindfulness, as a practice, is argued to be a compelling and enlightened way of leading in everyday circumstances.

The review is organized into two distinct parts. The first part looks at how mindfulness is understood in terms of mindfulness is understood. Definition and context is discussed along with a review of how brain imagery is revealing the positive neurological effects of meditation. The second part explores the connection between mindfulness and leadership, discussing both direct and indirect linkages. The overall intent is to establish a wide girth of available knowledge that reveal clear patterns of the ways leaders are incorporating contemplative practices as a way of being for 21st century leadership.

The mindful landscape. There are numerous definitions for mindfulness. According to Weiss (2004), “mindfulness is the energy or state of being within which concentration and insight arise” (p. 189). Mindfulness is associated with awareness in respect to the physical and metaphysical. It associates itself with Buddhism and its teachings, but is not attached to religion. It is influenced by western psychology, particularly as a way to aide physical healing or mental anguish.

Weiss (2004) understood “mindfulness practice in two varieties: formal and informal. The formal practice is what we would normally call meditation, for which we set aside a specific time to sit silently with mindful awareness of our breathing. The informal practice involves mindfulness of our daily-life activities, and is just as much “meditation” as the formal practices are” (p. 3). This can also be viewed in terms of both theory and application. The theory refers to the formal practice that requires a daily commitment. By application, I refer to the practice of paying attention to an ordinary discussion, one’s posture, or catching oneself when going on auto-pilot, such as reaching for a snack when you are really not hungry. Weiss acknowledged that both practices are necessary and are twin pillars to practicing mindfulness.

Kabat-Zinn (1994) said, “mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (p. 4). This definition placed emphasis on “seeing” and “being.” In other words, the focus is on the “now.” These ideas suggested that clarity is gained through an inward process of observation and noticing. I find these ideas compelling, both arduous and effortless, and requiring a lifetime of discipline. The non-judgmental aspect is particularly challenging. This is especially true in western cultures where striving to obtain (material possessions), hyper competitiveness (winner take all), and achieving (stopping at nothing) are common and reinforced in schools, work, sports to the extreme. My

perspective is that competition can be healthy and even desired, but when it comes at a cost of losing one's sense of self and values, we lose our ability to make conscious choices in meaningful ways. Kabat-Zinn said it well, stating, "I like to think of mindfulness simply as the art of conscious living" (p. 6). Kabat-Zinn spoke specifically to how being present centered involved all senses, not just the head. This opportunity is often overlooked in our hurried lives, and manifests itself in many forms, including a mindset that sees the mind and body as separate. Kabat-Zinn (2005) expanded on this idea and said, "To come to our senses, both literally and metaphorically, on the scale as a species and on the smaller scale as a single human being, we first need to return to the body, the locus within which the biological senses and what we call the mind arise" (p. 10). How this shows up in daily life varies including noticing posture, how and what we eat, and using the body as a way to gain emotional attunement while interacting in stressful situations.

Paying attention to the body is powerful because it has immediate application for leaders experiencing uncertain and chaotic situations. Wheatley (2006) captured the ramifications of this sentiment and stated, "We refuse to accept ambiguity and surprise as part of life because we hold onto the myth that prediction and control are possible" (p. 101). The idea that we default to control mechanisms to forge certainty reinforces the grand myth that a single leader can take us, the follower, to a new place alone. This is not only unrealistic, but it dismisses the power of the collective intelligence of the group and the power of the system. Wheatley (2006) described the term chaos as "the last state before a system plunges into random behavior where no order exists." She further explained, "Not all systems move into chaos, but if a system becomes unstable, it will move first into a period of oscillating stage, the next state of chaos, and it is then that the wild gyrations begin" (p. 116). This definition suggests that chaos has order that can be

predicted; there is a system at work. Leaders unknowingly confuse chaos with complete disorder, and, as a result, control mechanisms kick-in. Wheatley expanded, “For more than three hundred years, Western culture has been developing the old story. I would characterize it as a story of dominion and control” (p. 17). Wheatley spoke poignantly to the control machine seeing every last detail in terms of directing a predictable process. Consequently, stress ensues along with the illusion of dealing with problems as if they can be engineered; mind and body are viewed as disconnected. The increased pace of change is one reason why mindfulness meditation is increasingly turned to as a way to slow down the senses and create clarity of mind and body. Kabat-Zinn (2005) expanded, “As the pace of our lives continues to be accelerated by a host of forces seemingly beyond our control, more and more of us are finding ourselves drawn to engage in meditation, in this radical act of being, this radical act of love, astonishing as that may seem given the materialistic “can do,” speed-obsessed, progress-obsessed, celebrity-and-other-people’s lives-obsessed orientation of our culture” (p. 86). This critique calls for a new way of being to addressing long-standing challenges. Wilber, Patten, Leonard, and Morelli (2008) put forth a blue print for achieving emotional balance, mental clarity, and spiritual awakening through a series of core practices including body, mind, spirit, and shadow. The implications for this holistic approach call for engaging all the senses as a way to generate greater self-awareness and action. The focus on the shadow side is of particular importance because it brings forth the areas of the psyche that are often ignored. Thus, as leaders increase attention to these patterns, decode randomness and replace the old with new meaning, space for re-creating the self emerges.

In decoupling chaos and order, and aligning it with change, an interesting mix of symptoms arises. Often, attempts to address organizational change are approached

mechanically. This can be seen when problems are easily put into improvement boxes through re-organization efforts. Traces of this thinking go back to Rousseau where the mind and body were seen as separate as if one does not impact the other. This thinking still prevails in many organizations. Wheatley (2006) stated, “We sift through all the possible changes of failure, searching for that one broken part, a bad manager, a dysfunctional team, a poor business unit.” She continued, “This is the standard approach to organizational change. It is derived from the best engineering thinking” (p. 138). Wheatley saw the solution, in part, addressed through a systems perspective. By seeing the system she means wholeness. A wholeness of greater and deeper consciousness of how organizational life and people connect. Many leaders are still addressing change issues incrementally despite conditions of speed and uncertainty. In chaotic and fluid situations, emergent approaches offer a powerful approach to change. Holman (2010) observed three types of change: steady state (disturbance is handled within the existing situation), incremental shifts (disruptions interrupt the status quo), and emergence (occasional upheaval results when principles that keep a system orderly break down). Holman saw many of today’s challenges (i.e., economic, social, technological) being treated as if they were steady state or incremental, when, in fact, they are emergent. This type of change is rapid, complex, and interdependent, as with trying to fix a school’s social problems without addressing larger social community contexts. The implications for dealing with emergent change at the individual level are vast. Mind body practices, such as mindfulness, cultivate abilities to deal with emergent change because they create flexible thinking. It is common that random thoughts flood the mind while meditating. Allowing thoughts to come and letting them go, and becoming open to the unexpected, embody the essence of a meditative experience.

Building on Holman's view of change is the intersection with how learning influences the process. According to Mezirow (2000), "learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind" (p. 19). Mezirow asserted that on-going meaning making through critical reflection is needed in order to transform and reach a level of self-authorship; a way of owning and internalizing that we are and the beliefs we espouse. Values are influenced by a number of factors, including family of origin, culture, religion, and identity. Mezirow believed that experiencing a disorienting dilemma, such as a life crisis of major life transition, allows one to re-think what matters most. It is during this critical time that new meaning can be made and previous beliefs be called into question. Senge's (1990) notion of mental models sheds light on how difficult it is to change one's frame of reference. He stated, "mental models are deeply held internal images of how the world works that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting. Very often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects that they have on our behavior" (p. 8). Through a triggering effect like a disorientating dilemma, our viewpoints can more easily come into question and change may take hold. In cases where a significant event does not take place, both authors see the importance of on-going critical reflection and learning from insights as ways to bring about change. Otherwise, change without calling into question assumptions may not happen at all.

Vaill (1996) suggested that it is infrequent that we question our assumptions and beliefs. This is because it is a natural course of action to maintain equilibrium so that all the sub-parts of the system operate smoothly and predictably. Yet, despite this desire to remain in a steady state, change and uncertainty continue. Vaill used the term "permanent white water" as a way to describe unpredictable conditions. He stated, "permanent white water regularly takes us all out

of our comfort zones and ask things of us that we never imagined would be required” (p. 14). These conditions also present opportunities for creating new meaning. How we thought things were, or should be, is inextricably tied to how we feel. Mezirow and Vaill shared a similar perspective in the sense that values and beliefs contribute to and inform our world views. Paradoxically, we often do not have to look beyond ourselves to realize that we instigate these conditions of uncertainty. Vaill asserted that by embracing learning as a way of being, we are better matched to meet uncertainty, and in the process, become better leaders.

Hahn (1975) spoke to mindfulness as “the essential discipline.” He said, “When walking, the practitioner must be conscious that he is walking. When sitting, the practitioner must be conscious that he is sitting.” He goes on to say that mindfulness of the body is not enough, “we must also be conscious of each breath, movement, every thought and feeling, everything that has relation to ourselves” (p. 7-8). Clearly there is linkage to not only the physical, but the emotional, mental, and spiritual.

Interestingly, we are now learning scientifically about the benefits of meditation. Buddhist monks have known for thousands of years that meditation alters the way our brain works. According to Stein et al. (2003), “the first scientific studies, in the 1960s and 1970s, basically proved that meditators are really, really focused. Benson (1975), a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, found in a study of meditators that 17 percent less oxygen was used, and heart rates lowered by three beats per minute and increased wave patterns of actual sleep.” The practice and benefit of meditation, however, was largely isolated to eastern cultures and have only integrated in western societies in the last several decades.

Since the advent of brain imagery, scientific rigor has documented meditation’s profound neurological impact. Stein et al. (2003) highlighted, “What scientists are now discovering is that

with enough practice, the neurons in the brain will adapt themselves to direct activity in that frontal, concentration-oriented area of the brain.” Park (2003) puts Stein’s et al. findings in perspective, and outlined the three brain areas and benefits including,

1. Frontal lobe: This is the most highly evolved part of the brain, responsible for reasoning, planning, emotional and self-conscious awareness. The frontal cortex tends to go offline during meditation.
2. Parietal lobe: This part of the brain processes sensory information about the surrounding world, orienting you in time and space. Activity slows when meditating.
3. Thalamus: The gatekeeper for the senses, this organ focuses your attention by funneling some sensory data deeper into the brain and stopping other signals in their tracks. Meditation reduces the flow of incoming information to a trickle.

When these areas are shut down, a cleansing of brain activity results and a sharpened concentration goes to work, showing up unexpectedly during times of stress.

A tangential, but overlapping, focus on neuroscience is the topic of how change takes place. The application of imaging technologies, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and positron emission tomography (PET), are uncovering how the brain responds to stimulus. First, when information is processed, it is sorted by new or old, thereby activating the prefrontal cortex. The basal ganglia are parts of the brain where habits and routine reside. It is located near the core of the brain and requires much less energy. Herein lies the challenge: as change is experienced, it sets up a showdown between the two functions. It is much easier to engage in established routines than to form a new way of doing; new habits take time and energy—it requires discomfort until the new habit is established.

When trying to change behaviors, the brain naturally sends out messages when routine is interrupted. For example, changing a habit from eating highly processed foods to those which are nutrient dense sends messages that this is not normal. Uneasiness tends to occur as a result of stress. Furthermore, the difference from what the brain expects and what is actually happening causes the amygdala to go into overdrive. The amygdala is part of the orbital frontal cortex which is linked to the circuitry associated with fear. According to Rock and Schwartz (2010),

The amygdala and the orbital frontal cortex are among the oldest parts of the mammal brain, remnants of evolutionary history. When these parts of the brain are activated, they draw metabolic energy away from the prefrontal region, which promotes and supports higher intellectual functions (p. 4).

Impulse control takes over and the brain is hijacked; long-standing habits revert and any hope for change is over.

Rock and Schwartz contended that the ability to focus is a way to help brain circuits stabilize. By paying attention, the brain can begin to absorb the association with what is really happening and avert an amygdala break-down. Less stress can lead to easier information processing and emotional stability. This helps to reshape the bridge between what one expects and what really is. Rock and Schwartz suggested that one way to re-arrange one's mental map is to "cultivate moments of insight." This means developing the capacity to see things in ways that lead to new viewpoints. Over time, these insights grow and strengthen as they deepen as habits.

The neuroscience and mindfulness communities have opened a dialogue due to these shared interests. Science is shedding light on what contemplatives have known for years: that meditation affects how one experiences stress. This is because when meditating, the prefrontal cortex tends to go "off-line" and facilitates a slowing of brain activity. As a result, meditation lends support to increasing the ability to focus attention and re-shapes how the brain works.

Mindfulness as a contemplative practice is represented through a range of approaches. A common element to mindfulness meditation is the focus on breath. The opportunity for leaders to let go and allow sense making holds potential. This is particularly relevant for leaders seeking control in the midst of turbulence. Herein lays the opportunity to re-think how we approach challenges. According to Sethi (2009), “We are faced with a leadership crisis and a leadership paradox. There is a leadership crisis because senior executives in positions of authority at most organizations do not have answers to many issues and decisions they encounter. To arrive at better answers they need to really think out of the box, but past success (and the hubris that comes with it) has imprisoned them in the box” (p. 4). In other words, applying old techniques with similar approaches is not sufficient; new ways of conceiving problems that allows for in the moment responses can help bridge this gap. And mindfulness as a tool is a potent force for leaders experiencing chaos. Further, leaders who can recognize emergent change and emergent technologies, such as The World Café or Open Space Technology, create contexts that allow for experimentation and new possibilities.

Today there are many approaches to practicing mindfulness. There are programs addressing eating disorders, creating healthy relationships, and managing depression. All of these programs and many more are designed to fully live in the present moment. There are both formal approaches through meditation practices as well as informal awareness. There are three approaches in particular that provide context and contrast: mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR), contemplative prayer, and Buddhism. Each approach has been well established and draws upon a wealth of history, knowledge, and practice.

MBSR is based on a form of meditation known as “mindfulness.” Kabat-Zinn founded one of the first research and practitioner-based centers at the University of Massachusetts

Medical School in 1979. Consistent with earlier definitions; mindfulness can be practiced at any moment doing anything. All of our brains have a basic orientation toward being mindful. The MBSR approach is also systematic. “The program consists of eight weekly two-and-one-half-hour classes and a one-day retreat and typically provides participants with: instruction in mindful practices; gentle stretching and mindful movement; group dialogue, home assignments, and resources” (www.umassmed.edu). Versions of MBSR are reproduced at hospitals, private practices, and public programs all over the world. Having participated in an MBSR program, I found the process to be highly effective and it significantly enhanced my meditation practice. While MBSR programs can enhance well-being, it is important to recognize that increased self-awareness does not automatically result in increased coping skills. Deeper mental health issues may require in depth interventions such as talk therapy or medication. Moreover, MBSR programs have blossomed and are now considered a flagship model for this approach.

Next, contemplative prayer, often used interchangeably with centering prayer, is a Christian-based form of meditation. The tradition incorporates Christian based values, such as forgiveness, hospitality, and scripture (*Lectio Divina*), into daily life through meditation. According to Keating (2006), “Contemplation is a pure gift of God. It is accessed by letting go of our own idea of ourselves turning our will over to God and resting in the Divine Indwelling that is already present within us and waiting to reveal itself to us” (p. 2). Similar to other forms of meditation, contemplative prayer is accessed through daily meditation with a core goal of letting go of what is referred to as the false self. “The false self is the idealized image of ourselves developed from early childhood to cope with emotional trauma due to the frustration of our instinctual needs for survival/security, affection/esteem, and power/control” (Keating, 2006, p. 2). Keating saw the false self as giving rise to violence, war, and institutional injustice.

Centering prayer is not without its critiques, primarily from conservative Christians who do not view it as having biblical support, and others who feel it is associated with “New Age” ideas.

The approach can also suggest that the way to shed the false self is through God and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which may not be recognized as legitimate for the non-believer.

Last, mindfulness draws on a 2,500-year lineage, dating back to Buddha. A key tenant of Buddhism is what is referred to as, “right mindfulness,” the seventh of eight “Noble Eightfold” paths. Mindfulness is about generating the awareness necessary to be fully present in the moment, sometimes referred to as right mindfulness. This relates to Hahn’s (1976) idea that “the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth” (p. 12).

Underpinning this notion is recognizing the here and now, sensing the wind gently blowing on the face or noticing the town bell, for example. Similar to the other mindfulness approaches, the Buddhist notion is that it can be practiced continuously, and does not require a formal mindfulness practice. Other ideas relating to Buddhism and mindfulness include mindfulness and eating (many, but not all, are vegetarian), mindfulness and health (emphasis on holistic living), and mindfulness in the environment (using natural resources judiciously). In critique, many ideas concerning ending suffering seem to be primarily centered on the individual. The thinking is that the solutions lies at the personal level, and can overshadow collective action. Outside of Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, there is little formal hierarchy. There is also a danger in idealizing and commercializing Buddhist notions of mindfulness, and even developing a romantic notion that it can become a panacea for dealing with all sorts of problems.

Each of these three approaches to mindfulness offers a unique lens to better understand mindfulness and its relationship to leadership. Sinclair saw “breath” as a major ingredient for a leader’s success; that is, the ability to open up to self and others. She stated, “What is needed in

leadership may be simply stated, but is hard to give the capacity to not react impulsively from our own immediate needs” (p. 2007, p. 123). This theme of opening up is also echoed in Carroll’s (2008) mindfulness work who said, “Leading others requires that we first open to the world around us” (p. 20). So, breath and opening up serve as a compelling starting place. The following pages examine in detail breath as a building block for leadership.

Mindfulness and leadership. An increasing body of knowledge exists tying mindfulness, either directly or indirectly, to leadership theory and concepts. Sinclair (2007) and Weiss (2004) introduced the idea of breath and developing awareness for enhancing leadership. Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flower (2004) spoke to the notion of reactive and deeper levels of learning models in order for organizations to enhance awareness. Goleman, Boyatzis, and Mckee (2002) introduced emotional intelligence and Boyatzis and McKee (2005) extended the paradigm focusing on the concept of resonance within the context of mindfulness, hope, and compassion. George (2003) investigated authentic leadership as the vehicle to generate awareness and action. Heifetz (1994) presented the idea of adaptive leadership as a pathway to address leadership challenges, and Heifetz, Grashow, and Linksy (2009) extended these notions. Moxley (2000) and Fry (2003) introduced spirit in the workplace as a way to generate meaning and purpose. Palmer (2000) and the Dalai Lama and Cutler (2003) emphasized internal transformation through small, cumulative choices and Csikszentmihaly (1990) introduced the notion of flow, or an intense ability to stay in the moment, as a key ingredient to happiness. Each of these ideas has a distinct orientation, and connects to contemplative practice. According to Drey (2011), “Contemplative leadership recognizes that in order for leaders to effectively work with “reality,” they must be aware of our own preferences and blind spots. Contemplative leadership promotes ongoing awakening, developing habits of noticing, and penetrating strong

attachments to points of view and opinions related to favored external and internal “realities” (p. 348). The opportunities for leaders to cultivate abilities in dealing with uncertain contexts through contemplative practice are immense.

In applying mindfulness to the workplace, Carroll (2004) stated, “Awakening on the job is learning to drop our resistance and be intelligently and energetically alert to our lives at work” (p. 11). In order to drop, or at least lessen resistance, leaders require mindsets of openness, and a willingness to be surprised at outcomes that may differ than the original intention. This philosophy is consistent with Holman’s (2010) notion of engaging emergence and leaning into the challenge rather than trying to control an outcome. Carroll pointed out that it is the balance between getting somewhere with being somewhere that can be difficult. This is true for organizational leaders who find their attention in constant demand when preparing for a presentation, leading a meeting, and delivering results. He spoke of the idea of “letting go” as a way to achieve this balance. He stated, “When we let go and become available to our work, we may notice, even just for a moment, that we are inviting a much wider and wiser perspective” (p. 30). For some, “soft” ideas such as letting go or awakening to the unexpected may seem overly subjective. However, it is these dichotomies of the modern demand of increased complexity and turbulence that most poignantly intersect with the opportunity to engage emergence. Drey (2011) stated, “Successful leadership today requires a willingness to develop a level of inner growth and awareness capable of meeting the complexity of today’s world. The promise and opportunity of contemplative leadership evolves as a new consciousness transforms our presence and intentional action in the world” (p. 346). Leaders are thus invited to transform through the opportunity of emerging into the chaos of the present moment with an outcome unknown. This is the challenge: to let go of what is expected, and allow what is possible. Next, a number of

salient themes relating to mindfulness and leadership are explored. These include emotional intelligence, authentic leadership, adaptive leadership, and spiritual leadership.

Breath and awareness. Breath awareness in the context of leading is not a traditional notion. In the context of mind body practitioners, as it relates to the practitioner-based literature, a different perspective emerged. Sinclair (2007) offered that the concept of breath and leadership are interrelated. In other words, breath is liberation. She viewed liberated leadership as a process of self-reflection and critical understanding. The output of this process may increase confidence and an ability to adapt.

Sinclair (2007) pointed out, “In most Western traditions of thinking, breathing is a bodily by-product, with little relevance to the conscious self or its reasoning. In Eastern traditions, the breath is a gateway to the mind” (p. 111). The breath allows one to open up and slow down, and sustains the leader’s full attention. Sinclair explained, “The breath is also linked, in many ancient traditions, to spirit or soul. The word spirit comes from the Latin word *spiritus*, which also means breath” (p. 113). Breath becomes a powerful generator for awareness. Sinclair saw multiple benefits of breath for the leader including:

1. Changing one’s relationship to oneself;
2. Changing how we are with others and;
3. Bringing us into the present.

These orientations bring distinct enhancements such as generating openness to ideas, cognitive flexibility, and greater ease in dealing with uncertainties. Staying focused under stress increases while work place pettiness declines. The notion of change in relation to oneself, or others, can also be understood in the context of what Rogers (1961) referred to as unconditional positive regard, which acknowledged that even in the midst of failings we still feel valued. This can occur

in a variety of contexts such as marriage, as a child growing up, or in a friendship. The power of breath can be enhanced when positive regard is present. One's regard can extend to happiness and is linked to positive psychology (Seligman, 2004). Csikzentmihalyi (1990) found that individuals who have an ability to stay grounded in the moment, also had higher levels of happiness or what he called, flow. Leaders who focus on breath and have developed strong regard, share connections with mindfulness behaviors such as non-judging, accepting, and openness.

Weiss (2004) taught strategies to make the breath-awareness connection. He said, "Mindfulness meditation, in its pure and classic sense is about finding your true self." He shared, "As you begin to live this way, being authentically who you are in direct contact with the world, you will transform the areas of your suffering and make your life more vibrant" (p. xviii). Together, Weiss and Sinclair's emphasis on breath provide a compelling vision for leadership. Similarly, Carson and Langer (2006) linked self-acceptance and authenticity. Being oneself is a sign of positive regard and living in the moment because self-evaluative filters are not necessary to prop oneself. According to Carson and Langer (2006), "Living mindfully entails living daily life without pretense and without concern that others are judging one negatively" (p. 31). Living in a state of emotional flexibility allows one to self-actualize. Maslow (1968) maintained that looking for answers internally, similar to what Palmer (2000) viewed as looking inward, is a significant step toward actualization. Giant steps are not required for actualizing; rather, it is incremental, purposeful steps, accumulated over time, that make the difference.

Awareness of breath is important, but not sufficient. I recall feeling anxious while preparing for a 360-degree interview with an executive. I knew my approach to the questions would be noticed. Paying attention to my breath mattered. Weiss (2004) asserted, "Once we

notice the quality of our breathing, then we can inquire, “What goes along with our shallow and rapid breathing. After the question is asked, the answer becomes clear: we’re frightened” (p. 24). The anxiousness, used correctly, can become energy to produce meaningful change. It is a subtle but significant wake-up call that there is opportunity to understand where these feelings are coming from and notice.

Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004) extended insight from individual awareness to the organization. The work connected the parts to the whole, through the idea of systems thinking. They drew from analogies such as how the heart or lungs connect to the overall functioning of the body. Further, Senge et al. (2004) contended that “the basic problem with the new species of global institutions is that they have not yet become aware of themselves as living” (p. 10). Until a breakthrough in consciousness occurs, habitual behaviors of fear and control will remain the default. The solution lies in getting beyond this reaction with deeper levels of awareness. The reactive learning model (thinking and doing) is a tool to support going deeper. According to Senge et al. (2004), “Thinking increases awareness of the whole. Doing is action that increasingly serves the whole” (p. 11). The greater the depth of awareness, the deeper the learning. If this process falls short, learning and awareness will suffer and become surface level, and again, risk resulting in habitual thinking.

Suspension is one of the key tools used to break habitual thinking. The process includes a deliberate slowing down so that space for meaningful reflection can occur. One can simply notice when hasty or hurried decisions are made and take note. When suspension is not present, critical and intentional thinking is missing, and this can lead to a host of challenges, including judgments of others, that lack context and objectivity. Senge et al. (1994) said that suspension “allows us to see our seeing” (p. 29). This means greater clarity can be gained because one steps

back and notices what is happening in a conscious way. One of the challenges in practicing suspension in organizational contexts is the speed at which decisions are made. These situations reinforce automatic and habitual thinking when suspension is missing, and can result in mindlessness. This can short-circuit a process that could include broader perspective-taking. Suspension is powerful during times of uncertainty because alternative thinking and new perspectives emerge; it is a practical tool that interrupts habitual thinking and creates space for expansive ways of being.

In conclusion, presence offers insightful strategies to enhance clarity, but a degree of caution is required. Extending the distance between thinking and doing with deeper levels of learning can be superficial. Organizational leaders may engage in such activities, but obtain only surface level learning. Leaders may only half-heartedly support the process, or not experience the full impact of idea suspension, and yet declare mastery. Shallow application can be misleading and result in disconnect between senior leaders and employees. It is also important that organizations sustain learning, reinforced through processes and systems, such as recognition and reward for desired behaviors, and driving values such as listening and respect.

Mindfulness and emotional intelligence. A perspective akin to breath and awareness is emotional intelligence. The idea behind emotional intelligence was mainstreamed by Goleman (1995). Later, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) asserted, “The fundamental task of leaders is to prime good feelings in those they lead. That occurs when a leader creates resonance, a reservoir of positivity that frees the best in people. At its root, then, the primal job of leadership is emotional” (p. ix). Driving emotional states that are genuine and build on self and other awareness inspire others.

Fostering moods and managing emotion can extend an employee's engagement level. I know that when I feel rested, centered, and upbeat, I am more capable of sustaining dynamic relations with my daughters, for example, and my ability to deal with uncertainty is met with grace. When I am unable to regulate my emotions, my ability to guide and influence their thinking diminishes. Goleman et al. (2002) asserted "The ability of a leader to pitch a group into an enthusiastic, cooperative mood can determine its success. On the other hand, whenever emotional conflicts in a group bleed attention and energy from their shared tasks, a group's performance will suffer" (p. 14). Therefore, my parent role presents fertile ground for daily practice of emotional intelligence. Interjecting jokes, lightheartedness, or playfulness all stimulate original thinking and problem solving. The common denominator is awareness of my thoughts and fostering positive moods.

Creating resonance is the foundation for developing emotionally intelligent leaders. It is "the prolongation of sound by reflection; reverberation" (www.dictionary.com). Goleman et al. spoke to positive reflection, and finding the right leader pitch or tone to enable others to act. In contrast, dissonance stresses an unpleasant sound and does not engender followership. The authors stated, "Resonance comes naturally to emotionally intelligent leaders. Their passion and enthusiastic energy resounds throughout the group" (2002, p. 20). To act from such a stance would also suggest that leaders demonstrate authentic behaviors, in a similar sense that Carson and Langer (1997) linked to self-acceptance or George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer, (2007), related with authentic leadership.

Another insight Goleman made was in respect to self-mastery. He stated (2011), "Self-mastery requires self-awareness plus self-regulation, key components of emotional intelligence" (p. 21). Self-regulation is about managing impulses and requires a fair degree of awareness. For

example, if leaders are unaware that every time their stress levels increase they become impatient, it will be difficult to self-regulate behaviors. Leaders who pay attention to their behaviors and the details involved in decisions, have a better chance of being self-aware. Leaders who achieve self-mastery over a particular domain exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence. According to Goleman, positive moods are associated with higher levels of creativity and problem solving, as well as mental flexibility. Thus, leaders who exhibit emotional intelligence in this regard also are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of personal effectiveness.

How can leaders increase self-awareness? There are many tools that managers and leaders have access to in the workplace. 360-degree assessments are powerful tools that help to uncover behaviors that otherwise may be hidden to employees due to a lack of awareness or knowing. The outcome can become part of an on-going conversation helping to reveal behaviors to reinforce. Getting informal feedback from peers or team members may also be beneficial. Keeping alert to behavior and response will yield insight for action.

In reflection, the question of how emotional intelligence stacks against learning agility is salient. Goleman et al. contended that emotional intelligence is a key predictor for future success. Eichinger, Lombardo, and Capretta (2010) found “learning agility is an important element of performance potential and individuals with greater learning agility (success in dealing with first time experiences) are significantly more successful after they are promoted than others” (para. 17). A second interest is in respect to self-esteem. Goleman et al. advocated that increasing positive regard will increase emotional management. But what are the risks of achieving such high self esteem that it encroaches on self-aggrandizing or arrogance, a common derail? Should there be further explanation of what is meant by healthy esteem, and how it

correlates to happiness, a concept examined by Csikszentmihalyi. Goleman et al. (2002) addressed the positive effects of mindfulness work for overstressed research and development employees, who after an 8-week course report more creativity and productivity about their work” (p. 13). An important aspect of this is to understand the root of this stress and its implications for change. Further exploration into these areas would yield greater insight and use of emotional intelligence.

Primal leadership builds the case that great leaders project resonance or positive relationships as a means for transformation. According to Boyatzis and McKee (2005), “Great leaders are awake, aware, and attuned to themselves, to others, and to the world around them” (p. 3). The intersection with mindfulness and resonant leadership is direct. Creating positive relationships hinges on the premise that leaders need to be self-aware, and this is dependent upon acting on core values.

Sustainability is one of the challenges associated with resonant leadership. How do we create, let alone sustain, resonance when we are so stretched with life’s responsibilities? The balance of work and family is a constant prioritization process, for example. The authors spoke to the importance of developing “renewing” habits as a way to maintain positive habits. Rejuvenation as a process is unique for each person, but at its core, requires an unplugging from the daily bombardment of messaging and inviting stillness.

Boyatzis and McGee (2005) found that renewal depends on “three key elements: *mindfulness*, or living in a state of full, conscious awareness; *hope*, which enables us to believe that the future we envision is attainable, and *compassion*, or understanding people’s wants and needs and feel motivation to act on our feelings” (para. 8-9). The authors contend that there is a “dynamic tension” among these elements, and if practiced, restoration follows. If these stresses

remain unchecked, people may fall into what is called the sacrifice syndrome. “It goes like this: in the process of giving of ourselves, we give too much, leading us to ultimately become ineffective” (Boyatzis & McGee, 2005, p. 41). Resonant leadership and mindfulness are compatible because it emphasizes internal mechanisms to reconcile external circumstances. Therefore, mindfulness can be viewed as a core capability for leadership, rather than a supplemental or add-on.

In summary, leaders who have cultivated emotional intelligence are better positioned to lead themselves and others. A key attribute to any leader’s ability to create followership is making emotional connections, such as finding ways of relating and empathizing. The outcome of this process sustains engagement during times of turbulence. Creating resonance is one way this can be accomplished. At the core of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. There are a variety of ways that self-awareness can be developed including the use of 360-degree assessments or becoming an astute observer. These skills will lead to higher levels of emotional intelligence, as well as self-mastery. Moreover, the promise of emotional intelligence is significant for leadership, and cultivating patterns of seeing in terms of self and others offers a power path for future influence.

Mindfulness and authentic leadership. In the late 1990s, Authentic Leadership emerged as a reinvigorated perspective. Bill George, the former Chairman and CEO of Medtronic, helped mainstream ideas relating to Authentic Leadership. George (2003) spoke of authenticity “as being yourself; being the person you were created to be” (p. 11). He spent little energy extolling competencies one must demonstrate and cookie-cutter approaches to leadership. This thinking is unique, particularly compared to corporate culture, where limited space for reflection is afforded compared to the need to drive for results. Authentic leadership links to

theory such as positive psychology (Seligman, 2004), emotional intelligence (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2002), and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978). One can see the traces of Erickson's positive self-regard as an important connection, with George's emphasis on self-acceptance.

George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer (2007) set out to better understand, "How can people become and remain authentic leaders?" (p. 130). According to the researchers, "after analyzing 3,000 pages of transcripts, our team was startled to see that these people did not identify any universal characteristics, traits, skills, or styles that led to their success. Rather, their leadership emerged from their life stories" (p. 130). One's life journey and commitment to self-development gives rise to personal meaning. This suggests that overcoming adversity is not happenstance. Sinclair (2007) emphasized that personal narrative is critical to developing one's leadership stance. Both authors contended one's life story holds the key to relating with others, and adds character and texture to the journey.

Carson and Langer (2006) described the term mindlessness as a way to more fully understand mindfulness. She stated, "mindlessness is a state of rigidity in which one adheres to a single perspective and acts automatically" (p. 30). It is not a far stretch to assert that individuals who are not as self-accepting may struggle to show up authentically. In other words, the more mindful one is, the greater the opportunity to be self-accepting, and thus be real. One is simply not as concerned at how others may be evaluating them because all the person has is the present. The implications for leaders to have healthy self-regard and not be as concerned about how one is managing impressions are significant. Showing up with a strong dose of self-acceptance can help leaders cut complexity and meet it with clear thinking and speaking.

It can be argued that good leaders have a single, authentic identity, which is important to know, so that when they project and connect with others, it feels real. To achieve this requires critical self-reflection and a willingness to admit the less than flattering parts of one self. George et al. (2007) stated, “Denial can be the greatest hurdle that leaders face in becoming self-aware” (p. 134). This lack of self-awareness, or focusing too much on securing an authentic identity, can be a false ego trap, and can negatively impact one’s ability to relate with others. This can lead to being so concerned with one’s values and self that it gets in the way of who one really is, and how others experience them—in effect, a shadow side can develop under the guise of authentic leadership. According to Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2005), “A key factor contributing to the development of authentic leadership is the self-awareness or personal insight of the leader” (p. 347). Mindfulness can support this pursuit in providing the space and discipline to create objectivity, about oneself and others. But it does not guarantee it. Being more of who you really are may simply bring out traits that undermine relationships. If part of you is being a jerk or being judgmental this does not serve anyone well. In fact, hiding behind the authentic label could result in avoiding the hard facts of who you really are, without having to change or take responsibility for behaviors that need to be re-examined or changed.

Mindfulness and adaptive leadership. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009), stressed the process of diagnosis and action. This is similar to Gardner et al. (2005) and the notion of awareness and action in rigorous reflection produces uncanny awareness. Organizations struggle in creating space to reflect. Analyzing the current situation may be counter intuitive to achieving results, but paradoxically, it accelerates implementation. Heifetz et al. (2009) referred to a way of seeing as, “getting on the balcony; to gain the distanced perspective needed to understand what is happening” (para. 7). Another metaphor that illustrates this perspective is scaling the

ladder of inference, in which an individual reaches a decision largely through a series of assumptions. Thus, to be an adaptive leader, one must be able to see the "what" and anticipate the "what next."

According to Heifetz et al. (2009), "The most common cause of failure in leadership is produced by treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems" (p. 19). The ability to address technical challenges requires an informed, expert problem solver. Diagnosing a car's faulty brake line may require a trained ability, for example. Shifting the habit of the driver to lessen the pressure when braking, is another matter. Addressing the reasons for the driver's braking pattern is more complicated. Herein lays the difference between a technical and adaptive challenge: "Adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties" (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 19). The adaptive leader hypothesis can be understood as reaching a level of unsustainable discomfort in order to be open to change. Change for change's sake is not enough. When this situation occurs, the leader is given the opportunity to accelerate behavior with the intention of encouraging a change of habit.

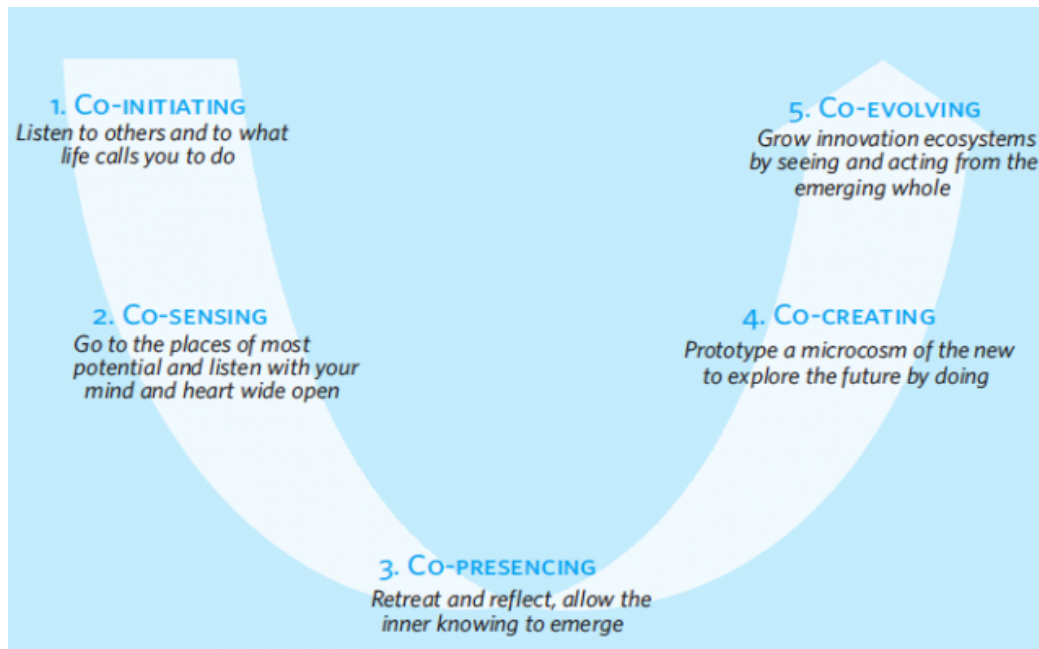
Heifetz et al.'s notion of creating sanctuaries to gain respite from life's responsibilities overlap with Boyatzis and McKee concept of sustainability advanced in Resonant Leadership. Examples include taking a walk, spending time with a friend, and meditation. Heifetz et al. (2009) stated, "Sanctuaries are spaces (physical or mental) where you can hear yourself think, recover from your work, and feel the quieter inclinations of your spirit. This renewal process is a way of remaining in touch with closely held values, and to live an authentic and balanced life. The adaptive leader requires stillness and silence to regenerate the energy to create change.

The adaptive leader approach offers compelling strategies, yet leaves pivotal questions unanswered, such as how the leader can behave situationally when orchestrating feelings of

discomfort. What qualities or traits should be demonstrated? How can the leader leverage strengths to manage the process of disequilibrium? And how does the leader adapt styles in respect to the individual vs. the team? Insight into one's leader style is necessary to answer these questions. Access to this level of awareness suggests support and training. Too often, managers do not receive the necessary skills to reach the level of leadership called for by Heifetz et al. More focus on transforming a culture can also be of benefit. The adaptive leader draws on shared cultural attributes, but the authors' largely limit change within the individual.

An idea akin to adaptive leadership is Theory U. According to Scharmer (2006), "The turbulent challenges of our time force all institutions and communities to renew themselves. To do that, we must ask: Who are we? What are we here for? What do we want to create together" (p. 14)? Scharmer advocated that change happens on two different levels: perception and action. These two dimensions are about accessing oneself: mind, heart, and will. Thus, the better we are at accessing these levels the more attuned we are to ourselves, and better able to adapt to others.

Theory U is a process that integrates three main movements: sensing, presencing, and crystallizing (Figure 2.1). The key to the process is being able to suspend one's thoughts and habits, to observe what is occurring in the moment, letting go of preconceived notions, and, as a result developing more insight and deeper learning of the situation. Theory U speaks to the possibility of suspending thoughts as a way to open up to others and adapt. It is a way to listen deeply to a particular context and develop sense making. In conclusion, adaptive leadership is stepping back and seeing challenges in context. Heifetz et al. described this process as getting on the balcony. To keep refreshed requires creating sanctuaries for retreat and renewal. This is critical for leaders that work in chaotic conditions. Theory U put into context the importance of suspending judgment as a way to let go and allow the unexpected to emerge. At its core is



Theory U, 2007. C. Otto Scharmer.

Source: Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky (2009). Reprinted with permission. See Appendix C.

Figure 2.1. Theory U.

being clear about what one stands for as a way to act intentionally and provides leaders with tools to diagnosis complex situations.

Mindfulness and spiritual leadership. If positive change is to occur, leaders must employ new mindsets such as acting authentically or behaving adaptively. Yet people still leave work drained and disconnected. An emerging body of literature (Moxley, 2000; Fry, 2003) is revealing that leadership practices in the workplace often dampen one’s spirit. People are unable to be themselves in a genuine manner and bring their personal values and mission to work. Palmer (2000) spoke about the inner journey of going deep within to uncover the authentic voice of vocation. He contended that by “experiencing and listening to one’s shadow side a greater understanding of self and one’s values emerge” (para. 18). Mainstream thought places work and spirit in exclusive domains. Most people spend the majority of their waking hours at

organizations; separating spirit and work or leadership and spirituality is akin to living without breathing.

Prior to the industrial revolution, it was common to have an integration of life's spheres: mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Working as a blacksmith, carpenter, print maker, or farmer all could have been performed in one's community. Following the industrial revolution, the separation of the four dimensions increased, with an over reliance on the physical and mental. The situation remains largely true today; only in recent years is a growing awareness of this division and its significance emerging. Increasingly, the emotional element mainstreamed through Goleman et al., has gained momentum, but only in pockets and with varying levels of acceptance. The spiritual dimension is emerging and it is less clear what form it will take.

Sinclair revealed that breath is associated with spirit. Moxley's (2000) definition is similar, "Spirit is the unseen force that breathes life into us, enlivens us, and gives energy to us. Spirit works within us. It helps define the true, real, unique self that is us. It confirms our individuality." It works within us to nudge us toward what Palmer (2004) called "hidden wholeness." According to Moxley, "We are who we are because of spirit" (p. 22). Being human is what he equates to spirituality, and the integration of the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual is the connection point. The congruency of one's values and mission is the measurement of spirituality. This notion overlaps with Palmer's (2000) interior truth with exterior behaviors. Intersecting spirituality with leadership, therefore, is about influencing and mobilizing others in a way that integrates the whole person and aligns with purpose. This model of spiritual leadership is a far distance from today's dominant mindset that de-emphasizes the whole person for transactional behaviors. Even the idea that a person is considered a "human resource" is shortsighted and has overtones that the person is a disposable.

Similar to Moxley, Fry (2003) viewed the whole person as elemental to the human experience. He noted that the increasing pace of global economics, technology, and the like is speeding the integration of the physical, mental, emotional, and the spiritual. Fry saw new frontiers for organizations to learn quickly and adapt. He defined spiritual leadership as, “comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership” (p. 694-695). The membership Fry spoke of is about people feeling a sense of calling, or meaning, and establishing a culture where leaders have genuine care and concern for others. Again, the sense of calling Fry references has parallels with Palmer’s notion of vocation.

Both Moxley and Fry viewed spiritual leadership as inclusive of all forms of religion. It is not tied to dogma, but can build on or add to one’s faith. Spiritual leadership is broader than religion because it connects meaning and ethics. It seeks to connect people’s inner motivations, values, and life purpose as a means to achieve better performance, commitment, and feeling of workplace content. Joy and happiness should be natural outgrowths of spiritual leadership.

One of the major challenges with spirituality is definition. There is a lack of consensus on what spirituality is, and its potential connection to religion. The lack of definition impacts how theory can be constructed and tested, and its connection to leadership. The default interpretation is associated with the whole person wheel (mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual). Tacit connections provide good general understanding, but leave room for a more updated, sophisticated explanation. Moxley and Fry’s thoughts on spirituality relate to intrinsic motivation, while others speak of spirituality in a theological sense, and tie definitions to dogma or scripture. A clear definition is needed if the field of spirituality is to evolve which links attributes and behaviors, and understanding how it impacts followers and culture.

In summary, spirituality and leadership is about being genuine and connecting value to work's mission. There remains significant opportunity to bridge this divide. In part, the pace of global change, and the lack of ways to create new meaning in new contexts, has contributed to feelings of being isolated. Workplace spirituality is about seeing and showing up as a whole person, and finding positive outlets to advocate for this opportunity.

Section two summary. The practitioner-based literature is abundant in respect to stillness and mindfulness practices. Definitions of mindfulness vary and were found to be inconsistent. Weiss (2004) understood mindfulness practice in two varieties: formal and informal. The formal practice is what we would normally call meditation, for which we set aside a specific time to sit silently with mindful awareness of our breathing. Kabat-Zinn (1994) suggested that mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. This definition places emphasis on “seeing” and “being.” In other words, the focus is on the “now.” Both definitions emphasized the inward process of observing and noticing.

Mindfulness was shown to be a significant practice in aiding leaders who encounter chaotic conditions. An underlying assumption of this perspective is that old methods of stress management and approaching change incrementally are no longer sufficient. Individuals are required to make in the moment decisions and, therefore, require higher levels of agility and decision-making abilities. Mindfulness embodies this approach.

The literature revealed that breath is foundational to a contemplative way of being. Findings suggested that with increased breath work and attention to self and others, an increase in self-awareness result. Self-awareness was seen as the gateway to good judgment and action.

The practitioner-based literature primarily focused on stillness and meditation practices, and did not have the same amount of review pertaining to movement practices, although there were exceptions. Most of the literature focused on the workplace and leadership in general, in the context of mindfulness.

In respect to future research, there are notable gaps, including a clear understanding of what is meant by mindfulness, the relationship between mindfulness and worker productivity, organizational learning, consistency in vernacular, and synthesis between concentration-based meditation, such as transcendental meditation, and a better understanding of the neurological benefits of mindfulness. These areas offer fresh opportunity to advance research.

The areas of emotional intelligence, authentic leadership, adaptive leadership, and spiritual leadership all have direct intersection with contemplative practice, and mindfulness in particular. Thus, when looking at how leaders cultivate clarity and openness, numerous concepts have relevance.

The literature revealed that the pace and complexity of change is pushing boundaries in terms of how organizational leaders interact with stress. The research revealed that through ancient practices, such as breath-work coupled with contemporary workplace strategies, a fulcrum of personal development opportunities emerge.

At the heart of contemplative and mindfulness practice is breath. Much of the non-peer reviewed literature suggested that breath leads to self-awareness. However, few references were revealed in respect to workplace programs making the mind body connection. As a result, there was a bias toward cognitive development (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Smalley & Winston, 2010; Wilber 2001; Wilber, Patten, Leonard, & Morelli 2008; Wheatley, 2007). The result is self-awareness and emotional relationship work has limited impact because it fails to integrate the whole person.

Section Three: Conceptual Presentation

Practitioner publications presented strategies and ideas to develop breath and deep listening with a leadership context (Carroll, 2008; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Sinclair, 2007; Wheatley, 2005). In particular, themes pertaining to breath and awareness or consciousness emerged, such as how long or short or how slow or fast. Breath coordinating is presented in respect to the breath four-part cycle: inhalation, pause, exhalation, and pause. Deep listening is about observing: paying attention to habits and barriers in the context of self and others. It is also about suspending judgment, which can lead to an emptying of thoughts and facilitates sense-making. The confluence and integration of these elements provides a framework from which a conceptual understanding can be built. In the following frame (Figure 2.2) breath and listening are introduced as the essential building blocks. As awareness of breath and listening is deepened, so is the opportunity for generating mind body connections.

Developing an awareness of breath is an important first step. Outside of talents such as singing, the martial arts, or activities such as yoga, most people are rarely introduced to conscious breathing. Yet, these practices are typically confined to that particular activity and not necessarily used as a tool for interpersonal effectiveness. The conceptual presentation suggests that leadership as a way of being begins with the self. This internal stance is the conduit from which all insight and action springs. As levels of awareness deepen and confidence grows, so too can the potential for influencing others. The conceptual model introduces external stimuli and is presented in Figure 2.3. At work, it can include coaching others, preparing for or giving a presentation, or interacting with a challenging peer. Each of these situations is fluid, with the end result unknown. One can easily be thrown with anxiety or frustration depending on the interaction and the reaction to it. The conceptual framework draws on breath and deep listening

Leadership as a Way of Being:

A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Source: Influenced by the work of Bhikkhu (1997); Carroll (2006, 2008); Hahn (1976); Kabat-Zinn (1994); Langer (1989); Rock and Page (2009); Silsbee (2010); Sinclair (2008); Vaill (1996); Weiss (2004); Wheatley (2005); Wilbur et. al (2008)

Figure 2.2. Leadership as a way of being: A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence, Part A.

as the foundation. For example, nerves may set in prior to a presentation. Recalling breath awareness practices can lead to a sense of creating calmness. A quickened breath can slow and an opportunity to check posture and body orientation can help to ensure alignment. The contexts are not limited to the work place. The model lends itself to integration in different ways including at home, with family and friends, and among many others. One key theme to pay attention to is during transitions. Because one encounters multiple roles throughout the day,

paying attention to how breath and listening show up during these transitions is important. For example, taking inventory of the nature of one's breath before coming home after a challenging

Leadership as a Way of Being:

A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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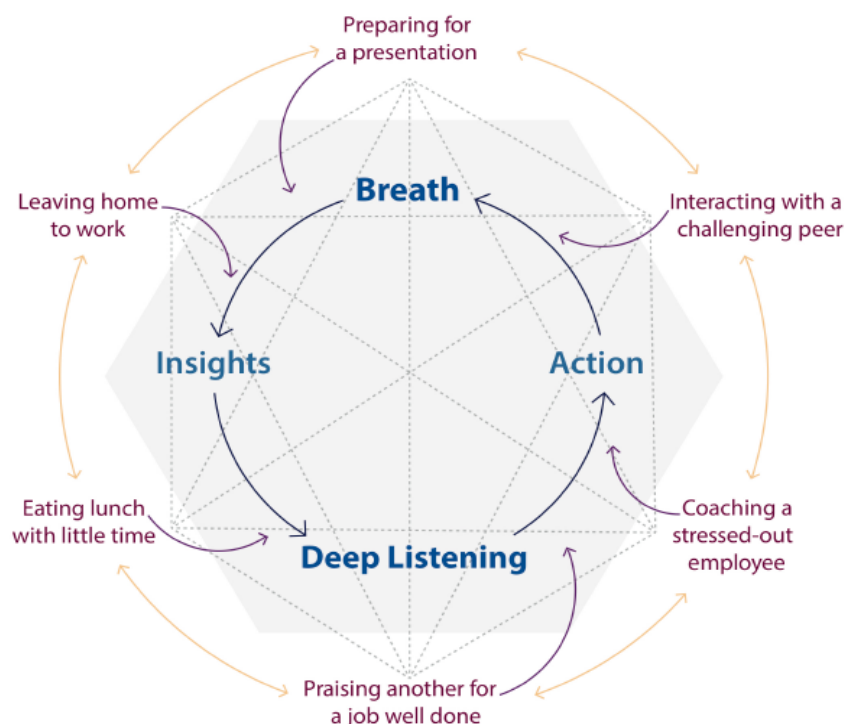
Figure 2.3. Leadership as a way of being: A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence, Part B.

day can reveal clues to how stress and anxiety is experienced. Is the breath originating from the belly or does it tend to be shallow, still frazzled from a particularly difficult encounter? Built in pauses such as setting aside a moment to center one's self help to release the space between work and home and provide an opportunity for awareness building.

A final conceptual framework is introduced is presented in Figure 2.4. Each successive

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A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Figure 2.4. Leadership as a way of being: A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence, Part C.

stage introduced more complexity. In this frame, the individual is fully immersed within and among the multiple contexts. These interactions are characterized by on-going interaction between the interior and exterior worlds (i.e., breath and dealing with a challenging colleague). The self is in a dynamic environment where one is drawing from the practices and contexts simultaneously. This requires a certain level of proficiency and confidence to be successful. It also suggests being able to draw upon different practices in different situations. In other words, a level of fluency is required so that one can self-correct as needed. The contexts may change, and because the individual can incorporate the practices more easily, it becomes possible

to move from one situation to another with greater flexibility. An example includes having just delivered a difficult message to an underperforming employee that is followed by a strategy meeting to chart the future course of the organization. Both contexts can be stressful and may result in mindless behavior because they require significant emotional energy. The difficulty of these deceptively simple practices quickly becomes apparent as they are attempted and serves as a reminder of the on-going need to remain mindful.

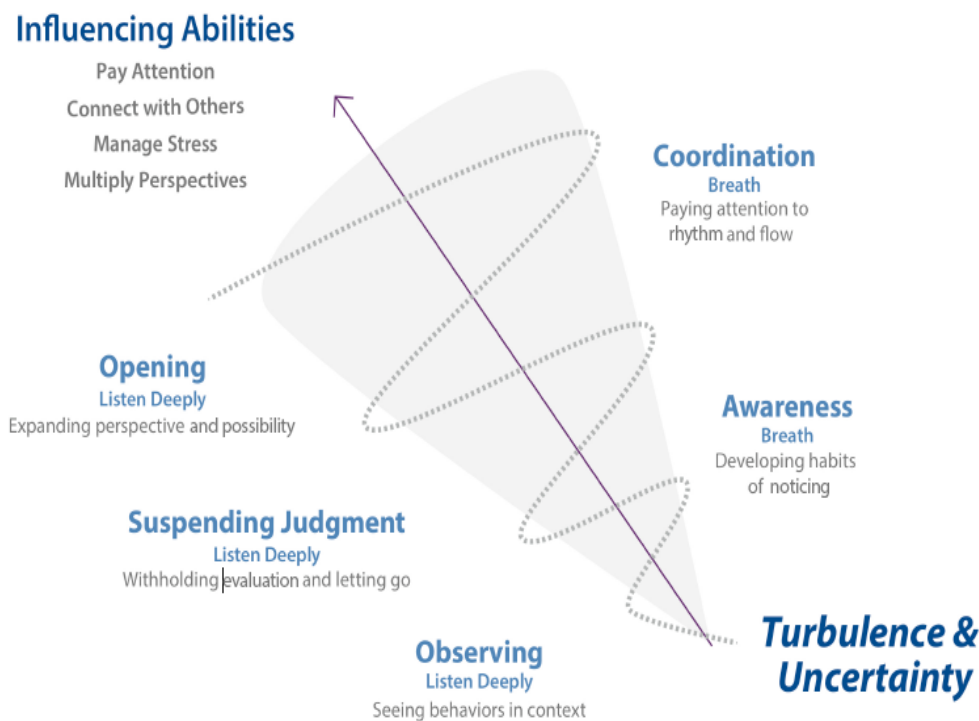
In looking closely at what is meant by breath and listening deeply, there are specific qualities to illuminate. In particular, breath coordinating was presented in respect to the four-part cycle: inhalation, pause, exhalation, and pause. Deep listening related to observing: paying attention to habits in the mind body context. It was also about withholding or suspending judgment so that in the moment attention is directed to the person and new possibilities emerge. The integration of these practices gives rise to leading as a way of being.

The conceptual framework is extended and illustrates how each of the five practices interacts in the context of turbulence and uncertainty in Figure 2.5. The illustration highlights the dynamic nature of the practices with one not necessarily being more important than another. One can start with any one of the practices and integrate other practices as new situations arise. The model highlights the four ways in which the study will evaluate the effect of these practices, namely the ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and multiply perspectives. In Chapter III, the practices are presented as specific exercises along with the methodology. What follows immediately is a more detailed investigation of how each of these practices can be understood and become the foundation for the how research will be conducted.

Breath awareness. Developing awareness of breath is foundational because it is the essential element for directing attention. Breath is the conduit in connecting the body with the mind and

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A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Figure 2.5. Leadership as a way of being: Interplay between breath and deep listening.

facilitates openness for one's basic orientation toward others. With breath awareness, the ability to step back to reset one's orientation and reframe can result. Breath awareness can be gained in numerous ways. For example, breathe in and out and notice how the chest and abdomen rise and fall. What do you notice? Or listen to the flow of air coming out of the nose. Is the air cool or warm? Does it feel smooth or harsh? Naming breath such as "agitated" or "calm" can make understanding concrete and palpable. Another way to bring shape to breath is by paying attention to its pace, is it fast or slow? Is it pulsating? If so, how does it feel? Recalling what

part of the body the breath is originating from (i.e., the chest) can be revealing, too. Labeling breath can help it feel less abstract and make it real. Drawing the connection between the breath and one's mental and emotional state is a jump in consciousness. A deepened understanding of the self can develop as awareness extends beyond physical understanding. Moreover, breath awareness is an on-going process that can be practiced any time; it provides valuable information regarding well-being, and can be a catalyst to ground the self in tumultuous circumstances.

Breath coordination. Generating awareness of breath is an on-going exercise that leads to constancy in terms of noticing subtle emotional changes (i.e., calm, focused, hurried, or scattered). Honing these awareness states can enable a natural modulating state and to help coordinate breath activity. Breath practice, as it will be utilized in this study, is part of a natural rhythm consisting of:

1. Inhalation (in-breath)
2. Pause
3. Exhalation (out-breath)
4. Pause

When this cycle is in normal, two-part breathing the inhalations and exhalations are of equal length, and is illustrated in Figure 2.6.

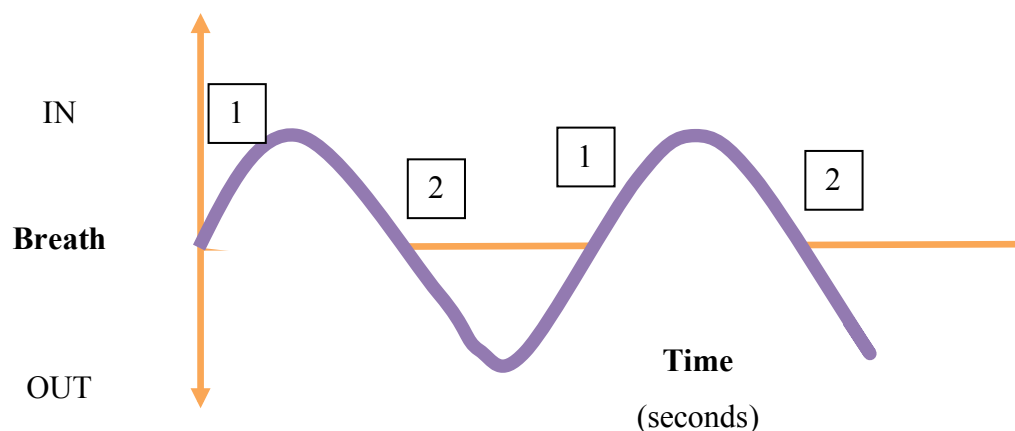


Figure 2.6. Normal two-part breathing.

The relaxing breath illustration (Figure 2.7) is an example of a way that the practices in this study will be encouraged. After taking an initial breath and exhaling fully, the subsequent breaths are shallow and will lessen feelings of tightness. These breaths are centered in the belly and contribute to feelings of stability by relying on multiple muscles including the diaphragm, rib cage, and abdominal. This is in contrast to more stressful breathing where the breath is chest centered, irregular, and rapid. Shallow breathing contributes to feelings of anxiousness and mindlessness. Tight or shallow breathing can also lead to hyperventilation, which is associated with lower levels of body-oxygen. Over time, less oxygen can lead to a host of ailments including prolonged or chronic stress and illness. As simple as a steady four-part breathing movement may seem, the ability to notice and be in constant awareness is challenging; gently regulating the use of breath in a natural and unencumbered way requires practice.

When the breath cycle is relaxed, taking an intentional breath, followed by slower breathing, a letting go can occur and is illustrated as:

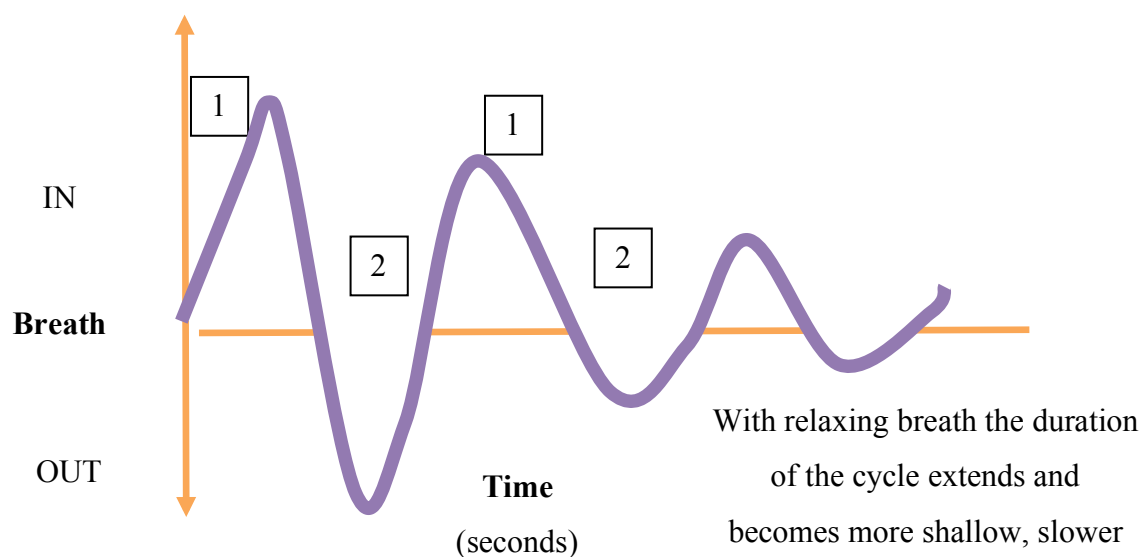


Figure 2.7. Relaxing breath.

Observing. With awareness of breath grounded as the core construct, a shift to deep listening can occur. Deep listening is not only the ability to hear what others are saying, but is a profound process that involves the whole self. For example, can you retell how posture changes during a stressful encounter? What about your feet? Are they planted on the ground or awkwardly arched? Do you find that your body leans against the wall for support or are you squared off? These examples reveal clues about where to start paying attention to your body. The aim of observing is to increase the ability to see your being while it is in the act. With this heightened awareness of what is occurring while it is happening, the opportunity to modify behavior increases. The lead character in the movie, *The Incredible Hulk*, played by David Barnett, helps to illustrate what poor observation looks like. Barnett's inability to feel his anger grow results in his body morphing into super human power. He is unable to regulate his emotion and cannot objectively see himself. He is in a state of mindlessness. If he were able to modify his behavior, and observe himself while in a state of anger, he may be able to regulate his emotions. Thus, observing is about developing the capacity to see behaviors in moments of discomfort more clearly. It is being able to look at how the breath and deep listening are showing up looking from the outside in. As this capacity to observe increases, so, too, does the potential to modulate and direct energy in deliberate and purposeful ways. In this way, observing is a key building block to breath awareness and mindful listening.

Suspending judgment. Suspending judgment is withholding evaluation. The mind is constantly shifting from one idea to the next and interpreting as it shifts. Many times judgments occur without noticing. Argyris and Schön (1974) saw "inquiring" as an important way to listen to others. Inquiring requires putting aside a particular interpretation in order to fully understand the intention of the speaker. The mind is constantly judging, making both faultfinding and

positive conclusions. For example, “It really doesn’t matter what she is saying, I’m right” or “I just don’t like the idea.” Alternatively, “I think his presentations always reach the right conclusions” or “I wish others would be like her.” Making positive judgments can also result in a narrow perspective. Therefore, suspending judgment begins with observing the mind and noticing judgment. Ask, “What am I noticing?” Simply notice. If critical thought emerges, acknowledge it, and allow it to pass. This practice requires ongoing effort because we are conditioned to evaluate.

The second part of suspending judgment is accepting. This includes noticing when an evaluation is made. For example, allowing space for judgment and remaining open to its implications is one way to experience the practice. Accepting pertains to seeing something as it really is and allowing it to be that way without trying to change it or alter its make-up. Ask, “What am I seeing?” Be sure to be as descriptive as possible. Your role is not to render a decision, but to see and accept. When your mind resists ideas or actions, try acknowledging the situation for what it is. Do not try to change it. The aim is to move toward the discomfort, rather than away from it, so that resistance can be lessened and you can work through it.

The third aspect presented in respect to suspending judgment is letting go. Holding tight comes in many forms, including defensiveness. New skills such as noticing and accepting make it easier to develop habits of letting go. This can become particularly evident and challenging around likes and dislikes, for example. The idea is not to disengage from the situation; rather it is about setting aside interpretation. This practice can be accelerated by asking, “What am I holding on to?” Or “What is it that I am resisting?” Holding judgment is a source of stress and tension and can lead to suffering. In the process of letting go, you are creating space for new possibilities. How these possibilities take shape will become more apparent in time. Being open

to a different route in an on-going challenge is a positive sign that a new flexibility is setting in. One trick is to notice when your body is resisting (i.e., muscle strain) and allow breath to be a primary vehicle in working through the resistance. Paying attention to its rhythm, and using the tools discussed, can help to move through the discomfort.

The three-part process of suspending judgment—noticing, accepting, and letting go—deepens the ability to listen. Feelings first originate in the body before they become conscious in the mind. Withholding judgment is counter to how many people enter into conversation, yet it can become a way of influencing that comes from a place of liberation rather than control.

Opening. A proposed extension of deepening awareness and connecting with others is opening. It is easy to push things aside given the level of ambiguity leaders typically experience during a typical day or week. As a result, unintentional and self-imposed barriers can manifest as coping mechanisms. Opening as a practice can help to bridge the letting go aspect of suspending judgment and facilitate an opportunity to see things in new ways.

An exercise that involves the tightening of the fist is an example that brings this practice to life. First, make a fist. Do not dig into the skin, but tighten the fingers into the palm and squeeze. Use force but not to the point of your hand or fingers feeling uncomfortable. Hold your hand in the fist for about 30 seconds. Afterwards, do not allow your “hand” to open, and do not let your “ego” open it; rather, allow the fist to open. There is no will, just allow it to physically open. This tightening of the fist is a metaphor and reminder of being in constant awareness. Pay attention to how your body feels when you hand opens. Is it tense? Do you feel constricted? If so, how? Pay attention to body sensations and breath. Ask, “What is the connection between restricting and leading? These questions will help to make sense of the practice.

The second part of the opening practice is increasing perspective so that a broader context and understanding can result. The opposite of constricting is opening and seeing multiple pathways. For instance, if someone offers an idea, take the opportunity to build on it, extending the view point. If a colleague, for instance, talks about a recent conversation they had with a direct report about activities to help them grow in their career, build on the idea. The practice can be modified during the same conversation to the point that new ways of seeing begin to emerge. During this practice, pay attention to how the breath and the body feel. Does the conversation lead to tightening or does flow result? These clues will help to uncover the mind body connection and can serve as a link between experiencing and directing emotion with leading.

Section three summary. In summary, section three presented the conceptual framework that explains the relationship between breath and deep listening. It provided a detailed investigation of breath awareness and coordination, namely how breath can be used as a way to create a more relaxed and calm disposition. Breath coordination included an overview of the four-part breath cycle and how this can be modulated as a pathway toward stillness. Deep listening presented three elements including observing, suspending judgment, and opening. Observing is associated with an ability to notice oneself in a way that enhances objectivity. Suspending judgment is about withholding evaluation in order to facilitate deep listening. In turn, the mental and emotional space is enlarged so that new possibilities can emerge. This leads to an emptying or opening of thoughts and seeing things in new ways. In turn, these practices can help to re-visit old challenges in new and creative ways. The practices do not need to occur in a linear fashion; rather, they are dynamic in terms of skill-development. They can be applied

one at a time over the course of a single interaction – it is largely dependent on the person’s skill and comfort level.

Chapter Summary

The study focused deeply on a review of peer reviewed and practitioner-based literature. The peer reviewed literature investigated themes from mind body literature in context of turbulence and the organizational leader. The author’s position is that that many work environments experience what Vaill (1996) referred to as “permanent white water,” conditions marked by constant uncertainty. Personal uneasiness can take the form of undue stress and anxiety, and consequently diminish leadership effectiveness. The review revealed three distinct ways to calm this whitewater including: stillness, movement, and relational practices.

The practitioner-based literature found abundant information in respect to stillness and mindfulness practices, and to a lesser extent, relational practices. The peer reviewed literature focused overwhelmingly on individuals, external to organizational settings, through randomized, control samples. The non-peer reviewed literature addressed broader areas relating to mindfulness and leadership in the contexts of emotional intelligence, authentic, adaptive, and spiritual leadership. Common to both peer reviews was the focus on breath and deep listening as ways to manage stress and promote clear thinking and calmness.

The chapter presented a conceptual framework. An overview of the practices was provided relating to: breath awareness, breath coordination, observing, suspending judgment, and opening. These practices may influence one’s ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and multiply perspectives. In one sense, these practices are abilities, but in another, they are intermediary forces that may, in turn, increase one’s effectiveness.

In conclusion, the literature review brought together distinct but complementary domains: peer reviewed and practitioner-based reviews. The sources of these reviews were interdisciplinary and carry significance for multiple fields. Integrating the contemplative lens throughout the review facilitated a consistent stand point. In turn, gaps were revealed and a focus for the study emerged: informal contemplative practices for organizational leaders experiencing uncertainty. Next, Chapter III will introduce single subject with multiple subject design as the methodology along with the research question and a presentation of the practices.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

The study invited seven people to participate in research exploring the effect of contemplative practices on organizational leaders. The approach specifically sought to uncover ways in which the practices influence four distinct abilities, including:

1. Paying attention (concentration and focusing of the mind)
2. Connecting with others (building relationships through attention of mind body states)
3. Managing stress (responding to external stimuli through mind body awareness)
4. Multiplying perspectives (ability to see viewpoints in a mind body context)

Through the application of the practices, the degree to which they had an effect on the four abilities was evaluated. Single subject with multiple subject design was chosen because of its crispness in treating each individual as a stand-alone unit that served as his or her own control group. This design allowed for participants to begin at baseline with the intervention being introduced thereafter. Self-assessment measures and qualitative evaluation were conducted continually over the course of the study. The study culminated with a series of post-tests to evaluate any change. One-to-one coaching supported participants in developing confidence and capabilities for the practices. The methodology was guided by the research question: What is the effect of contemplative practice on organizational leaders? The question evaluated whether or not the practices (intervention) caused a change in one's abilities.

Underlying the four abilities were the five practices, as presented in Chapter II. The conceptual model provides an overarching framework for the study. At the center of the model is the interplay between breath and deep listening. Breath, as a practice, consists of awareness and coordination. Deep listening relates to being able to observe oneself and others, suspending

judgment, and multiplying perspectives. Integrating the practices through repetition and habit may lead to improved abilities. In one sense, these practices are abilities, but in another they are intermediary forces, that may increase one's effectiveness. This study suggests that being a leader, and by extension, leadership, is not merely a series of actions; rather, it is a way of thinking and a way of being. This may support leaders in experiencing calmness and resiliency in the face of uncertainty. This contrasts with the idea of leaders only as doers where a specific outcome is expected. Contemplative practice and mindfulness, in contrast, is what leadership and being human is all about.

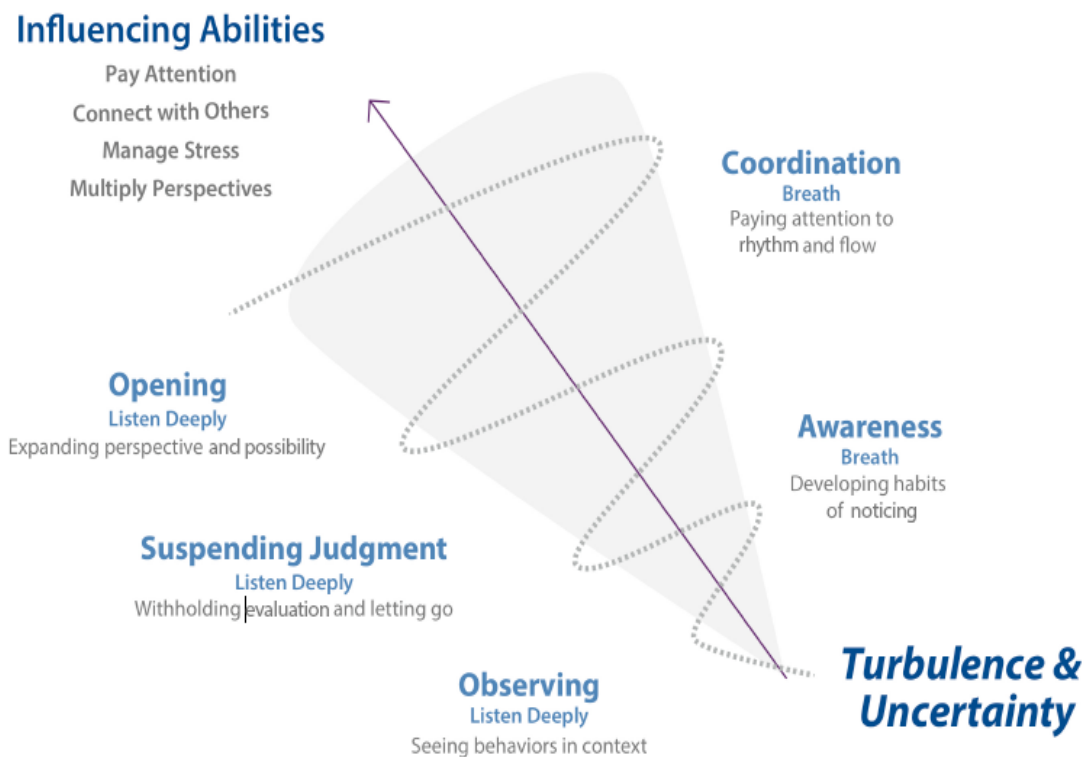
In Figure 3.1, leadership as a way of being is reintroduced. This time, however, each of the five elements can be viewed through the lens of the practices. The practices can be initiated in any order, during any interaction, and at any time. The practices are dynamic, but were evaluated separately. For the beginner, the practices can appear deceptively simple. However, with repetition and purpose, new habits of noticing take hold until a state of perpetual mindfulness is reached.

Methods

The research method is single subject with multiple subject design. I was interested in understanding if there was a connection between the practices, and, if so, would it lead to increased abilities and perhaps contribute to leader effectiveness. I was curious about which of the five practices would have more effect, and why it proved more potent. I was also interested in understanding how practice frequency effected any change. Would some individuals who consistently applied the practices at higher rates than others increase their abilities more quickly? What about individuals who did not practice regularly and still improved – what accounted for this? And how did the coaching meetings contribute to increased abilities, if at all?

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A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Figure 3.1. Leadership as a way of being: Interplay between breath and listen deeply.

Insight into these questions, in part, emerged from the self-assessments and observation. Single subject with multiple subject design revealed answers to these questions because it treated each participant distinctly, yet provided an opportunity to uncover patterns and make comparisons with the whole. According to McMillan and Wergin (2010), “single subject research is much like an experiment in that an intervention is actively manipulated by the

investigator to examine its impact on behavior. In single subject, however, there is only one person (or just a few people) in the study” (p. 6). Observation is a typical way of collecting data in single subject design. Self-assessments were primary ways to measure if changed occurred.

In multiple baseline design, measures relating to behaviors and performance variables are considered. This is because the researcher is interested in understanding the influence of each one of the five practices and how it relates to each person. Identifying the baseline was the first step toward ensuring a consistent starting point. Each of the practices were measured weekly, culminating with post-measures. This approach is in contrast to other multiple baseline design approaches that may include subjects or groups, such as with a group of managers, or across settings that could include evaluating an individual’s behavior in various environments or places. Moreover, single subject research is well regarded for this type of approach due to its flexibility, simplicity of design, and practical application.

Design

The purpose of the study is to understand if the practices changed one’s abilities as measured by paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, and multiplying perspectives. Self-perception and observation were the primary measures to determine if any effect occurred. A screening process was undertaken prior to the start of the research to determine if selection criteria were met. After the candidates were successfully screened and selected, the first meeting was scheduled to introduce the practices, including surveys and assessments. The participants were provided with an overview of the exercises and a detailed explanation so that they left the meeting feeling prepared.

After participants completed the interview, pre-assessments, and the practices, the process began. The coaching meetings occurred weekly over 10-weeks, with some participants

extending to 12-weeks due to travel or conflicting schedules. The post-meeting took place one-month after the initial study period was concluded. Participants were invited to check-in by email or phone during the week for on-going support and encouragement. The time was also helpful for encouragement and to make adjustments in the application of the practices as needed.

Researcher's Role

Single subject research lends itself to observation as an evaluation measure. Participants had the opportunity to discuss their experience at coaching meetings. They had the chance to role play different interpersonal scenarios so that they became more confident with the practices. I expected that each person would respond differently to the practices; some found them easier to apply as a whole, while others gravitated to one practice at the exclusion of another. I found that working through these gray areas within each person's context was tantamount to making the process relevant. Therefore, my role as researcher was multiple, including teaching and coaching as well as collecting and analyzing. My experience lent itself to supporting the process in three distinct ways: a theoretical and practical understanding of how individuals manage change; the ability to coach effectively; and a commitment to model the practices. This background proved invaluable to help the participants move through the process and the overall research design (Figure 3.2). Several guiding principles helped support the research process. There were several unforeseen events that occurred such as frequent travel, but the issues were managed through regular communication and adjusted expectations. I was able to bring a spirit of openness and surprise to the research process which helped to ensure that the research was successfully carried out. As researcher, I focused on:

1. Being *flexible and open to adjustment*. Because each participant had demanding responsibilities, full consideration of their commitments was made.

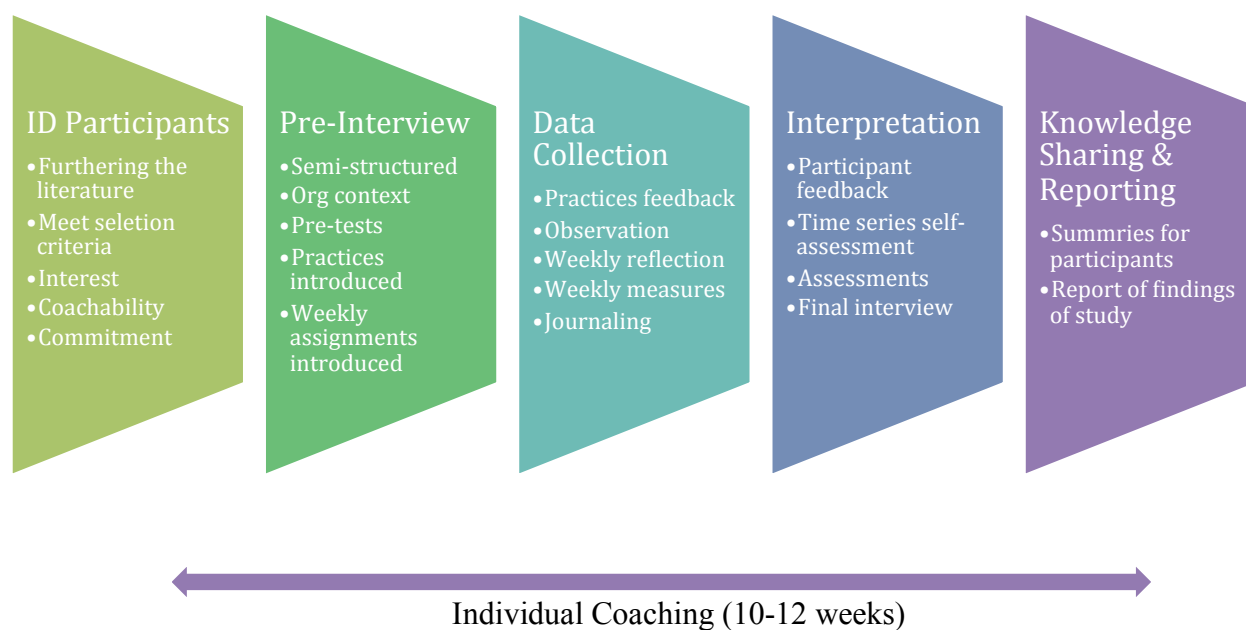


Figure 3.2. Research steps.

This included being sensitive to schedules, including my own work commitments, that required juggling at times and managing several unforeseen commitments.

2. *Time for reflection and sense making.* Because multiple individuals participated in the coaching process simultaneously, taking time to step back and integrate the learning was important. Journaling was one way I took a step back to reflect.
3. *Allowing the data and the process to emerge.* While there is significant research on the positive effect of meditation, research on informal practices in organizational settings is limited; being cognizant to how this information unfolded was important.

Participant Selection

There were multiple steps for the selection process. Pre-selection is concerned with determining if the participant met the criteria. The process of research fit was assessed through

the interview questions, a breathing exercise, and the level of exposure to contemplative practices (less is better). Each of the areas is discussed in detail.

Seven participants were selected for the study. Participants were drawn from the ranks of manager and above, with most people coming from director levels. These roles suggest, but do not always include, direct report responsibility. Direct report responsibility is important because uncertainty typically occurs in the context of others. The workplace is inherently agitated because humans are emotional. With direct reports come the expectation of motivating and leading others in ways that are not always easy. Identifying individuals who share these responsibilities provided for immediate application of the practices. During the interview, I paid particular attention to how the candidates described their direct reports. Do they see them as partners in accomplishing shared goals or do they view them primarily in terms of their technical background needed to accomplish tasks? Are they good listeners? Do they value and practice coaching others? If they have multiple direct reports, how do they conceive their role as team leader and how do they define a high performing team? Does the leader operate as if he or she is a system of one or do they articulate how each person and role is connected to the whole? During the screening process, I wanted to understand these responses so a clear baseline of their mindset was established. These answers provided important clues to the degree to which the leader created alignment with their team, specifically, and how they conceptualized leadership, more generally. Candidates who had at least one direct report were considered for the research, and those with more than one direct report took priority.

Participants were drawn from organizational settings, including private, public, or non-profit entities. The size of the organization varied, and ranged from small (less than 50 people) to large (greater than 100,000 people). Start-up type organizations, or those with fewer than five

people, were not considered. Volunteer-driven organizations such as parent-teacher organizations and neighborhood organizations were not accepted. The organizations identified were located in the San Diego, California, metropolitan area. Participants represented white-collar workers which included office and professional workers. People performing manual labor, either skilled or unskilled were not considered for the study. Age and gender were not factors in the selection process. A summary of the selection criteria is provided in Figure 3.3.

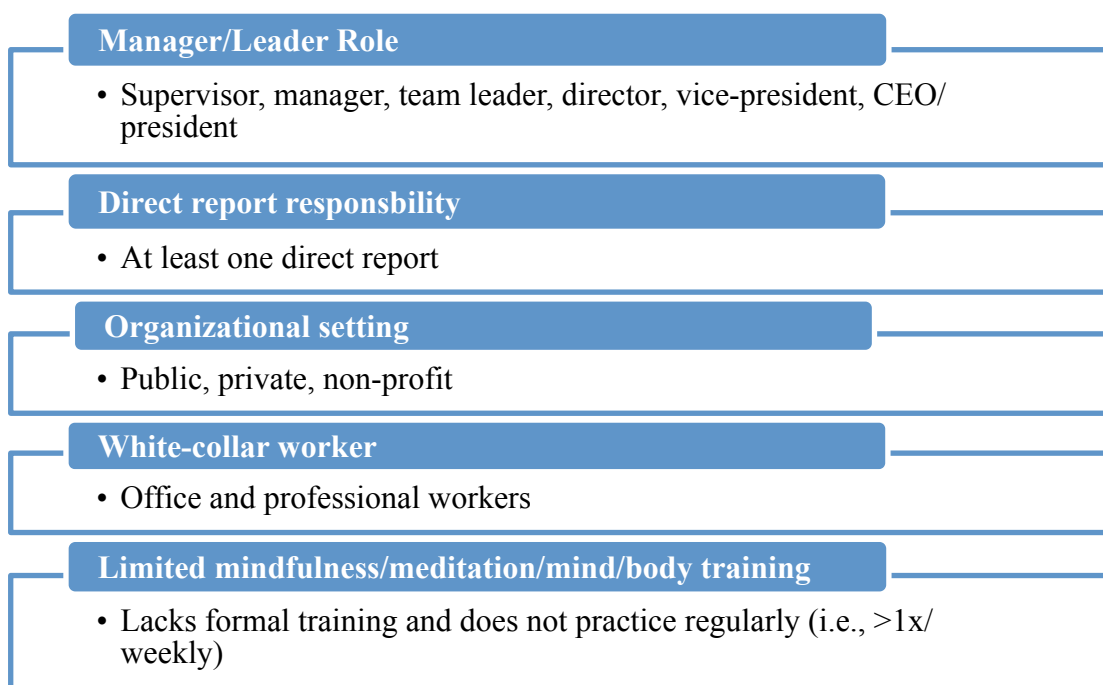


Figure 3.3. Summary of participant criteria.

Selection Process

Participants were identified primarily through my professional network. The first step in the process was creating a list of contacts. These contacts drew from consultants in the leadership and organizational development field. I asked my contacts if they knew people that fit the research criteria. If they did, I asked the contacts if they could reach out to the potential participants. If the potential participants were interested, I followed up by email and phone.

Thereafter, I met to interview each of them. My intent in communicating with the potential participant was to convey an inviting tone and to provide an overview of the study. I wanted the individuals to know what they could expect and how it might benefit their professional and personal development. The initial email included an introduction to the study, what their role would be, the anticipated timeline and commitment, and my role in the research.

If the person responded positively to the email, I scheduled a phone call to more deeply assess fit and evaluate if the person met the selection criteria.

Interview Process

The purpose of the interview was to assess study fit. The interview took place either by phone or in-person, depending on what information was revealed up until this point. During the interview, the following steps occurred:

1. Introducing self/general purpose of the study per the introductory email;
2. Asking questions pertaining to the individuals role and responsibilities;
3. Understanding exposure to contemplative and meditative practices;
4. Gaining a sense of any significant health issues that may impact participation;
5. Committing to the study, if selected.

The interview process took approximately 60 minutes. I took notes during and after the interview. The following questions were asked during the interview:

1. Tell me about your role and responsibilities?
2. Tell me about your organization? Its mission and goals? Values? Priorities?
3. In what ways do you feel that you excel? Please describe.
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the level of stress in your work life?
5. In what ways is your job stressful? Please describe.

6. How would you rate your ability to handle this stress?
7. How do you respond to stress? Please describe.
8. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being low and 10 high, how much change has the organization experienced in the last year? How has this impacted you?
9. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being low and 10 high, how much uncertainty have you experienced? Please describe.
10. What has been your response to uncertainty in the workplace?
11. How have you invested in yourself over the course of the last year from a development perspective?
12. If there were 1 to 2 things in the future that you can do that would significantly increase your effectiveness, what would they be?

Rubin and Rubin (2005) referred to the term “conversational partner” as a “way to emphasize the uniqueness of each person with whom you talk, his or her distinct knowledge, and the different ways in which he or she interacts with you” (p. 14). My intention was to bring this spirit of inquiry to these semi-structured interviews, paying attention to each person’s style and focus on ways to develop a personal connection.

The amount of exposure to contemplative and meditative practices was important. Potential participants may have had an introduction to a mind and body practice such as yoga, or may have tried meditation, but the limiting criteria were those who do not have a regular and formal practice. A regular practice is more than one time a week. A formal practice precluded any training for that specific practice. The following questions helped to determine exposure to the practice:

1. Have you had previous experience with mind and body practices, such as meditation, yoga, or the martial arts? If so, please describe.
2. If you have practiced in the past, did you receive formal training?
3. If you have had exposure to a mind body practice, what was it and what did it consist of? For what length of time did you practice?
4. Did you find the practice satisfying? In what ways was it difficult or challenging? Please describe.
5. How would you describe your overall experience with mind body practices?

The responses to the questions revealed clues to how participants may experience the practices, if selected. If the exposure was not positive, they may not have an interest in the study. If they had limited experience, but were curious and showed a willingness to try them, it revealed another set of considerations. Paying attention to this information was important in gaining a sense of coachability, and their commitment to the experiment.

The organizational role was important because it uncovered their responsibilities. Their role provided context to their daily pressures, and the skills required to carry out their work. If the person was a scientist, many of their skills may be technical, for example. But if they led a team, they would be less likely to rely on their technical expertise on a daily basis, and more likely to be involved in influencing others and making decisions. Their role indicated the extent to which they encountered uncertainty. Many situations in which turbulence occurs have little to do with the individual and a lot to do with the organizational context and culture that they are a part of, as well as how they perceive it. This information was helpful to establish a baseline.

The person's well-being was another consideration. The aim of the questions was in no way designed to make a clinical diagnosis of the person; rather, a general sense of the person's

engagement and health was needed to ensure that they meet the study criteria. Three questions were asked, including:

1. Do you use biofeedback, acupuncture, or massage therapy to deal with any chronic health issues?
2. Do you currently have a life or executive coach with whom you are working?
3. Are there any additional health considerations that you think will affect your participation in this study? If so, please explain.

The interview process was designed to identify people who do not have significant underlying mental health concerns. The mindfulness based stress reduction literature focused heavily on researching whether or not mindfulness practice influences mental health. Individuals who were seeking professional services of a mental health professional were not automatically ruled out. It was dependent on the reported well-being of the individual. Because mental health is a concern among many Americans with up to one-third being diagnosed with mental illness, and up to fifty-percent being diagnosed in their lifetime, taking care in this regard was important.

Commitment to the practices was also evaluated. Those who were willing to commit to the practices were considered. This included having a clear understanding of how individuals handled unexpected work demands. Three questions were asked to determine how they respond to competing commitments, including:

1. How do you see yourself making the time and commitment necessary to participate in the research?
2. What obstacles or barriers might you encounter in terms of following-through with the study?

3. How do you see yourself working through scheduling challenges or other potential changes (i.e., new role) that might occur?

Gaining a sense of the person's overall goals and desire to participate in the study established selection and fit.

Last, after selection, participants were asked to complete an informed consent agreement. The participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point during the research. In one case, the person did not continue after the initial meeting for reasons that were unclear, and a new candidate was identified to take his place, so that no less than five individuals would result in the final analysis. In this study, a total of six people completed the process. In cases where the individual might have a change of mind to participate in the research, the person's wish to end the relationship was honored. This was not the case in this study; all who began the process with the one exception completed the commitment. Moreover, the interview process was essential to ensure all possible efforts in making a good match.

After the interview, I reflected and journaled on the meeting. If all indicators were positive, I followed up, letting the person know the decision and next steps. In cases where the criteria were not satisfactorily met, I would have contacted them, thanked them for their time and interest, and let them know that they were not chosen. This did not happen in this study. Due to the uneven nature of the time of selection, and my ability to work with them simultaneously, the entry time for the participants were staggered. The research was completed over a six-month period. Participant biographies are included in Chapter IV, adding depth and texture to the person's background, coupled with their results.

Kick-off Meeting—Getting Started

The kick-off meeting focused on setting expectations, a breathing exercise, an

introduction of the practices, and the organization of the research. The meeting lasted about 90 minutes in length.

Prior to the kick-off meeting, participants took two pre-measures. These surveys were administered on-line using Survey Monkey. Field notes and journaling were collected and analyzed using the on-line software tool. The two initial surveys included the:

1. Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)
2. Mindfulness survey (MS)

Completing these surveys prior to the start of the research allowed for maximum time to introduce the practices.

According to Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, and Toney (2006), the FFMQ is based on a factor analytic study of five independently developed mindfulness questionnaires. The analysis yielded five factors that appear to represent elements of mindfulness. The five facets are observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. The 39-item questionnaire (the questionnaire is found in the Appendix E) is based on a five-point scale that includes: never or very rarely true, rarely true, sometimes true, often true, and very often or always true. The FFMQ was administered as a pre-and-post-test, and at the time of the one-month follow-up meeting. Score comparisons were used to evaluate any change.

The second instrument is the Mindfulness Survey. This is a self-constructed instrument linking the dimensions of breath and deep listening, as revealed in the conceptual framework in Chapter II, and includes: observing, suspending judgment (noticing), suspending judgment (accepting), suspending judgment (letting go), opening, breath awareness, and breath coordination. Statements are on a 7-point scale, and include: strongly disagree, disagree,

somewhat disagree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree (questions are found in the Appendix F). The survey was conducted as a pre-and-post-test, and at the one-month follow-up meeting. Score comparisons were used to evaluate any change.

Breathing Exercise

Participants performed a breathing exercise at the pre, post, and one-month follow-on meeting. The average breath an adult takes is between 12-20 breaths per minute. In contrast, the average breaths for an advanced yoga practitioner is as low as three breaths per minute with high attention to its quality. This breathing exercise was introduced at the first meeting and was adapted from one developed by Dr. Andrew Weil. The exercise includes the following steps:

1. Find a comfortable sitting place; make sure your back is erect and your head slightly forward. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Let the breath come in and out without trying to control its pace or rhythm. Allow the breath and mind to soften. Next, begin the exercise with the following movements:
 - a. As you exhale, count “one”
 - b. With the next exhale, count, “two,” and so on until you reach five
 - c. After reaching five, re-start, again, counting with “one” as you exhale
 - d. With the next exhale, count, “two,” and so on until you reach five
 - e. After reaching five, re-start, again, counting with “one” as you exhale

Only count to five and do not pass that number. Make sure you count only when you exhale.

Last, you will know that your mind will wander if you find yourself counting upwards of five without noticing and find yourself at ten or higher.

Continue the breathing exercise for several minutes. Afterwards, you will have a chance to describe the experience. The goal of the breathing exercise was to give the participant access

to a calming technique that could be used throughout the study and to create mind body awareness. The following questions were asked of the participant at the three intervals (pre/post/one-month follow-up):

1. How would you describe the experience?
2. Were you able to follow your breath? If so, in what ways? If not, what happened?
3. Did your mind wander? If so, were you able to bring yourself back to the counting?
4. What did you feel during the exercise? How would you describe these feelings?
5. Did you find yourself making judgments during the exercise?
6. What else would you add?

Body Mapping

A body mapping exercise was a tool designed to uncover underlying stress and tension. The mapping exercise was conducted bi-weekly and was collected for analysis and comparison. The exercise started at the second week of coaching and continued through week ten. A sample body map is provided in Figure 3.4. The participant marked areas that they identified as being

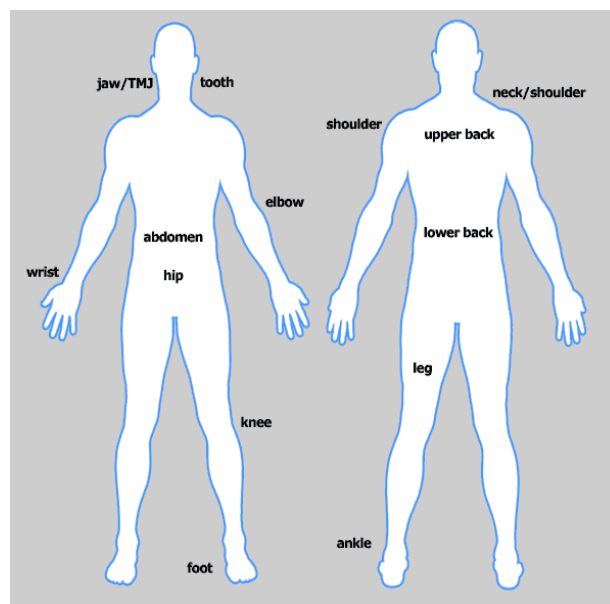


Figure 3.4. Body mapping.

stress-related or where tension existed. For example, if the participant had stress in the shoulders, they would say so and explain reasons as to why the stress is showing up in this area. If there was no stress to report, I took note of this as well and asked for reasons why this was so. I presented a blank body map to the participant every other week, and asked them to place a dot on any areas where stress was present. The body mapping process facilitated developing awareness of body tensions and helped to reveal discomforts. This information was used during the coaching meetings and to discuss how the practices may have supported in providing any relief. The body map was reviewed and compared over the course of the study for any changes.

Practices

The practices consumed the majority of the focus at the kick-off meeting. As a recap, a practice can be understood as a habit for the purpose of learning or acquiring a new skill. In this study, the practices relate to breath and deep listening. Any one of the five practices can be initiated at any time. They do not need to be conducted in any particular order. The practices were encouraged for use beyond the workplace so that there was opportunity to apply them in multiple settings. It is often during the transition times (i.e., home to work or work to an evening activity) that new and unexpected opportunities arise and lend themselves to the practices. An overview of each of the practices is presented next.

Practice #1: Breath awareness. Developing breath awareness is the foundation for all others forms of mind body practices. The aim of the practice is to increase the ability to notice breath at different times during the day. The study requirement was simply to notice their breathing. As participants become more aware of breath, its quality and form, they would be better able to notice and respond to it. In some cases, a response may be simply noticing, in other situations, it may mean leaving a difficult situation so that they can regain composure.

Participants can practice this awareness technique at any time of the day. Some may find it easier if they set a reminder on their phone, while others may prefer to keep it top of mind and be prepared to notice as situations arise. The point is to have many informal times of check-in so that a new habit of noticing breath takes hold. Again, the aim is to simply notice the breath, its quality, and any effect that it is having. Several questions that follow will be encouraged for the participant to ask themselves. Can I feel the breath coming in and leaving my nostrils? If so, what is the feeling? Where is the breath originating (i.e., the chest or diaphragm)? Does the breath feel moody? How would you describe it? Becoming aware of how emotion influences behavior will be useful information into how different mind states are experienced.

Practice #2: Breath coordination. The aim of the second practice is to notice the rhythm and make-up of the breath. The first part of the practice is recognizing that breath is a four-part cycle (inhalation, pause, exhalation, pause). If the cycle is shortened or awkwardly lengthened, the natural breath process may be stilted. The expectation is that as participants increase awareness of breath, they will be able to modulate a more natural and even flow. If the breath is short and tight, for example, the ability to notice this is first, then gently returning to a natural and even state of breath is key, breathing in and out. As one notices the breath, its rhythm and flow, this may lend itself to being able to reveal its quality, for example; is it fast, slow, short, or long and what is the context when I noticed this (i.e., during a challenging meeting). If the flow of the breath is uneven, a requirement of the practice is to try bringing it back to a relaxed state with longer out-breaths. If the breath flows agreeably, notice this, and continue to breathe. The aim is not to abruptly modify the breath, but to become aware of it and gently return to a more natural state. This practice has the potential to evolve into a powerful tool as it is applied to tense or difficult situations.

Practice #3: Observing. Observe is becoming an astute eyewitness of interactions with self and others. Notice how your body feels in times of stress and ambiguity. Where is the tension originating in the body? What is happening in the mind, does it want to flee or stay and fight? A requirement of this practice is simply to begin observing behavior. This behavior can include noticing how you are interacting with a colleague or direct report, and being able to accurately describe your thoughts and actions. It might also include seeing another person's behavior, such as observing their face turning red or noticing that the breath is shallow and chest-centered. Your ability to see how these behaviors manifest in others will help to recognize your own behavioral tendencies. You can ask yourself, what am I seeing? How can I describe what is happening? Have I seen these behaviors before? What is unique about this context? What surprises me? The requirement of this practice is to objectively describe what is happening, within you and among another person, in the mind body context.

Practice #4: Suspending judgment. Suspending judgment refers to the process of withholding judgment so that there is space for an open mind and deep listening. The process of suspending judgment includes three parts. The first part is to notice how frequently the mind makes evaluations during the course of a conversation or over a given day. Are you aware when a judgment was made? What was the subject and who was involved? Second, accept that that your mind is making an evaluation without judging yourself. In other words, allow interpretation to result without judging the judgment. The final step is to let go – suspend the judgment. Ask yourself if you are holding onto the need to be right, liked, or perceived in such a way as smart or in control. Notice feelings that manifest in the body. How do these feelings affect how you interact with others? The requirement of the practice is to listen deeply to others, without

judging, using the three steps outlined above. This process will reveal clues to the frequency and nature of evaluations and the significance.

Practice #5: Opening. Opening is gaining the awareness of blockages or obstructions that hinder the mind body relationship with self and others. The “fist” exercise is an activity that demonstrates how opening can be understood. The idea is that when our mind and body are constricted, it shuts off the possibility of listening deeply and in more expansive ways. First, tighten the fist for about 30 seconds, so as to restrict flow in the body. Now, try to hold a conversation with someone while keeping your fist closed. How is listening affected? Where is your attention focused? Now, slowly open your fist. How does it feel? What did you experience when you tried to have a conversation and your fist was tight? Did you feel that you were able to connect with others without being distracted? The exercise provides a quick reminder to how the body influences the mind. The requirement for this practice is to listen to others in ways that build on the perspective of others so that new ideas and innovative thinking can result. Noticing the mind body state in terms of its constriction or openness promotes opening. The practice lends itself to paying attention to when listening is not occurring, so that you can readjust your focus with full attention.

Weekly Surveys

The kick-off meeting concluded with an introduction of the three weekly surveys. The first survey was the weekly reflection log. The 20-item survey allowed participants to reflect on the week. The statements correspond to the four abilities and were constructed using a seven-point scale, including strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree (Table 3.1). The information was analyzed and compared. The coaching meetings provided an opportunity to review how the practices were

Table 3.1

Weekly Reflection Log

Weekly Reflection Log	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Check the box in the blank that best describes your level of agreement.							
I maintain my focus in challenging situations (PA)							
I am comfortable when making presentations (PA)							
I easily find ways to relax (MS)							
My breath is fluid in tense circumstances (MS)							
I judge my own thoughts (PA)							
I make decisions with appropriate input from others (MP)							
I am slow to judge the ideas of others (CO)							
I act genuinely during conflict (CO)							
I feel in control of my circumstances (MS)							
I pay attention to what is said beyond the words (CO)							
I listen deeply to others even if I think I know the answer (CO)							
I consider the organization as a whole when making decisions (MP)							
I usually feel relaxed even when I am not sure what is next (MS)							
I listen to others when I disagree (CO)							
I reflect on how I interact in meetings (PA)							
I notice my breath when sitting at the computer (PA)							
I accept the ideas of others when I am stressed (MS)							
I challenge team members to build cross-functional views (MP)							
I build on the ideas of others (MP)							
I seek input from others when making decisions (MP)							

Note. PA = paying attention; CO = connecting with others; MS = managing stress; MP = multiplying perspective.

experienced that week. For example, the individual found that they were moving too quickly from one task to another, and that it was affecting their ability to focus. The log helped to reveal this tendency, its context, and re-occurring patterns.

The second log was the weekly self-rating report (Table 3.2). This is a five-question survey that asks participants to rate themselves on each of these abilities and how one perceives leader effectiveness. A seven-point scale was used and included, strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree. Field notes augmented the findings. The data was compared individually and across participants.

Table 3.2

Weekly Practice Report

Weekly Practice Report	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Please rate each of the following questions using the scale below. Check the box in the blank that best describes your level of agreement during the past week.							
1. During the past week, rate your ability to pay attention?							
2. During the past week, rate your ability to connect with others?							
3. During the past week, rate your ability to manage stress?							
4. During the past week, rate your ability to generate new perspectives?							
5. During the past week, rate your capacity to demonstrate new leader abilities?							

The final assessment is the frequency report (Table 3.3). The five-question survey reported how often participants conducted the practices daily. This information revealed a consistent effort to practice and outcomes showed improvement in several areas – suggesting a

positive relationship. The narrative data helped to uncover clues as to why there was reported change in one's ability despite "observing" three to four times daily, for example. What accounted for a lack of change when practice occurred? Or reverse, if the person did not practice, yet the report posted an increase in the ability to pay attention. What accounted for this change? Answers to these questions were divulged in the coaching meetings.

Table 3.3

Weekly Frequency Report

Weekly Frequency Report					
Based on the past week, how frequently did you apply the practice over the course of the day? Please check one response per each category below.					
	Not at all	1-2 times daily	3-4 times daily	5 times daily	>5 times daily
<i>Breath awareness</i> (Noticing inhale and exhale breath)					
<i>Breath coordination</i> (Attention to rhythm and flow)					
<i>Observing</i> (Seeing behaviors in context)					
<i>Suspending judgment</i> (Withholding evaluation)					
<i>Opening</i> (Expanding perspective)					

Recording and reviewing journal notes provided further insight, although, subtle changes in thinking or slight behavior modifications were nuanced and difficult to track at times. The multiple data sources helped to understand any change in one's ability.

The practice frequency report also provided focus. Preference for breath awareness at the expense of suspending judgment was revealed, for example. Some practices were found to be easier than others, and therefore, may have contributed to a bias in practice. Another consideration of the frequency report was that it provided clues to habits. A primary reason for recording frequency was that the more a behavior was exercised, with consistency over time, the more likely that it became a normal and natural way of thinking and way of being. The question of how long it takes to form a habit varies. Twenty-one days is commonly cited; however, to make a lasting and substantial change 45-days, or about six weeks, appears to be more accurate. For practices like those introduced in this study and conducted daily, a reasonable time period for habit forming seems to be a 10 to 12-week period. Because habits form at different rates for each person, the actual time may vary. For some, six or seven weeks for the study may suffice, whereas for others, several additional weeks may be needed. I was most concerned that the participants achieved a level of fluency and comfort with the practices at their own pace, rather than to expect them to form habits in a specific or rigid time table. Consistent with formal meditation studies, there appears to be a potential for greater opportunity to form a habit if it is practiced consistently during the initial 21-day period. Afterwards, the nature of forming habits slowly deepens. This finding is consistent with state and trait studies relating to meditation. Therefore, participants were encouraged to apply the practices as much, and as often, as possible at the start of the study. This gave the participant a good start to form new habits.

Kick-off Meeting Wrap-up

The participant should have had a clear sense of expectations and confidence in being able to begin the practices after the kick-off meeting. Some felt a bit overwhelmed with the new information. Others were excited and looked forward to getting started. It was my intention that

whatever the case, the person felt supported, and knew that the subsequent meetings would support this endeavor. An overview of the practices was handed out along with the survey materials. The materials were presented as a packet so that participants felt organized. I let the participants know that they could reach out at any time for guidance – they did not need to wait until the next coaching meeting. Last, I thanked them for their participation and for their willingness to try something new that had the potential to positively affect their lives.

Coaching Meetings

The coaching meetings were approximately one-hour in length. The meetings were a time to explore challenges and successes as they related to the practices. The time was an opportunity to discuss the weekly surveys and the body map and its significance. I inquired about practice frequency and areas where they felt that they were progressing. Which practices did they gravitate to and why? Which ones did they practice less of and why? I asked them to explain where stress and tension manifested in their body and what it meant to them. Was lower back pain a result of poor posture or computer use, for example, or was it something else? I took notes during the coaching meetings so that I could accurately recall what was shared. Afterwards, I reflected and journaled to learn from the experience. The meetings helped make sense of the experiences and encouraged me to experience the process.

Final Coaching Meeting

The final coaching meeting focused on closing-out the overall experience and for the post-interview questions. The final meeting lasted between 60 and 90 minutes in length. The following questions were asked:

1. Tell me about your experience as it relates to the practices over the last 3 months?
2. In what ways has your awareness of breath changed?

3. How have your listening abilities changed?
4. In what ways has your self-awareness changed?
5. In what ways has your ability to connect with others changed?
6. In what ways has your ability to manage stress changed?
7. In what ways has your ability to multiply perspectives changed?
8. Has your ability to lead others changed? If so, how?
9. Describe how you deal with uncertainty.
10. Describe your relationship with stress.

In addition, the FFMQ and the MS was emailed so that it was completed at the time of the final coaching meeting. Again, I kept notes during the meeting and journaled afterwards. Last, we identified a date for the one-month follow-up meeting. The participant was not provided with any further instruction or guidance at this time. The decision to continue with the practices was at the discretion of the participant and was discussed at the follow-up meeting.

Post Research Follow-Up Meeting

The purpose of meeting one month post-research was to measure any change since the final coaching meeting. The participant was not expected to check-in or receive coaching prior to this period. I did not provide instructions beyond sharing that we would meet a final time with similar interview questions asked at the final coaching meeting and the expectation that the FFMQ and the MS would be administered a final time. At the follow-up meeting, I asked the following questions:

1. Have there been any work place or role changes since the last time we met?
2. Did you attempt to maintain the practices after the final interview? Why? Why not?

3. How has the lack of check-ins or coaching meetings influenced your willingness to engage the practices? Please explain.

I was interested in knowing how the work environment may have changed over the course of the month. And if they continued with the practices, which ones were practiced, and why? If they did not continue with the practices, I was interested to know why not. I asked the participant to conduct the breathing exercise a final time, and to describe the experience using the same questions as presented earlier. I took note of the level of consistency between the one-month follow-up with all previous narratives. I sought to understand the overall experience and more general take-aways from the process since they have had time to reflect.

Data Collection Summary and Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative measures were used to evaluate any change resulting from the practices. The data drew from pre-and-post measures, weekly data collection, and field notes and observation. Each person in the study represented his or her own control group, with self-perception and observation as primary ways information was collected.

Table 3.4

Summary of the Order of Events for the Research

Step	Week	Event	Detail	Process/Tool
1	0	Participant selection	1. Reach out to potential participants or through contact to ID names	Email/phone
2	0	Contact participant	1. Assess interest/fit	Email/phone
3	0	Schedule interview	1. Prepare for interview	Email/phone/in-person
4	0	Conduct interview	1. Introduce study 2. Interview questions (pre-test) 3. Assess contemplative experience 4. Consider health issues 5. Evaluate commitment level	In-person Journal (researcher – post meeting)

5	0	Go/No decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If go: Set up kick-off meeting 2. If no go: Thank person for interest/part ways 	Email/Phone
6	0	Preparation for Kick-off meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete informed consent 2. Complete FFMQ 3. Complete MS 	Email Administer Survey Monkey tool for assessments
7	1	Kick-off meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breathing exercise (pre) 2. Introduce body mapping exercise 3. Introduce practices 4. Introduce weekly surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection log • Practice report • Frequency report • Introduce journaling exercise 	In-person Email surveys via survey monkey Journal (researcher – post meeting)
8	2 to 10-12	Coaching meetings	<p>Email weekly to complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection log • Practice report • Frequency report • Journaling <p>Collect bi-weekly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body map 	In-person Journal (researcher – post meeting)
9	12	Final coaching meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breathing exercise (post) 2. Interview questions (post) 3. Email final surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection log • Practice report • Frequency report • Journaling • Body map 4. Complete surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFMQ • MS 5. Schedule 1-month follow-up meeting 	In-person Email surveys via Survey Monkey Journal (researcher – post meeting)
10	16	1-month follow-up meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interview questions (post) 2. Breathing exercise (final) 3. Complete surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFMQ • MS 	In person Email surveys via Survey Monkey Journal (researcher – post meeting)

Qualitative Data Collection

Participants were expected to meet with me weekly throughout the study. At the coaching meetings, questions relating to the practices, the surveys, and the body map were addressed. My role was to identify trends and patterns that emerged from the data, and to create a safe and engaging environment for learning. My role was also to help make sense of their experiences so that they could increase their competence. In one sense, the coaching meetings provided guidance for development, and in another, they were similar to an interview to gather information.

The first interview was the selection process which focused on the study criterion. Subsequent interviews took place in the coaching meetings, through weekly correspondence, and at the one-month follow-up meeting. These contexts exposed how the practices were experienced and how stress and uncertainty were experienced.

The breathing exercise was another data source. The exercise was conducted as a pre-and-post-test, and at the one-month follow-up meeting. The exercise helped to understand the person's relationship with their breath, if and how they accessed it, and their comfort level in working with it. I paid particular attention to how they described the experience and how this related to the abilities. In other words, did the practice of breath awareness influence the ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and multiply perspectives? The surveys revealed if there was any effect, and if so, what it was.

Last, the body mapping exercise was conducted bi-weekly. In this exercise, participants marked areas on the map that related to stress and tension. The body map helped to uncover how emotions were experienced in the mind-body relationship. The mark-ups were compared across time for any change.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Multiple avenues of qualitative data analysis were used. Responses to the interview questions were compared at the pre, post, and one-month intervals. Data was analyzed on an intra-subject basis. Pre-and-post data comparisons were made and any trending that emerged was included.

The breathing exercise was reviewed for analysis at the pre-and-post and the one-month follow-up meeting. Analysis of the participant's description in terms of how they related to breath in particular, and the mind body relationship in general, was compared. Particular attention to the words used in describing breath helped develop an overall composite.

The body mapping exercise was collected bi-weekly. Areas that reveal tension and stress were tracked and noted for patterns and significance. Questions as to why participants marked certain areas were asked. Based on this input, an explanation as to why certain body ailments were selected was included. An overall comparison of the body maps was made and compared over the course of the study.

Quantitative Data Collection

There were two quantitative pre-and-post surveys administered. These include the FFMQ and the MS. The FFMQ is a 39-item questionnaire based on a five-point scale that includes: never or very rarely true, rarely true, sometimes true, often true, very often or always true. The MS is an instrument that was created integrating the dimensions of breath and deep listening. The statements are based on a seven-point scale and includes never or very rarely true, rarely true, sometimes true, often true, and very often or always true.

Participants were asked to complete these surveys as a baseline measure. They completed them at the final coaching meeting and at the one-month follow-up meeting. I kept

notes during the meeting and journaled afterwards to note trends and significance.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The FFMQ was evaluated as a pre-and-post measure, and at the one-month follow-up meeting. The questionnaire is based on a factor analytic study of five independently developed mindfulness questionnaires. The analysis yielded five factors that appear to represent elements of mindfulness. The five facets are observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. The scores for items within each scale were added together and averaged. The items below correspond to the facets and were used for analysis. The statements can be found in Appendix E.

Observe items: 1, 6, 11, 15, 20, 26, 31, 36

Describe items: 2, 7, 12R, 16R, 22R, 27, 32, 37

Act with Awareness items: 5R, 8R, 13R, 18R, 23R, 28R, 34R, 38R

Nonjudge items: 3R, 10R, 14R, 17R, 25R, 30R, 35R, 39R

Nonreact items: 4, 9, 19, 21, 24, 29, 33

Mean scores were looked at across the three time periods and reported the percent change.

The MS was constructed for this study and it integrated the dimensions of breath and deep listening, as revealed in the conceptual framework. The MS was administered as a pre-and-post-test, and at the one-month follow-up meeting. The scores for items within each scale were added together and averaged. One question relating to the item for Suspending Judgment (letting go) was found to be spurious, and therefore, was not included in the final score. Mean scores were compared in terms of percent change across data collection time periods to evaluate any change. The following items and ratings were used and analyzed for any change.

Breath awareness = 8, 11

Breath coordination = 3, 13

Observing = 1, 12

Suspending judgment - noticing = 4, 14

Suspending judgment - letting go = 2, 7

Suspending judgment-accepting = 6, 9

Opening = 5, 10

Scores were added and averaged for analysis. The statements can be found in the Appendix F.

Time Series Data Collection

Time-phased data was collected. These assessments included the reflection log, practice report, and practice frequency report. The reflection log consisted of 20 items related to the four abilities: paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, and multiplying perspectives. The practice report is a five-question self-assessment that asks each participant to self-rate for each of the abilities as well as on their perceived leader effectiveness. The final assessment is the practice frequency report. This assessment is a five-question report reporting how frequently over the course of a week the participant conducted each practice (1= never, 2 = 1 to 2 times daily, 3 = 3 to 4 times daily, 4 = 5 times daily, and 5 = > 5 times daily). All of the participants exercised each practice at least one to two times daily. These assessments were collected weekly via Survey Monkey for evaluation. These assessments helped to reveal incremental shifts in participants' perceptions, and track movement in subtle ways. One of the measures was the frequency report which showed how often a practice was exercised. An advantage of the time-phased data was being able to measure change over short time periods – a hallmark of single subject research is its ability to reveal movements in time.

Underpinning the time-phased data were four key questions that include:

1. Will participants practice frequently (i.e., daily)?
2. Will regular practice result in any change in the abilities (paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, multiplying perspectives)?
3. Will any change or increase in the abilities result in a heightened sense of self-perceived leader effectiveness?
4. Will the time phased assessments reveal what it is intended to measure – namely, the regular practice of the abilities leading to any change?

These questions were assessed through the weekly measures as well as extrapolated through the interview questions and discussed in the coaching meetings. The first two underlying assumptions were that participants who practiced frequently would show an increase in their abilities. This thinking is based on the understanding that new habits and repetition can lead to new ways of acting and being, which requires time and practice to manifest.

Time Series Data Analysis

The reflection log was collected weekly. Participant perception of abilities was analyzed using the data from this 20-item assessment, with a seven-point response scale that included, strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree. There are four abilities subscales in the scale: paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, and multiplying perspectives. Mean scores for each of the abilities subscales were tracked over the study period. A running score was compiled by adding two weeks together and averaged. For example, week one and two were added and averaged; weeks two and three were added and averaged, etc. A running average is more reliable than an analysis on a week to week basis because it smooths out anomalies for any one

week. The running average suggested a possible relationship between the practices and any change reported in the abilities. Coaching meeting notes augmented findings and were included as narrative to help explain the quantitative trends, or lack thereof.

The practice report is a five-question self-assessment that asks participants to self-rate on a seven-point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, and strongly agree). The seven-point scale self-rating on practices report was completed and collected weekly. Item scores were tracked over the 10-week intervention. A running score was compiled and added every two weeks and averaged. Field notes from the coaching meetings augmented and facilitate explaining the findings. The data was compared individually and across all participants.

Ethical Considerations

Participants who choose to take part in this type of research did so because they had an interest or desire to grow and learn personally and professionally. They may have been drawn to the opportunity for a variety of reasons, these ranged from increasing their leader effectiveness to the quality of their relationships, and their own personal well-being. During the coaching meetings, they were asked to disclose sensitive information about their organization, the culture and teams that they were a part of, their supervisor, and their direct reports. It was essential that the participant knew that what was shared remained confidential. These considerations remained at the forefront during the research process.

Chapter Summary

Chapter III communicated how the study was carried out. Single subject with multiple subject design was determined as the best fit for the research question. The methodology proved powerful because it allowed a study of each participant as a unique data set while providing

information to better understand how six individuals were affected in different settings and circumstances.

The approach evaluated five distinct contemplative practices relating to breath and deep listening. These practices (breath awareness, breath coordination, observation, suspending judgment, and opening) are intermediary forces by which the individual is being assessed. Leadership, in this study, is not merely seen as a series of actions; rather, it is a way of being, a way of thinking in terms of who you are as a leader and a person. When uncertainty and complexity arises, it can be approached from a sense of calmness rather than from a false sense of control. Therefore, the practices are best understood not as outcomes, but as a way of being. The study design and methodology used surveys and measures which sought to uncover any change relating to the practices, rather than if a specific result was obtained.

The practices were introduced simultaneously. Quantitative and qualitative surveys were used, including the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire and the Mindfulness Survey. Interviews, a breathing exercise, body mapping, observation, and journaling all added depth and richness to the data. A reflection log, practice report, and frequency report were included as weekly measures that helped to uncover behavioral nuances. Analysis techniques were used and included data and score comparisons, running averages, and observation. A study hallmark was individualized coaching that facilitated the participant's ability to integrate the practices into daily life. Care in choosing capable, willing, and committed individuals that met select criterion helped to support quality experiences.

Chapter I, II, and III laid the foundation for the dissertation. With its purpose, review of literature, and methodological approach in place, Chapter IV will introduce the findings, and follow with summary and implications in Chapters V and VI.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The study invited six people to participate in research exploring the effect of contemplative practices on organizational leaders. The approach specifically sought to uncover ways in which the practices influence four distinct abilities, including the ability to pay attention (concentration and focusing of the mind), connect with others (building relationships through attention of mind body states), manage stress (responding to external stimuli through mind/body awareness), and multiply perspectives (ability to see viewpoints in a mind/body context). Through the application of the practices, the degree to which they had an effect on the four abilities was evaluated. Self-assessment measures and qualitative evaluation were conducted to evaluate if change occurred, and to increase proficiency, one-to-one coaching was provided.

The methodology is guided by the research question: What is the effect of contemplative practice on organizational leaders? Underpinning the research were four questions including:

1. Will participants practice frequently (i.e., daily)?
2. Will regular practice result in any change in the abilities (paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, multiplying perspectives)?
3. Will any change or increase in the abilities result in a heightened sense of self-perceived leader effectiveness?
4. Will the time phased assessments (i.e., weekly surveys) reveal what they are intended to measure – namely, did the regular practice of the abilities lead to any change?

The following integrative analysis addresses these questions and presents seven major findings as a result of the review and the supporting evidence.

Integrative Analysis

The integrative analysis provides a holistic review of the quantitative and qualitative data. This process included an analysis of the practice frequency, the pre and post breathing exercise, the Five Facets of the Mindfulness Questionnaire, the Mindfulness Survey, the body map, the weekly surveys, and observations from the coaching meetings. The culmination of the material resulted in seven findings. These findings, along with supporting evidence, are presented next and include:

1. All six participants engaged in the practices every day between 13 to 15 times.
2. All six participants reported an improved relationship with their breath.
3. Participants reported improvements across multiple categories of the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, with all participants reporting an increase in observing and non-reacting to the inner experience.
4. All six participants reported increases in breath awareness, breath coordination, and observing on the Mindfulness Survey.
5. Five of the six participants reported that they no longer held stress or tension in the body by week eight, with the sixth person reporting no stress by week ten.
6. All six participants reported an increase in their ability to pay attention and connect with others; five of the six participants reported improvements in their ability to manage stress and multiply perspectives.
7. Participants perceived an increase in their leader abilities.

Finding #1: All six participants engaged in the practices daily between 13 to 15 times. All participants reported engaging the practices on a daily basis (Figure 4.1). Participants were asked whether they never engaged in the practice (code=1), or on average over the course

of the past week engaged one or two times a day (code=2), three to four times a day (code=3), five times a day (code=4), or more than five times a day (code=5). Participants reported that over the course of the week they exercised each practice between one and five times daily. No one reported going under an average of one to two times daily for any given practice. Participant Two, Participant Three, and Participant Six reported an average across weeks of three to five or more times for each of the practices. Participant One and Participant Five exercised the five practices, on average, across weeks between one and two times per day. Participant Four was somewhere in between, reporting an average across weeks of between about three to four times daily. This finding shows that all participants engaged in the practices, at minimum, moderately and often several times a day.

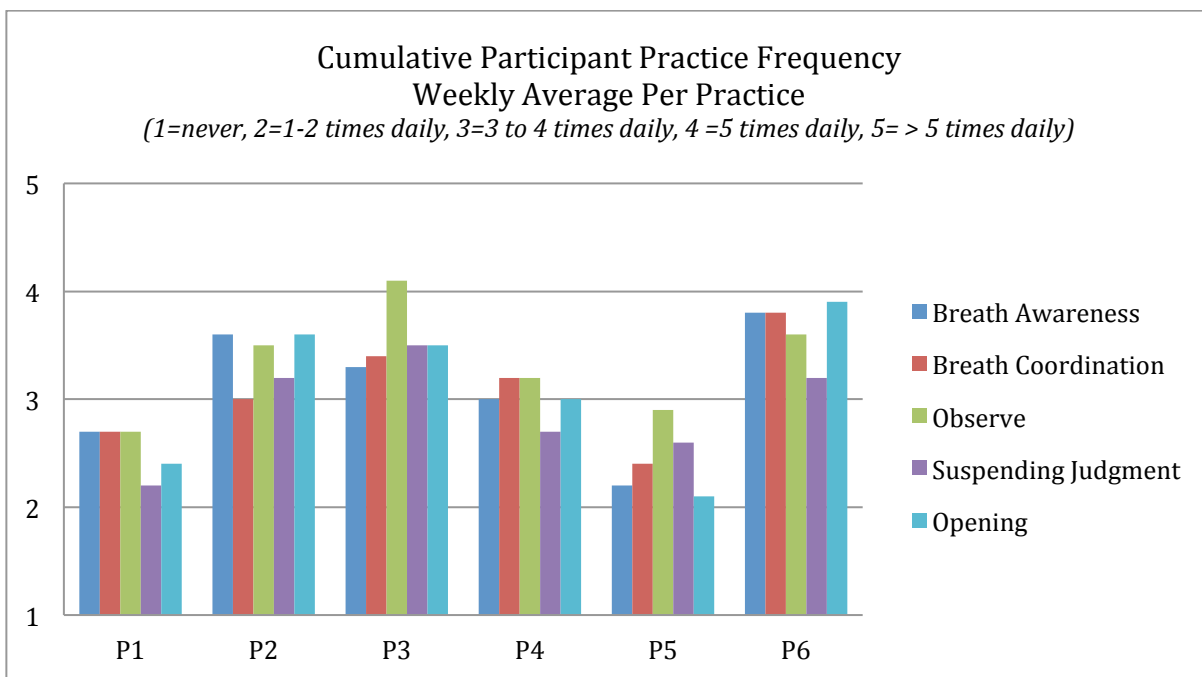


Figure 4.1. Cumulative participant practice frequency.

Finding #2: All six participants reported an improved relationship with their breath. All participants reported an improvement in their awareness and quality of breath (Table 4.1). At the beginning of the study, none of the participants described that their breath felt

natural or that they were able to focus. Most of the participants described the experience as difficult or awkward. The inability to relate to the breath, to feel it manifest in the body or to let go of thoughts coming and going, was typical. The breathing exercise was conducted at a café, either inside or outside, as was the case for the final breathing exercise. By the study's end,

Table 4.1

Cumulative Breathing Exercise Results

Participant	Pre	Post
1	Chest centered, wanted to hurry up, lacked attention, shallow breathing	Breath felt natural and even, easy to relax, did not feel distracted
2	Felt distracted, could not feel her his breath, felt relaxed after	Breath felt natural, high focus, smooth and relaxed, felt centered
3	Exercise was relaxing, good to slow down, had some focus	Breath was natural, noticed its flow with ease, awareness of sensations, did not feel distracted
4	Took several minutes to focus, breath lengthened with each breath, felt distracted	Breath felt intentional, was able to go deeper in breath quickly, calming
5	Distracted, little focus, lots of thoughts rushing in and out	More aware of breath, more focused, heard noises – not too distracted
6	Distracted, wanted to hurry up, felt stressed, did not know where breath was originating	Breath was normal and relaxed, noticed with ease and awareness, little to no distractions

the feedback changed in that the breath was reported as natural, relaxed, with feelings of calm and focus. In all cases, the degree to which noises they heard were distracting was markedly less. Moreover, all participants said that their relationship with their breath changed for the better.

Finding #3: Participants reported improvements across multiple categories of the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, with all participants reporting an increase in

observing and non-reacting to the inner experience. Participants experienced varying degrees of improvement on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (Table 4.2). Table 4.2 highlights if change occurred; a plus (+) represents an increase of less than 20%, two pluses (++) represent a change of 20% or greater, and three pluses represent a change of 50% or greater. Increases were calculated based on a change from a lower to higher code on the 5-point very rarely true to always true response scale used for the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire. All participants increased in observing and non-reacting to the inner experience. Participant One reported an increase in all categories except non-judgment of the inner experience. Participant Two reported an increase in all categories. Participant Three improved in all categories. Participant Four increased in observe, describe, and non-reacting to the inner experience.

Table 4.2

Cumulative Scores for the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire

P#	Observe	Describe	Act with awareness	Non-judgment of the inner experience	Non-reacting to the inner experience
1	+	+	++	-	+
2	+++	++	+	++	++
3	+	+	+	+	+
4	++	+	-	-	+
5	+	-	++	+	+
6	++	+	+++	++	++

Note. - = decrease, = is no change, + 1 to 19% increase, ++ = 20% or greater increase; +++ = 50% or greater increase.

Participant Five increased in all categories except describe. Participant Six improved in all categories. Cumulatively, 15 scores were improvements, with nine scores increasing by 20% or more, and two participants recorded a score of greater 50%.

Finding #4: All six participants reported increases in breath awareness, breath coordination, and observing on the Mindfulness Survey. All six participants reported improvement in breath awareness, breath coordination, and observing in the Mindfulness Survey (Table 4.3). Improvement, or increase, was calculated based on a change from a lower to higher code on the 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree Mindfulness Survey response scale. Participant One reported an increase of 20% or greater in breath awareness and breath coordination, as well as an increase in observing. Participant Two reported increases in all four Table 4.3

Cumulative Mindfulness Survey – Breath Awareness, Coordination, Observing & Opening

P#	Breath awareness	Breath coordination	Observing	Opening
1	++	++	+	=
2	+++	+++	+	+++
3	++	+++	+	+
4	+++	+++	++	+++
5	+	++	++	-
6	++	++	+++	++

Note. – = decrease, = is no change, + 1 to 19% increase, ++ = 20% or greater increase; +++ = 50% or greater increase.

categories, of which, three (breath awareness, breath coordination, and opening) were increases greater than 50 percent. Participant Three reported improvement in all four categories, with an increase of 20% or greater in breath awareness and greater than 50% in breath coordination. Participant Four reported improvements in all four categories, with 20% or greater in observing, and 50% or greater in breath awareness, breath coordination, and opening. Participant Five reported an increase in breath awareness, and a 20% or greater improvement in breath coordination and observing. Participant Six reported increases in all four categories, with breath awareness, breath coordination, and opening increasing 20% or greater, and observing increasing 50% or greater. Overall, the participants reported increases in 22 of the 24 possible scores.

Table 4.4 highlights three additional abilities covered in the Mindfulness Survey: suspending judgment with respect to noticing, letting go, and accepting. Of the 18 possible

Table 4.4

Cumulative Mindfulness Survey – Suspending Judgment, Noticing, Letting Go & Accepting

Participant #	Suspending judgment (Noticing)	Suspending judgment (Letting go)	Suspending judgment (Accepting)
1	++	=	=
2	+++	+++	+++
3	=	+	+++
4	=	+++	+++
5	=	-	++
6	+	=	++

Note. – = decrease, = is no change, + 1 to 19% increase, ++ = 20% or greater increase; +++ = 50% or greater increase.

ability scores (six participants with three activity subscale scores each), eleven scores were improvements, six did not change, and one decreased. Participant One's suspending judgment scores were mixed. She reported a 20% improvement in noticing, but no change in respect to letting go and accepting. Participant Two reported 50% or greater improvement in all three suspending judgment areas sub-scales. Participant Three reported a 50% or greater score in accepting, an improved score in letting go, and no change in noticing. Participant Four reported an increase of 50% or greater in letting go and accepting, and no change in noticing. Participant Five reported a 50% or greater score in accepting, no change in noticing, and a decrease in letting go. Lastly, Participant Six reported a 20% or greater score in accepting, an improved score in noticing, and no change in letting go. Overall, the scores for suspending judgment showed moderate improvement, with the most frequent positive change in the area of suspending judgment.

Finding #5: Five of the six participants reported that they no longer held stress or tension in the body by week eight, with the sixth person reporting no stress by week ten. All participants reported body stresses at week two, and all but one (Participant Two), continued to report tension at week four (Table 4.5). The tipping point was at week eight when only two people reported body stress. Two (Participants One and Four) of the six participants reported some body stress at week eight. One person (Participant Six) reported body stress at week ten, and said that it was minor strain related to computer use. My observation was that the amount of body stress participants reported declined incrementally; in none of the cases did it quickly dissipate. In most cases, participants attributed a decline in body stress to the breathing exercise in particular, and the daily practices more generally.

Table 4.5

Cumulative Body Awareness of Stress

Participant #	Week 2	Week 4	Week 6	Week 8	Week 10
1	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
2	Y	N	N	N	N
3	Y	Y	Y	N	N
4	Y	Y	N	Y	N
5	Y	Y	Y	N	N
6	Y	Y	Y	N	Y

Note. Y = yes, body stress was present; N (green) = no, body stress was not present.

Finding #6: All six participants reported their ability to pay attention and connect with others increased; five of the six participants reported that their ability to manage stress and multiply perspectives improved. Responses to the weekly reflection survey (Table 3.1) revealed increases in the participant's level of agreement about their ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and multiply perspectives (Table 4.6). Increases were determined based on a change from low to high codes on the 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree response scale. Participants One to Five all indicated that they increased their level of agreement over the course of the intervention for all four abilities. Participant Six said that the ability to manage stress and multiply perspectives did not occur. Participant Six scores were high from the onset, leaving little room for improvement quantitatively.

Table 4.6

Cumulative Scores for the Weekly Survey—Multiple Item Survey

Ability	Weekly Survey—Multiple Item Score					
	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6
Paying attention	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Connecting with others	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Managing stress	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Multiplying perspectives	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N

Note. Y = increase in the ability was reported; N (green) = a decrease in the ability was reported.

The weekly practice report (see Table 3.2) solicited feedback on the same four abilities with a single self-rating question. This weekly practice report also included an additional single self-rating question that asked about their capacity to demonstrate new leader abilities. Increases were determined based on a change from low to high codes on the 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree response scale. The following single self-rating questions were asked and the changes in agreement level are highlighted on Table 4.7.

1. During the past week, rate your ability to pay attention?
2. During the past week, rate your ability to connect with others?
3. During the past week, rate your ability to manager stress?
4. During the past week, rate your ability to generate new perspectives?
5. During the past week, rate your capacity to demonstrate new leader abilities?

Table 4.7

Cumulative Scores for the Weekly Survey—Single Item Survey

Ability	Weekly Survey - Single Item Score					
	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6
Paying attention	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Connecting with others	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
Managing stress	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Multiplying perspectives	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Leadership	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N

Note. Y = increase in the ability was reported; N (green) = a decrease in the ability was reported.

Participant One reported an increase in connecting with others, managing stress, and her leader abilities. She did not report an increase in paying attention and multiplying perspectives.

Participant Two reported an increase in all five abilities. Participant Three did not report an increase in any of her abilities. She reported very high scores on the abilities from the beginning of the study. There was little room for improvement (see the participant presentation for detail).

Participant Four reported an increase in all abilities. Participant Five reported an increase in four abilities; she did not report an increase in connecting with others. Participant Six did not report an increase in any of the abilities. Similar to Participant Three, many of the scores reported at the beginning of the study were very high (see the participant presentation for detail). Overall, the participant's scores on the single items were mixed—Participant Two and Participant Four increased in all abilities, Participant One and Participant Five reported increases in most abilities,

and Participant Three and Participant Six did not report an increase. Again, Participant Three and Participant Six began the study with very high scores leaving little room for improvement.

Finding #7: Participants perceived an increase in their leader abilities. At the end of the study, each participant was asked whether or not they demonstrated new leader abilities (Table 4.8). If the ability changed, they were asked, how it changed. The most frequently

Table 4.8

Improved Leader Abilities

Improved Leader Abilities					
Participant ONE	Participant TWO	Participant THREE	Participant FOUR	Participant FIVE	Participant SIX
Strategic thinking (less reactive)	Strategic thinking (less reactive)	Managerial Courage	Perspective	Perspective	Perspective
Composure	Composure	Perspective	Interpersonal savvy		Composure
Leading the Team	Interpersonal savvy	Leading the Team	Adaptability		Understanding & Motivating Others
Dealing with ambiguity	Listening	Managing Change & Transitions	Listening		Dealing with ambiguity
Patience	Approachability	Listening	Resilience		Listening
	Patience				Patience

cited leader ability was gaining more perspective (four participants), which includes seeing things broadly and from different or new viewpoints, and being more strategic (two participants) and less reactive. Dealing with ambiguity, managing change and transition, and being adaptable was referenced by four of the participants. Typically, responses included the ability to cope with change, act without having the total picture, and not being easily irritated by uncertainty. The ability to listen (three participants) and practice patience (two participants) was referenced by

five of the six participants. Keeping composure (three participants) was referenced and is understood as not becoming defensive, handling stress well, or working through frustration. Last, feedback relating to leading the team (2) and interpersonal savvy (2) was reported. It was unclear whether or not a change occurred in Participant Five's leader abilities. She referenced an ability to step back and observe others and situations more clearly and this is associated with perspective taking, and therefore, was included. Overall, the participants perceived an improvement in their leader abilities.

More broadly, the seven major findings represent the overarching themes of the study. Context and detail to the findings is presented next at the individual level. For each participant, detail of practice frequency, results for the breathing exercise, the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, the Mindfulness Survey, the body awareness map, and the effects of the abilities are presented. A brief biographical synopsis for each participant is presented at the beginning for context. Post interview summaries, along with any reported change in leader ability is also provided. The participant's journaling and my observations are integrated into the presentation and add detail and texture to the quantitative findings.

Selection Process and Data Collection—Recap

Six participants volunteered for the 10 to 12-week study. The selection criteria consisted of: managers and above; direct report responsibility; public, private or not-for-profit organizations; white collar workers; and those with limited meditation and mindfulness training. Participants were drawn through a network of contacts; all were located in the San Diego, California, metropolitan area. In some cases, the number of weeks was extended by one or two, depending on the participant's situation.

Five of the six completed, at minimum, 10-weeks of surveys for analysis, plus a one-month follow-up meeting. One participant did not complete the one-month follow-up meeting. After the initial interview and selection was made, a 90-minute one-on-one orientation session was conducted. Participants were introduced to the practices at the initial meeting, along with a more detailed interview of the person's background, organizational role, and understanding of how stress was experienced. An orientation packet was provided to clarify the process as well as give details and examples of the practices including a step-by-step guide to the breathing exercise and articles relating to contemplative leadership. Together, the packet helped ensure that the participant had the necessary information to begin the process.

Live instruction for the breathing exercise was provided. Although the three-minute breathing exercise was the foundational practice from which the other four practices were understood, any of the practices could be initiated in any order and at any time. Thereafter, the participant was asked to practice the breathing exercise daily for the remainder of the study. The opportunity to tailor the practices to each participant's situation was discussed and became the basis for future coaching meetings. Participants were instructed to perform the practices as frequently as possible throughout the day. At the end of each week, a survey was e-mailed to track practice frequency and any effect the practice may have had as it related to the abilities: paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, and multiplying perspectives.

Weekly coaching meetings were conducted so that the participant could make sense of their experiences as well as deepen the practices. The majority of the meetings were conducted face-to-face at a mutually agreed upon time and location. In some instances, a telephone meeting took place, often due to travel schedules and the desire to keep pace with the study's timeline. The meetings typically ranged from 45 to 60 minutes in length. Additionally, some

participants benefited from a brief five to 10-minute phone call or email exchange in between the formal meetings. For participants who checked-in, the reasons typically included a chance to modify or make sense of the practices, and reach out for encouragement. Last, a one-month post meeting was conducted for final evaluation. Again, the breathing exercise was conducted and reported. The study period and the one-month follow-up meeting were conducted for five of the six cases. In a seventh case, after the initial meeting, the participant did not show up for the second meeting. Attempts to contact the participant were made, but there was no response. Several weeks later, the participant emailed asking to meet and continue with the meeting. I made the determination that this person was a poor fit for the study, thanked the participant for their time thus far, but did not invite him back for further meetings due to the high-risk in continuing his involvement. Next, the findings for each of the six participants are presented.

Participant One

Participant One is director of a career center for a university. She is female in her mid-60s and in the twilight of her career. She has been in this role for the last three years and has responsibility for providing strategy and direction for the center and a staff of six. Prior to this, she was associate director and a career counselor during her 15-year career. When she began at the university, there were approximately 5,000 students and a staff of six. Presently, there are more than 10,000 students with a staff of six and a half. Due to budget cuts and state funding reductions, her responsibilities have significantly increased. Additionally, her responsibilities include raising funds for the center and influencing academic leaders. She also continues to teach in a limited capacity in the classroom and serves on a number of committees, both internally with the business school, and externally, with the Chamber of Commerce.

The participant considers her core strength to be as a relationship builder. Her ability to tune into others was one reason she was attracted to the work that she does as well as the variety of her role. She shared that she is an Extrovert-Intuitive-Feeling-Judging type in Myers-Briggs Type Indicator vernacular and enjoys using her people skills in counseling students. She said that she does not like the fundraising aspect, nor the budgetary role that requires her analytic skills, but she does what is necessary to carry out her responsibilities. Her stress comes largely from managing others. She shared how she can become exasperated and confessed to rolling her eyes with her direct reports in times of frustration. She said that her stress can reach levels as high as eight or upwards of ten on a ten-point scale in these situations. She also finds advocating and securing resources stressful and influencing academic leaders anxiety-producing, particularly when she is required to make a presentation. A goal she stated is building the center to a level proportional to the needs of the student body. This would require hiring additional career counselors and increased funding. She said that in order for this to happen, resources from the state will need to increase, along with her ability to influence others. She hopes to make significant strides in this direction before she retires in the next couple of years.

Practice frequency. Participant One's practice frequency remained at a fairly even and steady pace throughout the study (Figure 4.2). In respect to breath awareness and breath coordination, she reported a score of two, or one to two times daily, for the first three weeks. Afterwards, the score increased to three, or three to four times daily, with breath coordination returning to a score of two, or one to two times daily, for final two weeks of the study.

It was important for the participant to develop a consistent breathing practice; she was eager to learn about the practice and get started. She shared that she wanted to attend a meditation course for some time, but it never seemed to work out. Initially, she began the

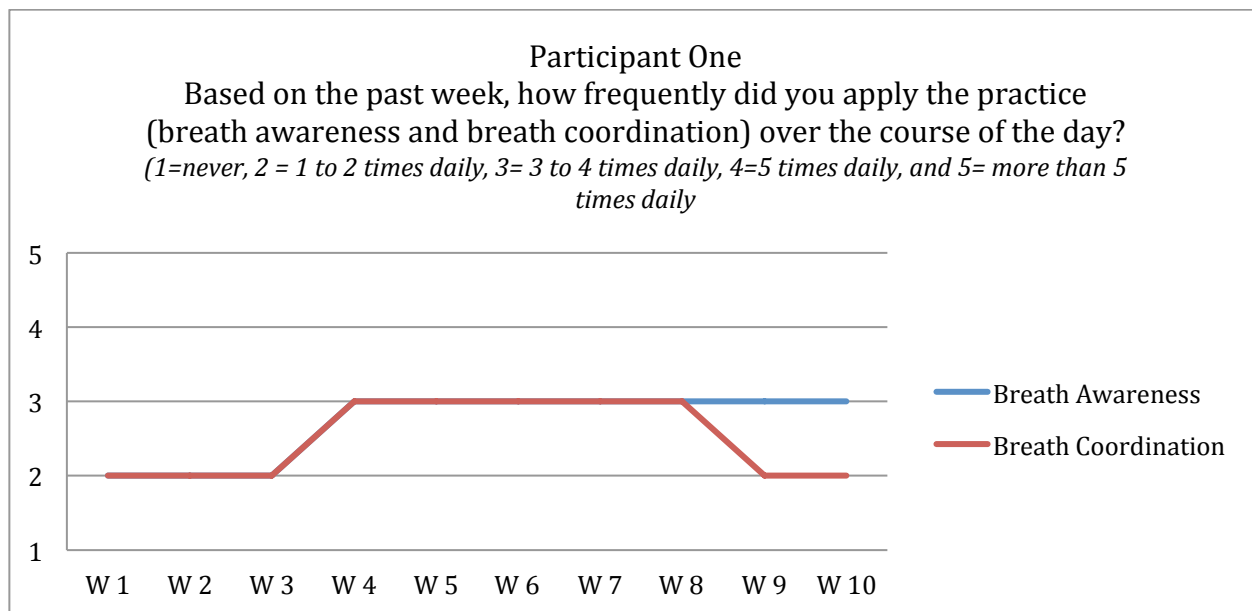


Figure 4.2. Practice frequency: Breath awareness and breath coordination – P1.

breathing practice at home, but due to a house remodel, she did not find this a viable location. She experimented with other locations and found that her car was a good option. I began many of the coaching meetings with a brief check-in gauging her weekly consistency, which typically was a daily three-minute practice, with some days increasing to five minutes. Many of her comments reflected this one, “I continue to do the breathing exercise in the car in the morning when I arrive on campus and am parked in the parking lot.” This feedback was consistent with several of my field entries including the following after the second week,

[Participant] is off to a good start. She did the breathing practice every day over the past week except for one of the days. She finds that doing the practice early in the morning before going to work is an ideal time. She also tried it at work. For this next week, she will try to incorporate the exercise at work as well and to pay attention to its effect. The time that she tried the breathing practice at work she felt less stress in her shoulders.

The participant started out at a reasonable frequency, practicing breath awareness and breath coordination one to two times daily. While she did not reach five or more times of practice daily, she was consistent, and for most weeks maintained at the three to four times a day level. This

translated into increased awareness and helped her to stay grounded. The following field note provided an additional perspective.

[Participant] is building some momentum with the practices. Even though her breath awareness exercise has been inconsistent this past week, she is more aware of it during daily context, such as interacting with others. In the ensuing weeks, the consistent approach to the breath practice was also benefiting her catching herself when she was not grounded as I noted in this observation, ‘She shared that she was rather quickly able to get in touch and use her breath more effectively since starting the breathing exercises.

The participant’s breathing routine did not alter for the remainder of the study. One of the benefits of the practice appeared to be her ability to deepen her relationship with others. I noted at one of our meetings, “She shared that she practiced the breathing exercise before a meeting with one of her direct reports and it helped her re-focus and center.” Moreover, her steady approach with the breathing practice resulted in subtle, but steady changes, notably her self-awareness and ability to manage stress.

In respect to the additional three practices, observing, suspending judgment, and opening, the frequency was similar to breath awareness and breath coordination (Figure 4.3). The observing practice varied throughout the study from one to two to three to four times daily. Suspending judgment was the least exercised practice, primarily averaging one to two times daily for the first eight weeks, but increasing to three to four times daily by week nine. The suspending judgment frequency changed the least of the five practices; in fact, we did not begin discussing this practice in any depth until the mid-way point as our relationship grew. The opening practice alternated between three to four and one to two times daily throughout the intervention. Moreover, the participant showed that with a modest but sustained effort, one could sustain learning new habits and produce behavioral change.

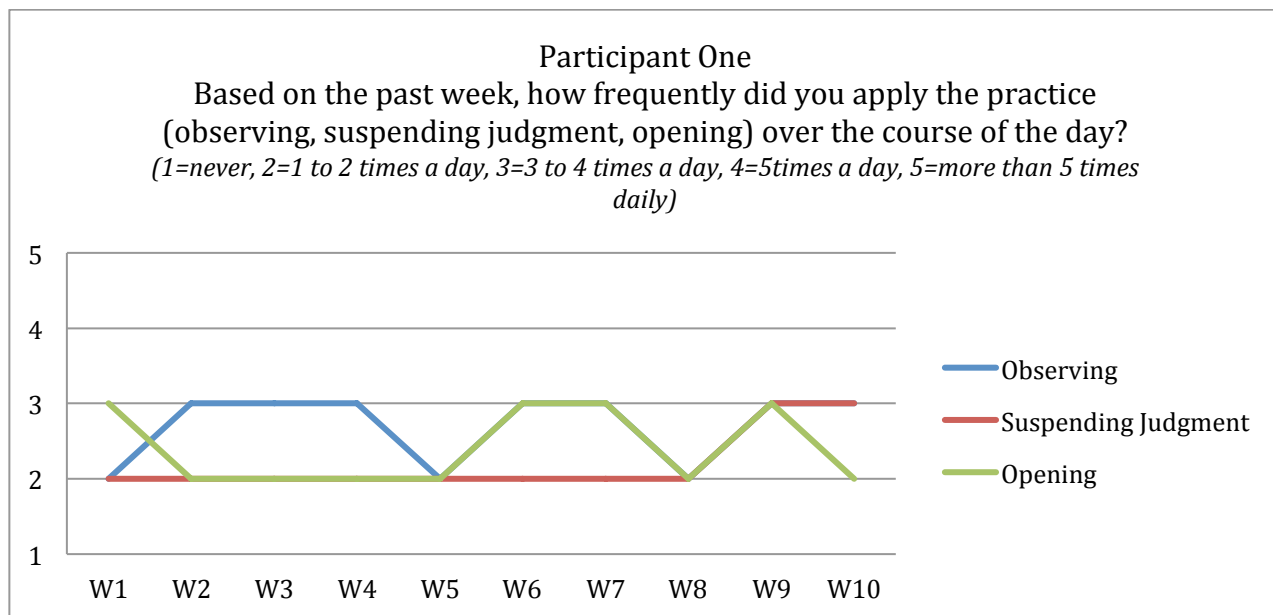


Figure 4.3. Practice frequency: Observing, suspending judgment, opening – P1.

Breathing exercise results. The participant was asked to conduct a breathing exercise at the pre, post, and one-month post period of the study (Figure 4.4). In each event, the participant was asked to take normal in and out breaths, and to count to the number one, then two, to the count of five, for every out breath. The participant was asked to repeat the cycle two or three times to the count of five. Instruction on sitting, hand and body position, and guidance on distracting thoughts was provided. The exercise typically lasted three minutes in length. The exercise was debriefed upon completion. The participant was asked to perform this exercise once a day for a minimum of three minutes, for the duration of the study.

The data suggests that the participant had little awareness and attention to breath at the beginning of the study. This was particularly evident by her difficulty describing her breath, the chest-centered nature of it, and a desire to quickly finish the exercise. By the end of the 10-weeks, and at the one-month post-meeting, the participant described the breathing exercise in terms of being able to easily relax, feeling



Figure 4.4. Breathing exercise at pre, post, and 1-month post period – P1.

natural and fluid, noticing surrounding noise but not being distracted by it, and an overall easiness in her body posture and sitting position.

Pre and post surveys overview. Participants were asked to complete two mindfulness surveys. The first was the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (see Appendix E). This

survey included 39 items divided into five subscales: observe, describe, and act with awareness, non-judge, and non-react, with responses on a five-point very rarely true to always true scale. Each subscale had seven or eight items. Scores were averaged across the items. The questionnaire was administered three times, once as a pre-test, a post-test, and a final time one-month after the coaching period ended. The second survey was the Mindfulness Survey (see Appendix F for statements and Figures 4.6 and 4.7). This survey included seven practice subscales including: breath awareness, breath coordination, observing, opening, and three relating to suspending judgment (noticing, letting go, and accepting). Each of these subscales consisted of two items with responses on a 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree scale. One of the items relating to suspending judgment (letting go) was found to be spurious and, therefore, was dropped. Thus, the letting go practice sub-scale was based on the score of one item.

Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire. Participant One experienced improvement on four of the Five Facets of Mindfulness subscales. Percent increase was determined based on a change from a lower to higher code on the 5-point very rarely true to always true Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire response scale. Results for Participant One (Table 4.5) for the observing category showed an increase of 16% from the pre to post period (changing from sometimes true to often true), and this change was maintained at the one-month post period. In the describe category Participant One showed an increase of 26% from the pre to post periods (changing from sometimes true to often true), with the increase remaining at the one-month follow-up period. In the act with awareness category, Participant One showed a small 7% increase from pre to post period, and a slight decline by -3% at the one-month post period (basically maintaining at the sometime true level). For non-judgment of inner experience, Participant One showed consistency at the 3.5 level (between sometimes and often true) from pre

to post periods. Non-reactivity to inner experience for Participant One increased 21% from the pre to post periods, and then stayed basically consistent at the close to “often true” level. Thus, three of the facets (observe, describe, and non-reactivity to inner experience) showed a positive increase (moving from sometimes true to the often true level), two (act with awareness, and nonjudgment to inner experience) remained basically unchanged at the sometimes true level.

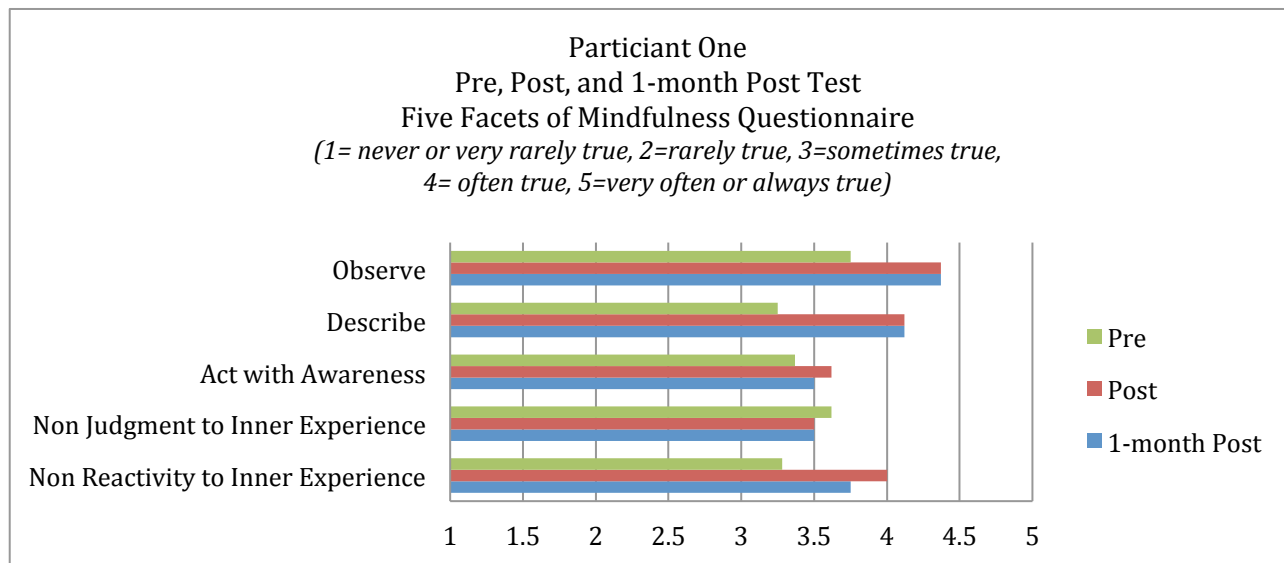


Figure 4.5. Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire – P1.

During the study, the participant revealed that it was common for her to self-judge through negative self-talk. This talk often took the form of self-criticism and self-doubt. The following quote revealed the effect that negative self-talk could have on a person and how breath awareness and the breathing practice can help rewire mental habits.

On Tuesday and Wednesday morning, I did the breathing exercise at home after I got ready for work and found that a relaxing way to start my day. I had to be here early today (Thursday) and didn't do it so my day didn't feel like it started as well. I had a meeting request from one of the counselors today and didn't know what it was about so I took a few minutes before that meeting to do the breathing exercise. I think it helped me be more direct in some of my comments to the individual.

The participant often shared that it was difficult to turn-off the chatter; that it had been a part of her life for a long time—clearly, there were deep-seated habits at work. Yet, as the breathing

practice kept pace, improvements were happening. In a follow-on discussion, the participant shared,

Where I feel like I have made the most noticeable difference is in the self-talk; when I start saying something to criticize myself I have just stopped that thinking and it really hasn't been as hard as I thought it would be. It's kind of like trying to get a small child to switch gears once you get their attention. It has actually been nice to not keep that chatter up.

Over the course of the study, the data from the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire suggested that she continued to have a moderate impression of her ability (scoring between sometimes and often true) to be non-judging of the inner experience. At the same time, her response to the non-reacting of the inner experience changed more significantly from sometime true to often true. In other words, through the practice, she had some success in being able to turn-off the amount of inner chatter and refocus her thoughts. These comments were consistent with my observations,

She has noticed her critical self-talk and has been able to slow it down. She says that she is not doing the pushing and pulling as much in this respect and she is able to stop the conversation or change the topic.

Interestingly, it was not until about the half-way mark of the study that the participant was ready to share more about this aspect of her life. The score improvement as described above (see Figure 4.5) and the narrative suggest that change is possible even with a modest level of daily practice.

Mindfulness survey. Mindfulness Survey (see Appendix F) consisted of seven subscales including: breath awareness, breath coordination, observing, suspending judgment, and opening. Suspending judgment consisted of three subscales (noticing, letting go, and accepting). A seven-point response scale was used, with response codes and categories of 1=strongly agree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neither agree or disagree, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, and

7=strongly agree. Increases were calculated based on a change from a lower to higher response code.

The result for Participant One for breath awareness increased 10% from the pre to post period, and then increased another 10% at the one-month post period (Figure 4.6), representing a shift from somewhat agree to agree. Breath coordination demonstrated similar results, with a 10% increase from the pre to post period, again representing a shift from somewhat agree to agree. Her ability to observe increased by 9% from the pre to post period, and then decreased by 8%, erasing the gain from somewhat agree to agree then back to somewhat agree. Opening

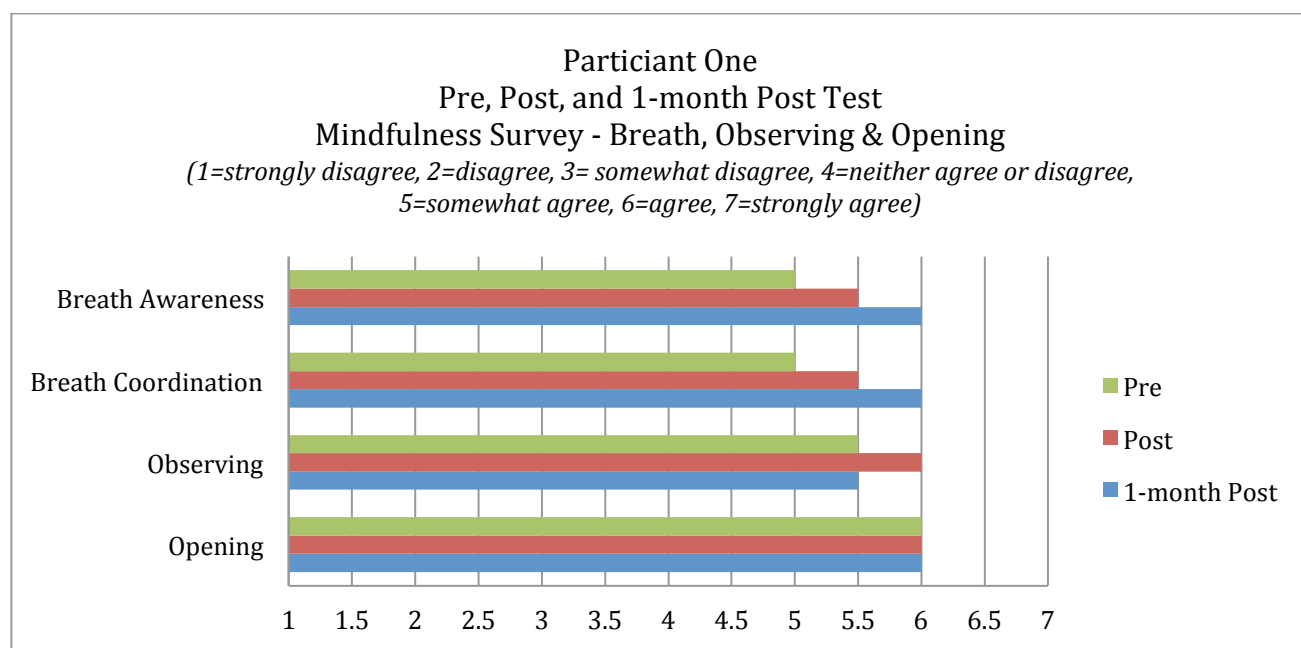


Figure 4.6. Mindfulness survey—breath, observing and opening – P1.

remained at a consistently high agree level throughout the study at all three pre and post-markers. Her observing score moved up slightly in the post-test, but returned to her starting level in the 1-month post-test.

Additionally, the three aspects of suspending judgment were evaluated. The score for accepting and letting go remained the same at the somewhat agree and agree level respectively.

Noticing increased by 30% from the pre to post period, from somewhat agree to agree, and then declined slightly by 7% at the time of the one-month post survey (Figure 4.7). The scores may have not been sensitive enough to pick up the subtle changes Participant One reported during the coaching sessions. In fact, change was occurring and was reported during the coaching meetings. When we began the process, the participant seemed to hold on to the opinions of others. By the end of the study, she was better equipped to recognize and accept what was important and what was not. Despite a score that remained at the agree level over the course of the study, Participant One reported in coaching meetings that she was able to improve her ability to let go of things she did not view as important.

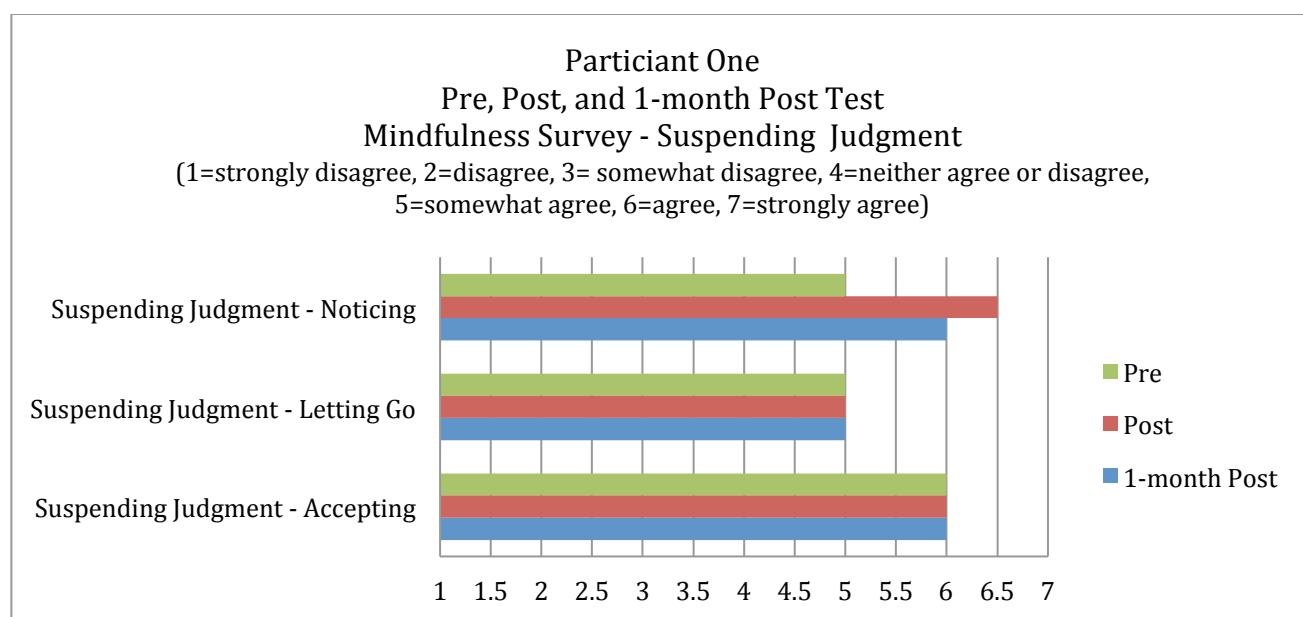


Figure 4.7. Mindfulness survey—suspending judgment – P1.

From the beginning of the study, the participant was open to and interested in breath work. The following quote illustrated her reaction after the first week of the process,

I have noticed when I do the breathing exercise in my office that I have a similar body response as I did when Steve was showing me how to do it. I felt the tension in my neck at work but not at home. Very interesting. I also caught myself in a 1:1 with another staff member earlier in the week being more present and listening more fully. For some reason with this person I often look at nonrelated papers on my desk or write down

something nonrelated. I am doing the breathing exercise at least twice a day and sometimes three times a day.

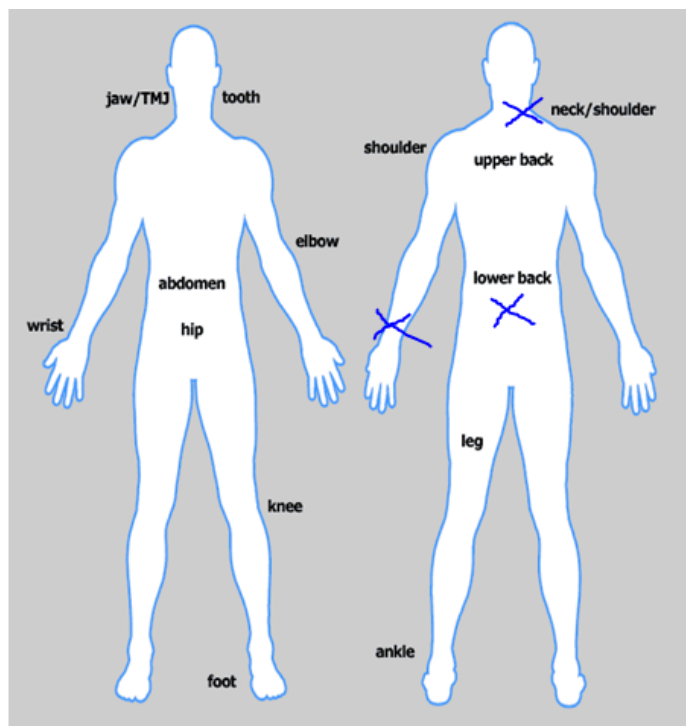
The feedback by the participant provided clues about her ability to be present and listen. Her tone of engagement echoed my initial observations. I reflected,

[Participant] is off to a good start. She did the breathing practice every day over the past week except one of the days. She finds that doing the practice early in the morning before going to work is an ideal time. She also tried it at work. For this next week, she will try to incorporate the exercise at work as well and to pay attention to its effect. The time that she tried the breathing practice at work she felt stress in her shoulders. She mentioned that she caught herself this past week when she was not in the moment. She also noticed a time when a direct report was speaking to her and she began writing "scribble" notes down on a paper because she did not have an interest in what they were saying - she caught herself and stopped.

By the end of the study, the participant's awareness of breath, and ability to modulate its flow and rhythm, affected her life in many positive respects. In the final coaching meeting, it became evident just how much proficiency she gained with the following observation,

Today was the final coaching meeting with [participant]. We began with the breathing practice. She described the practice as feeling natural, particularly compared to the first time that she did it. She said that she heard people talking the first time around and that it was a distraction. This time she noticed noise but it did not feel annoying. She said that it is easier to get into a good breathing posture. She is able to pay attention to how her feet are positioned on the floor and her body posture. Overall, her breathing is more natural, more comfortable, and more flowing. I noticed her body posture and facial expression as relaxed. She seemed like she was able to get into the breath practice easily and with little effort—it was confirming.

Body awareness. Participant One reported two primary types of body stress and tension (Figure 4.8). The first type was located in her shoulders. She said that this stress was due to challenging interactions with others. The second stress experienced was located in the wrist and lower back areas due to computer use or overuse, and poor posture. The lower back was also reported as a source of strain that the participant thinks came from lifting heavy boxes. By week two, the participant reported that she was able to loosen or diminish somatic tension through awareness



Week	Symptom (Ache/Pain)
2	Shoulder primarily (stressful conversation and posture)
4	Shoulder (Tension/Stress conversation); Is able to make it go away with breathing
6	Shoulder (stress and strain); Wrist (computer overuse)
8	Shoulder (tension) – can get it to loosen up; Lower back (tweaked or pulled)
10	Shoulder (not sure if it is stress or computer); Lower-back (not stress related)

Figure 4.8. Body awareness map—P1.

and the breathing practice. By week five, the participant increasingly became cognizant of the stress resulting from computer use as illustrated below,

I wasn't as good about noticing my posture and/or breathing while sitting at the computer. I actually have all kinds of postures I use depending on the length of the email I am composing and whether I need to word things very carefully (can use some improvement there) and I find that is when my neck muscles are tense.

Developing awareness in respect to noticing posture and body tension evolved. In subsequent weeks, she reported,

I'm still working on noticing my posture at the computer and can't really say I've done any better than last week. I am getting an ergonomic evaluation next Wednesday so I'm looking forward to the feedback on that. I did try using the mouse with my left hand and my initial reaction was that I couldn't do it. I haven't tried it again.

By week seven, there appeared to be a breakthrough in noticing somatic stress, particularly as it related to posture and computer use. The following observation provided additional context,

[Participant] has been paying more attention to her breath (something that she has been resisting) and posture. She had an ergonomic review and she is in progress of making adjustments. She said that she often will smell her “essential oils” before she begins working on the computer as a way to center. She found it curious that she did not acknowledge this before – we talked about the possibility that she is now paying more attention and that she may have been using this technique as a way to ground herself, but had never made it explicit. It will be interesting to see if some of her neck tension lessens now that she has made the computer adjustments. She also made the decision to turn her computer station so that when people come in her back will not be the first thing that they see – good results altogether.

This small act of turning her chair so that she can face others as they enter her office has big implications for her ability to relate with others. In fact, it suggested that she is open to others and welcomes them. This finding also has implications for how she relates to herself moving beyond thinking as if her community consisted of one to multiple—she could no longer only think of herself; she became better versed at thinking through how her decisions affect others. In another example, a connection between awareness of her body and how this affected her ability to connect with others was revealed. I reflected,

In thinking about her relationship with herself while at the computer, she noticed her posture and presence were not good—she noticed her body position “all over the place” and not paying attention to her breathing. In this way, her awareness increased. The previous week she said that she does not do a good job of staying aware of her body or breath while at the computer—she was either unaware or did not provide objective perspective. She said that she noticed shoulder stress as a result of working on the computer—we talked about paying attention to this for the coming week and taking breaks to readjust when she catches herself. She also shared that she was more aware of

when people came into her office and stopped what she was doing to redirect – she said that she was better able to listen and focus on the person and be more present.

By the last week of our meetings, the participant’s body tension had lessened significantly.

When stress appeared, she reported that she was better able to manage it. Overall, her somatic awareness increased and her attention and adjustments to respond mitigated negative effects.

Effects of the abilities. Participants completed a weekly assessment consisting of two surveys – the weekly reflection report and the weekly practice report—that measured four abilities: paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, and multiplying perspectives. The weekly reflection report (see Appendix G) included three items per ability, with response codes of 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neither agree nor disagree, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, and 7=strongly agree. Participant scores were calculated by averaging the codes across the three items in each scale.

The weekly practice report (see Figure 4.9) consisted of single self-rating questions

Table 4.9

Weekly Practice Report: Single Items Scoring Questions

1. During the past week, rate your ability to pay attention?
2. During the past week, rate your ability to connect with others?
3. During the past week, rate your ability to manage stress?
4. During the past week, rate your ability to generate new perspectives?
5. During the past week, rate your capacity to demonstrate new leader abilities?

related to the same five abilities. The participant was asked to respond on a seven-point scale similar to the multiple item scoring. The multiple item and single self-rating question results are presented together on figures (Figure 4.10 to Figure 4.13). It is interesting to note that for

Participant One, her single question assessment about her abilities was consistently higher than her score on the multiple items per ability weekly reflection log. The additional items added more breadth and depth to how she saw her abilities. The single self-rating question relating to the capacity to demonstrate new leader abilities was recorded separately and is shown in Figure 4.14.

As shown in Figure 4.10, paying attention increased from somewhat agree to agree on the multiple item average. Paying attention for the single self-rating question remained consistent with agree for the duration of the study. Responses relating to her ability to pay attention started moderately high (between somewhat agree and agree) and stayed high. Despite the quantitative scores reporting minor change, the participant discussed ways in which her

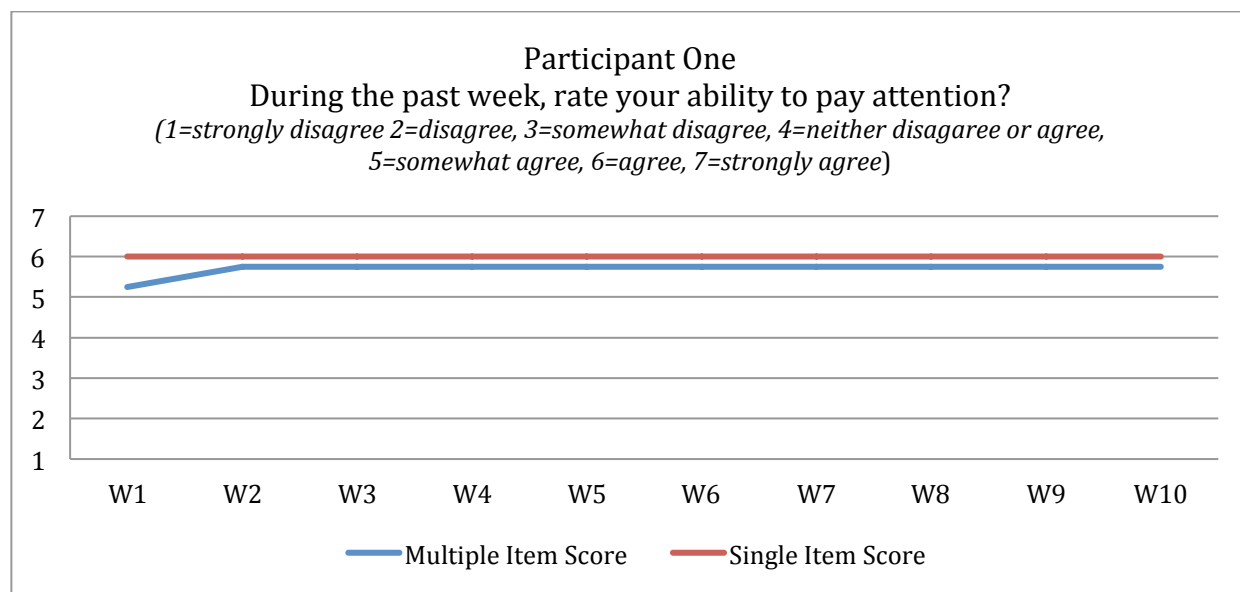


Figure 4.9. Paying attention (multiple and single item score) – P1.

ability to pay attention and focus was heightened. The following comment highlighted her increased awareness in being distracted.

I tried to be in the present and notice when I was doing it. I did notice a couple of times when I was having a quick conversation with one of the staff that they were in a hurry so

knew they had another commitment. I was aware of this so cut the conversation short and said we could finish it at another time.

Her evolution was slow but steady, similar to her moderate, steady practice frequency. In another situation that involved a difficult employee, a take-away she reported was the need to be present during challenging situations. The following reflection provided context,

I did have a very unhappy employee walk into my office to express her view that she was being treated unfairly. This was at the same time I was getting ready to walk over for the noon meditation group (and was not able to go as a result). This took the wind out of my sails since we had had a very positive 1:1 last week. I am trying to be more present during all of these situations and notice how I am reacting.

By the end of the study, I noted several ways in which she improved her ability to pay attention including the following,

She says that she is more self-aware, particularly in respect to paying attention to when others are reaching out and being able to tune into what they are saying. She is better able to notice negative self-talk and make adjustments in thinking and not make assumptions about what others may be saying.”

As the participant deepened her ability to focus, sometimes it translated to simply listening. This was the case at several staff meetings and was highlighted in her journal.

I wasn't able to attend the first half hour of staff meeting on Wednesday because of a conference call with an employer and a colleague from campus (who happens to be the President's husband). I told the staff to go ahead and do part of the agenda without me. When I arrived they were deep in conversation and I was able to sit quietly and listen rather than jump in and take over.

Her ability to listen also contributed to connecting with others (Figure 4.10). By the end of the coaching meetings, I noted the following,

She feels that she has always been good with connecting with others (as her self-rating scores attest), but it has improved in terms of a “more equal connection” with others – something that she has been striving to improve for some time. She said that direct reports have at times kept her at a distance because of her title or manager status – she is better able to just to talk with direct reports and has reduced feelings of hierarchy.

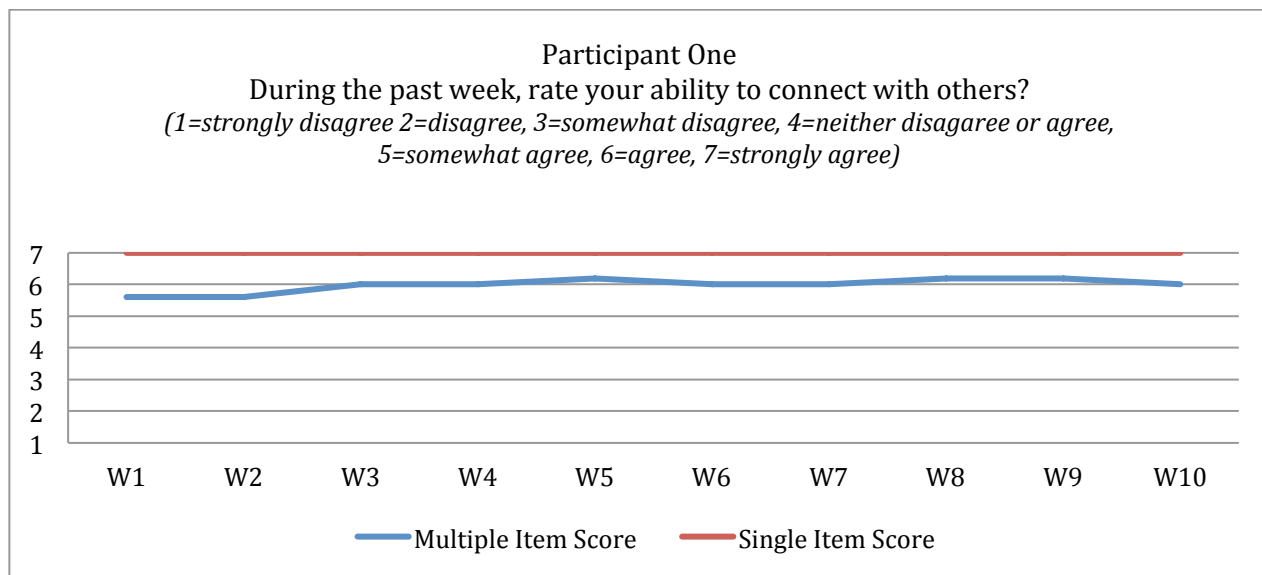


Figure 4.10. Connecting with others (multiple and single item score) – P1.

The fact that she began the process with high scores quantitatively (agree to strongly agree) in respect to connecting with others creates context for understanding the subtle changes. Her ability to forge more equal and relevant relations with those who were not her peers was relevant.

We spent considerable time discussing her direct reports as she was constantly seeking ways to deepen her relationship with them. The practices allowed her to do so in new ways that often took a non-doing approach. In other words, she began to notice and listen more instead of directing and telling. My perspective was that she was slowly finding ways to sit with discomfort and become a better observer of circumstance. By the end of the coaching process, I captured the following,

She says that she feels better able to connect with others and pay attention. She is noticing and adjusting more. The relationship with her most challenged direct report is on an even keel – it has at minimum stabilized and she can interject humor more easily and with greater ease. In terms of her listening abilities, she is doing less talking and more listening. She is taking more time at staff meetings to listen and inviting others to speak up more – this is creating more openness among team members.

In respect to managing stress (Figure 4.11), the participant said that her stress level could reach as high as eight or more on a scale of 10, which could manifest itself in feelings of exasperation. By week three, there were already signs of moderate change as I noted:

Most significantly, she shared that she had multiple positive conversations with one of her direct reports. She found a way to provide positive feedback to [direct report] on one occasion and we discussed continuing to find ways to connect informally and to just listen. As a result, [participant] expressed feeling more fluidity in these conversations. I noted that as she had lightness about how she was describing the situation compared to previous ones and that her body appeared more comfortable and relaxed.

In another example, I reflected on how the breathing practice became an impetus for managing stress empowering others.

In terms of managing stress, she is using the breathing exercise and this has been a big help, she is getting outside more, walking, learning to delegate more easily, and this has created more space for doing other things. She sees all of these signs as indicators of letting go.

Her self-rating and composite multi-item score for managing stress started at the somewhat agree level and moved up towards agree by the end of the intervention. An increased ability to manage stress paralleled with being able to better notice. This was evident as she was becoming more flexible and better able to direct attention, and as a result, feeling more at ease. The following comment illuminated this point,

Her relationship with stress has changed in the respect that she feels that she is better able to be in the moment and adapt. This is one area that she feels that she has always struggled with, and although she sees this as a work in progress, that she has taken strides, for example, in being able to ask insightful or probing questions in the moment and to reframe situations. In closing, she said that she hopes to extend the practices she has adopted and begin drawing, something that she has wanted to do for some time.

Overall, the participant showed improving results in the ability to manage stress. Her awareness was improving and her toolbox of stress reduction strategies was making a difference.

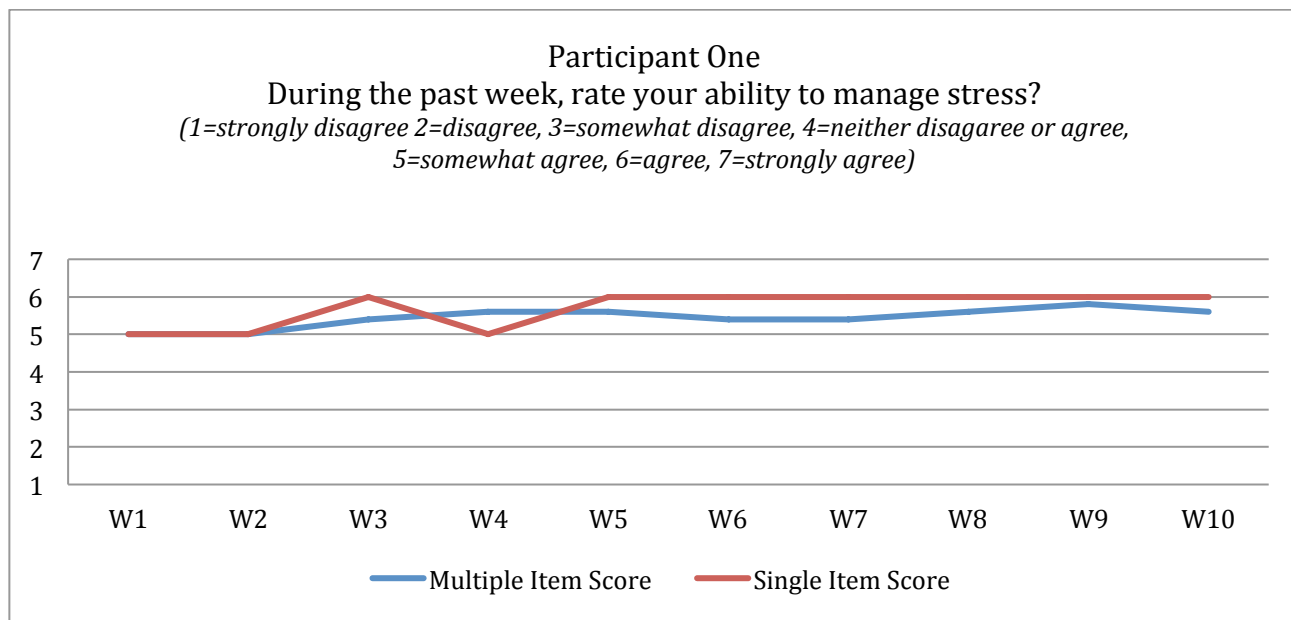


Figure 4.11. Managing stress (multiple and single item score) – P1.

In respect to perspective taking (Figure 4.12), the participant shared an example of working with a student and the subsequent conversation with his parent. As context, the participant said that prior to the practices that she would have probably quickly reacted and most

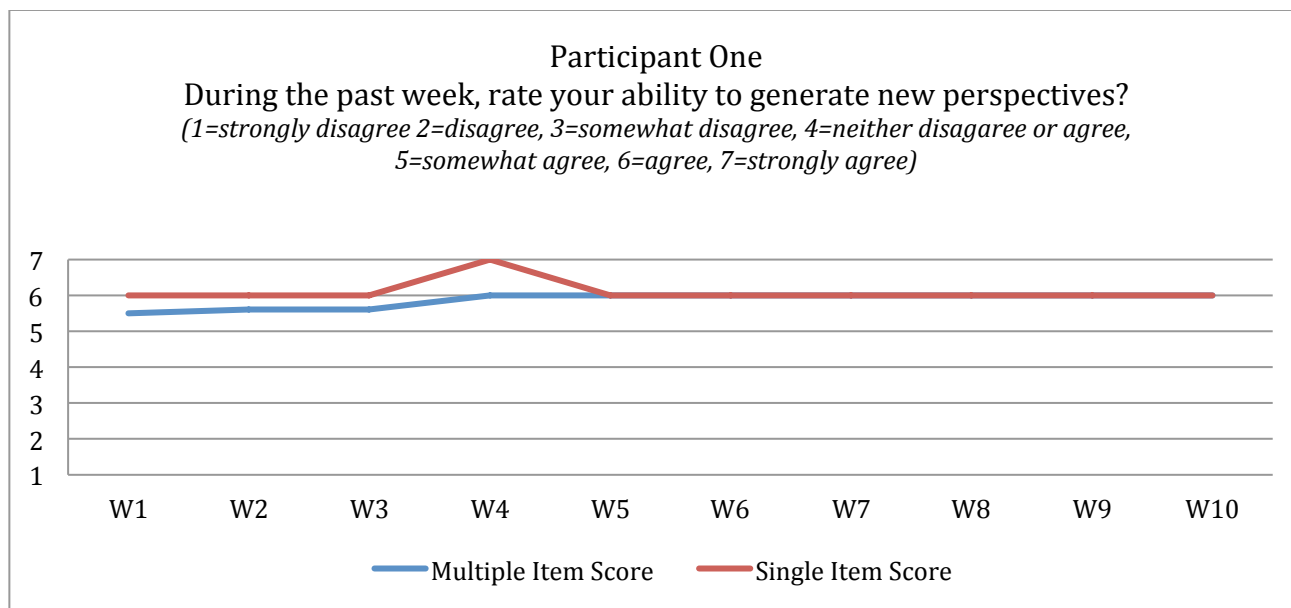


Figure 4.12. Multiplying perspectives (multiple and single item score) – P1.

likely in a negative way. Instead, she said that she was able to reframe the circumstance with inquiry. Her participant journal included the following,

On Thursday morning I had a voicemail from the parent of a student who had met with one of the counselors. The student told him the person he met just suggested some websites to check. In investigating the situation (reading the counselor notes and talking to the counselor - turned out it was [direct report whom she has had challenges with]), I knew much more had been done with the student. Prior to returning the parent's call, I did the breathing exercise and wrote out some notes of what I would say. Due to confidentiality I couldn't tell him much other than his son had been seen and I assured him more than a few websites were discussed. I encouraged him to ask his son if next steps had been discussed, whether he had done any of them and send him back to us to meet with [direct report] again or with another counselor. The conversation went extremely well though I wasn't looking forward to it. I think about being deliberate (slowing myself down in simple movements) but haven't been very good about implementing this (I think about it during my commute).

The student example attested to the importance of keeping a wider lens when responding to a situation when the facts may not be all together clear. Moreover, the feedback revealed a nuanced view of her growing ability to broaden her perspective taking. Her scores for perspective taking hovered around the agree level throughout the intervention, but her narrative reflects an increased awareness of perspective taking.

Again, in terms of demonstrating new leader abilities (Figure 4.13), the participant's

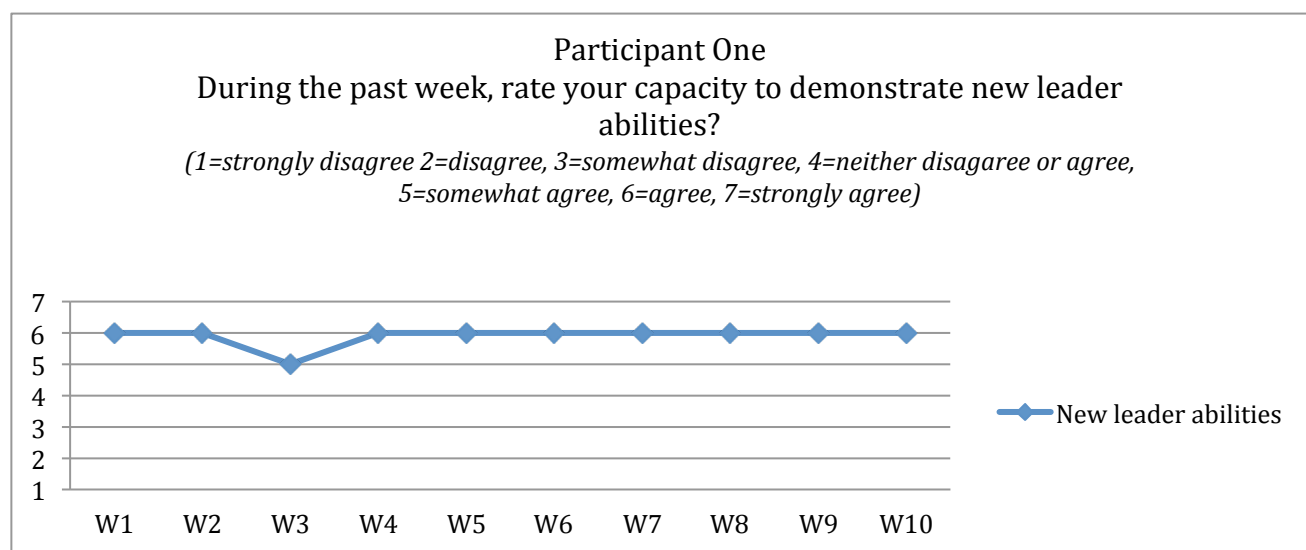


Figure 4.13. Leader abilities (single item score) – P1.

response to the single item self-rating question remained at a constant level, which was high, or at the agree level, from the start. However, my observations and her comments suggested that a willingness to take risks and influence others increased.

In another staff meeting, the participant brought up the idea of taking breaths as a way to manage stress – she was willing to share her experience and the benefit that she experienced.

She stated,

Staff meeting quote "Keep breathing" went over very well. One person who was looking at the quote at the top of the agenda actually was just getting ready to take a deep breath.....so the conversation and laughter that followed was good.

In a conversation, we discussed how her leadership, more broadly, had been influenced as a result of the practices. She had the following to share which I captured in my field notes,

In responding to the question how her leadership overall has changed, she said that she is more deliberate in her thinking and acting, and more strategic in her approach. She thinks that she is less reactive than she was before, a mode of operating that was common. She finds that she is also less defensive and takes pause before just jumping into conversation, and at the same time she said that she has more energy and capacity to jump in on issues that she may have avoided due to personal discomfort or conflict. The participant said that the practices were creating mental space for new thinking, and this, in turn, was supporting her willingness to try new things and ways of being. More broadly, the qualitative data revealed a nuanced shift in her leadership. During the final coaching meeting, we had the opportunity to discuss specific personal and professional development that occurred.

I captured the following,

Overall, she found the 10-week experience very successful. It has helped her leadership abilities at work. She notices a better “karma” in the office because, as she said, she is either more approachable or the team is responding better to her. The office has a more relaxed feel and to the culture feels good, and this is with the backdrop of a highly busy time of the semester.

Additionally, she said that,

She is taking conscious time to be in the present – much more than before. All of these have contributed to reduced stress. In building on others’ perspectives, she said that she has always asked for input, but she did not always listen. She is doing this more and in a more deliberate way. She is seeking input more and asking for others’ consideration. She is also anticipating people’s concerns and trying to address them upfront and by helping them see the big picture and their respective role.

At the one-month follow-up meeting, we had a chance to discuss what had transpired since the coaching process ended. The practices appeared to remain in place, including her daily breathing practice. My observations provided perspective at the follow-up meeting.

[Participant] and I met for the post one-month follow-up meeting today. She had many things to update me on including her continued good relations with her boss and that her team continues to do well. She said that they have kept in a good place – little drama as she said and her challenging direct report, whom we spoke of many times, seems to be engaged. The culture shift to a more relaxed group has seemed to hold. [Participant] has kept up with her breathing practice, keeping a commitment to 3-minutes daily and typically in the car before work. She said that it is rare that she misses the breathing practice and has continued to find it very helpful.

Overall, the change that took hold over the month remained, and in some instances, deepened. The team culture and the relationship with her once challenging direct report were positive. This change was communicated during weekly coaching meetings, but did not show up directly quantitatively. The participant reflected on the importance of listening and connecting with others, which is captured below,

She said that she also continues to listen well and be in the moment. She is good at letting others talk and sometimes people will ask her why she is not speaking up more – she responds that she is listening. She thinks that being more deliberate and deepening her listening really came after the breath practice was established – it was the foundation that let the other practices take shape. She also said that the coaching was a big help to support and deepen the practices and said that my nonjudgmental approach created a safe place to explore things. Her additional comments included that the timing for the practices was good (in terms of when she began the process), that her ability to maintain calmness among many unknowns has been a big benefit, and that it has helped her to be a better manager not over-reacting, building relationships, and helping others to be direct with others in a professional but objective manner.

Overall, Participant One took significant strides in her development, which she seemed pleased

about. Perhaps the participant said it succinctly with the following, “The practices have worked very well for me at work and I am trying to use them more in my non-work life. I think I have the tools to do so.”

Summary. Participant One began the process with little awareness of breath or its composition; she initially characterized her breath as chest-centered and shallow, and having little patience to hold its attention. Through consistent, steady, and daily application, her relationship with her breath changed. Her ability to regulate her breath changed, which she described as natural, smooth, and relaxed. This foundation allowed her to make incremental change over time. By week eight, she no longer had significant body stresses or tensions, and when they arose, she was able to loosen or dispel them through body awareness and the breathing practice.

In respect to the pre, post, and weekly surveys, the participant reported the following:

- Increases in four out of five categories from the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, with improved scores in the ability to observe, describe, act with awareness, and non-reactivity to the inner experience
- Increases in breath coordinating, observing, and suspending judgment (noticing) from the Mindfulness Survey
- The weekly reflection and practice report scores were inconclusive, with most scores reporting no change. The exception was the ability to manage stress, which showed moderate gains

Moreover, while the weekly scores did not show significant improvement, the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire and the Mindfulness survey did. Observations and participant reflections highlighted incremental improvements in nearly all of the abilities. The

ability to think and act more strategically and less reactively was a standout. Others included improved teamwork, better relations with direct reports, and an ability to maintain calmness in stressful situations. The results suggested that with steady practice, deep reflection, and daily practice, that change is possible.

Participant Two

Participant Two began the process having recently completed a four-month assignment on the east coast. His responsibilities included leading a comparative medicine team of seventeen. This involved setting the vision and direction of the group as well as day to day management responsibilities. Upon his return to San Diego, he assumed responsibility of a smaller team consisting of two direct reports, plus global project responsibilities. His role requires significant cross-functional leadership and influencing without authority. The participant is from India, has a Ph.D. in molecular virology, and is a veterinarian for a large pharmaceutical organization.

The participant has practiced meditation inconsistently in the past. He hoped the study would support his effort to establish a regular meditation and mindfulness practice. In this way, he thinks that the study aligns with his personal goals. He also wished to improve his listening. He said that based on feedback that he has received from others, and his own observations, that he does not always listen. He said that he has a tendency to tell people what needs to be done and how to do it, even if they do not ask. An example is completing others sentences before they have a chance to finish. He also shared that some of his reports felt intimidated by him, and that he needed to pay attention to the context before speaking – seeking first to understand. Last, he said that he can be too open in sharing information that does not concern others and this can result in losing focus.

The participant identified three personal strengths, including the ability to 1) simplify processes and give others freedom and hold them accountable, 2) deal with complexity (i.e., creating role clarity when responsibilities overlap), and 3) meet customer expectations. He hopes to leverage these strengths during the coaching process. He said that he becomes complacent when things go smoothly and that he would like to develop more discipline and awareness in this respect. He said that it is common for him to become less patient with others as the typical day unfolds, because his listening abilities decrease. During these times, unintended interpersonal challenges can arise. He said that he is often tired during the afternoon and this has resulted in not paying attention to his needs, or the needs of others. In addition to his work responsibilities, he has a growing family with two small children at home. My overall impression was that the participant has a number of development opportunities that he was aware of and that he was motivated to grow and apply the practices.

Practice frequency. Practice frequency steadily increased over the course of the study (Figure 4.14). The first two weeks the participant averaged at least three to four times daily for breath awareness and steadily increased reaching five or more times daily by week seven. Thereafter, it leveled out at four to five times daily the last weeks of the study. Overall, there was a consistent pattern of engagement for breath awareness which I recorded with the following,

[Participant] said that he is off to a good start with the breath practice, both paying attention to informal breathing awareness and doing about 10-minute meditation sittings. I passed along via email several meditation resources and a body scan exercise, as he shared an interest in learning and practicing more.

Throughout the study, the participant had a high interest in the breathing practice. We often spoke about the quality of the breath and how it was affecting his mental and emotional state. Because the participant had some background in meditation, I found that he was better equipped

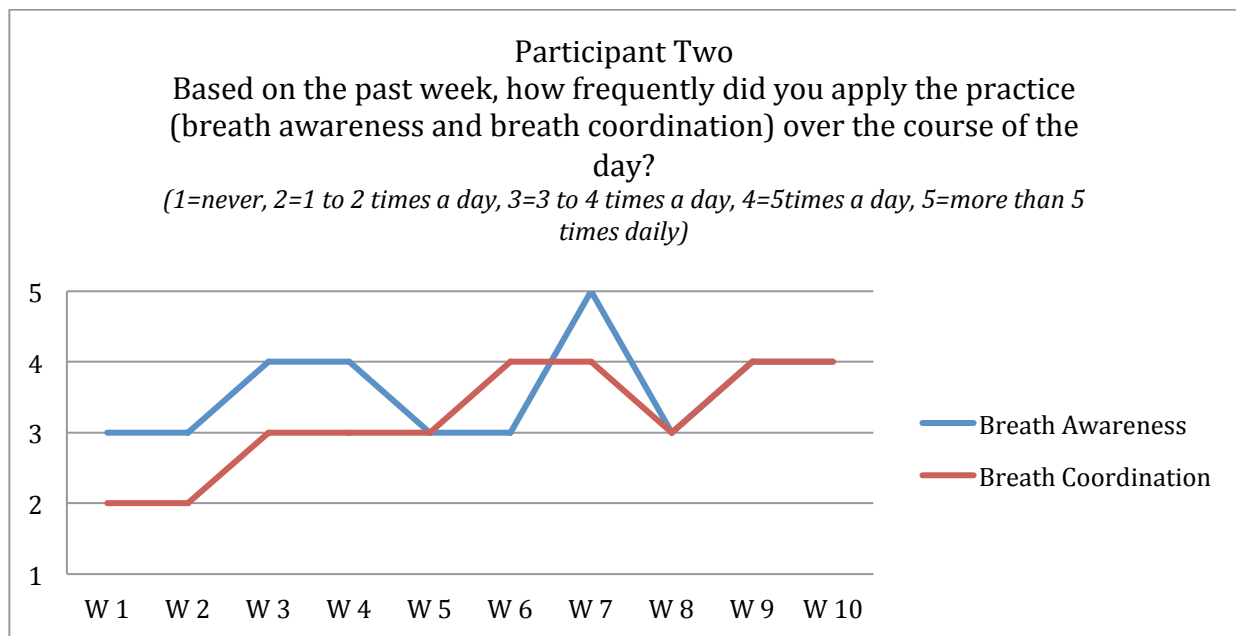


Figure 4.14. Practice Frequency: Breath awareness and breath coordination – P2.

to engage in the practices from the beginning. One aspect that interrupted practice consistency was frequent travel to the east coast. This made for choppy practice frequency at times. Despite this challenge, the participant remained committed and steadily increased in frequency. The participant was at the height of applying the practices at week seven. My notes reflected this with the following observation,

[Participant] has recently increased his daily breathing practice. He has been consistent with a 10-minute practice in the morning and 30-minute body scan in the evening. He has found the body practice aided in getting a full-night sleep and to wind down in the evening. He has a body scan and meditation app on his iPhone that he uses. [Participant] is seeing real benefits from his practice including overall feeling calmer, not taking things so personally, and managing his time better.

The observing and opening practices doubled in frequency over the course of the study, while suspending judgment increased from an average of three to four times to five or more times daily (Figure 4.15). Interestingly, all the practices exhibited a similar frequency pattern. Week seven showed the greatest jump in all three frequency categories, mirroring the spike of the breath awareness and breath coordination practice. At the beginning of the study, the

participant was averaging three to four times daily for breath awareness and one to two times daily for breath coordination. This frequency increased to three to four times daily up to five times daily for the majority of the study period. Observing represented a steady increase of one

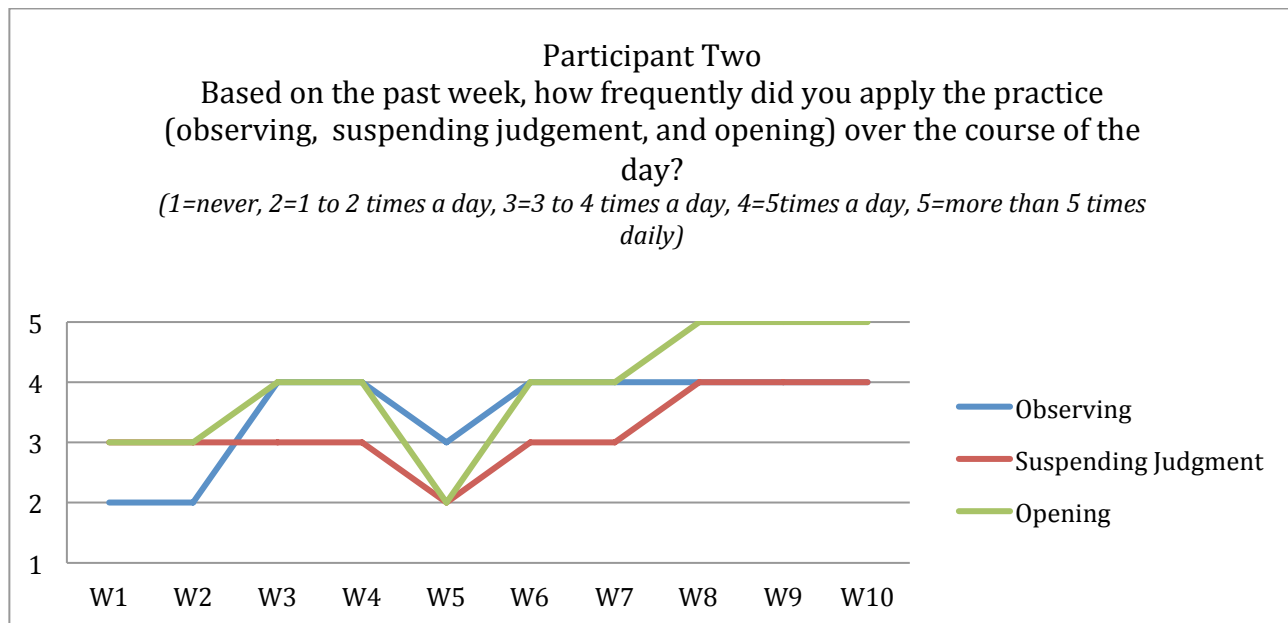


Figure 4.15. Practice frequency: Observing, suspending judgment, opening – P2.

to two times daily to five times daily. Suspending judgment ranged between three to four times daily to five times daily and opening was reported between three to four times daily to more than five times. In all, the participant's average daily frequency, although uneven, consistently rose.

Breathing exercise results. Despite the participant's exposure to meditation, his awareness of breath at the beginning of the study was emerging (Figure 4.16). I recorded the following observation after introducing him to the breathing exercise at our first meeting,

The participant felt that he was able to relax more after the exercise, that he could feel his toes, and that it was hard counting to five, he got to four and was distracted. He said that he felt tension in his eyes and that he would have liked to have done the exercise longer. He shared that he has one lung and that he is asthmatic - sometimes he cannot feel his breath in the back of his body.

It struck me that the participant had only one lung. I was curious about the effect that it might have on the breathing practice. We talked about trying to notice and feel his back area when he



Figure 4.16. Breathing exercise at pre, post, and 1-month post period – P2.

did the breathing exercise. At the mid-way point, he reported that he could feel his back after doing the breathing practice. The ability to concentrate was also a struggle at the beginning and he said that he was easily distracted. He had discomfort in his eyes possibly due to sinus pressure and general fatigue. Overall, the participant was eager to begin the practices.

The participant quickly found momentum with the breath practice and as the weeks progressed, he increased the daily meditation to upwards of ten to fifteen minutes. One of his early reflections included,

When I consciously did my breathing practice I felt a lot more in control of myself. It was especially useful this week as I had several meetings with our global team head. I consciously did the breathing practice for 10 min before each meeting and I felt I was in control of my thoughts through the meetings. Another aspect I noticed this week was that I was able to let go of things which would not have been possible before. Also I was able to withhold my quick comments when one of my peer's made comments that I would normally have responded to immediately.

By the end of the study, the participant reported that his breath felt natural and relaxed, that his focus was high, and that he was able to notice and go in and out of conversations that he overheard with ease and focus. He said that his breath started as chest-centered and quickly moved to the belly. At the one-month follow-up meeting, the participant continued to do the breathing practice after the ten-week period, but not as regularly. I reported the following,

He said that his daily breathing practice has been on and off. He said that he has been trying to stay centered more generally, paying attention to his body, awareness of tension, stress, and posture more so than doing the sitting meditation.

At this meeting, the participant was experiencing allergies (an on-going challenge) and this affected the final breathing exercise. Despite this, he said that his breath felt natural, but that it did not have the smooth rhythm and flow that had become characteristic. His allergies reminded me of the cold symptoms he exhibited at the beginning of study. More broadly, the relationship the participant experienced with his breath underwent a transformation over the course of the study. He progressed to a place of ease and focus that appeared to parallel the level of frequency practice he established.

Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire. The participant experienced changes in four of the five categories for the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (Figure 4.17). The percent change was calculated based on the response codes. Observing increased 69% from the pre to post period, and decreased 2.5% at the one-month post period. Describing increased 43% from the pre to post period, and increased another 15% at the one-month post period. Acting

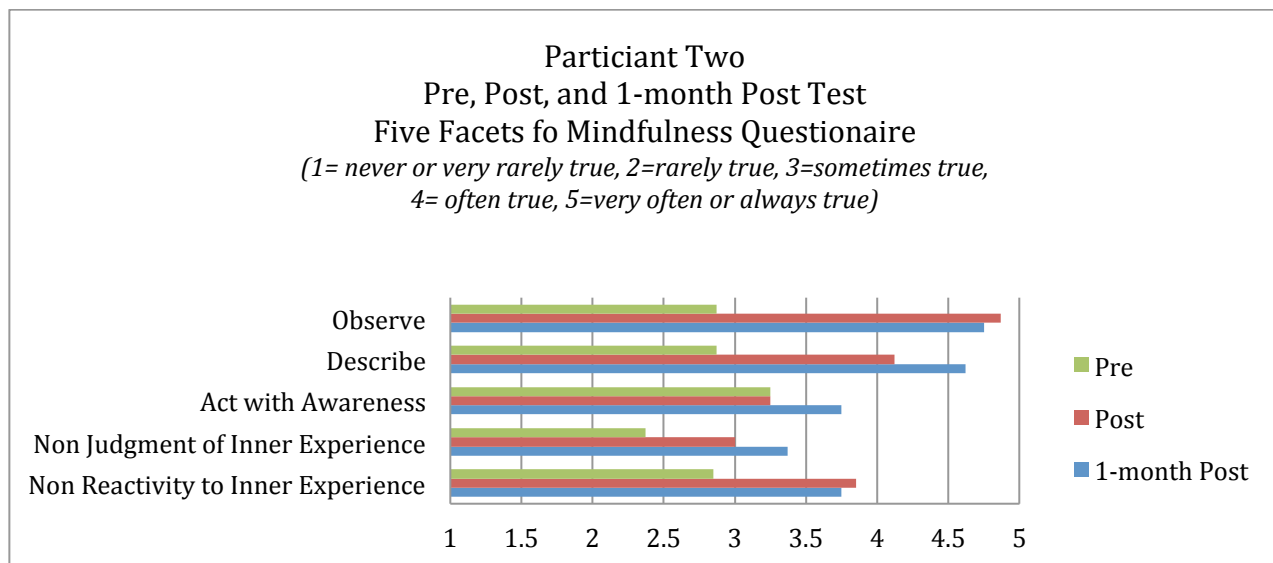


Figure 4.17. Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire – P2.

with awareness remained equal at the post period, and then increased by 15% at the one-month post period. Nonjudging of the inner experience increased 26% from the pre to post period, and then it increased another 12% at the one-month post period. Nonreacting to the inner experience increased 35% from the pre to post period, and decreased 2.5% at the one-month post period. In three of the five categories, an increase of 12% or higher occurred from the post to the one-month follow-up meeting.

These score improvements mirrored comments made by the participant as well as my observations. At week seven, the participant said the following,

This week was very interesting in that I had several good moments in my interaction with the senior leadership. My ability to feel relaxed and fluid during these interactions was very revealing to me. These situations highlighted “Why I am who I am” and helped me understand myself fully for the first time. Also, this was the first week I started a conversation with my group head with an opening of getting her perspective first before offering my suggestion. This opened a new perspective and information that helped overcome a big obstacle with which I have been grappling.

The participant was aware of the improvement he was making, particularly in respect to listening and insight into his behaviors. He said that he was better able to notice when he finished other

people's sentences and adjust. He said that when he interrupted others that this diminished his ability to influence and connect with them. He revealed that when he caught himself doing this that he could be hard on himself. This feedback revealed that he was applying and deepening the practices despite inconsistencies and uneven results. Some weeks he made gains while in others it was more incremental—at times, there was regression. Despite the ups and downs, his application of the practices was consistent and change was occurring. In my field notes below, I captured how the emphasis on listening was supporting his ability to keep calm.

[Participant] shared that he was at a meeting last week and someone asked for his opinion only after everyone else gave theirs – he chose simply to listen, and when his opinion was asked, he shared. He said that his nervous energy lessened overall, and he is seeing these benefits in his ability to connect with others. He said that he is being more deliberate and is not easily provoked as he would have been. We talked about his self-talk in terms of making judgments – primarily toward his self. We talked about paying attention to how this manifests behaviorally. We talked about keeping a curious attitude toward observing his behavior and to note any insights. We also talked about multi-tasking tendencies and he shared that he has been able to set his cell phone and attention to the computer aside and has done a better job at focusing on what was happening.

One of the practices used to help increase awareness was observing. The more attention he paid to his tendency to interrupt others, for example, the better able he was to adjust. This was also true for when he caught himself becoming self-critical, to notice, acknowledge it, and try to let it go without self-judgment. Interestingly, observing on the survey experienced the largest gain from the pre to post period.

Mindfulness survey. The result for breath awareness was the most dramatic change on all surveys, increasing by over 160% from the pre to post period, showing a positive increase from strongly disagree to agree, and further improving to strongly agree at the one-month post period (Figure 4.18). This change paralleled breath coordination which rose 75% from the pre to post period, improving from neither agree or disagree to strongly agree. Observing rose 8% from the pre to post period, and another 7% at the one-month post period, essentially moving

from agree to the strongly agree level by the one-month post survey. Opening rose dramatically, 116%, from the pre to post period, from somewhat disagree to agree, and then rose another 7% at the time of the one-month post period, further improving to strongly agree. The participant quickly became a student of breath in many respects by finding a rhythm early on and deepening the practice throughout the study. He was highly motivated and went far beyond baseline expectations. He also looked for informal times throughout the day to notice his breath and to consciously check-in when his rhythm lacked flow. At one point, he shared that he was better able to prioritize goals and manage his time after the breathing practice. He said that this resulted from enhanced clarity and focus. He said that he was also less attached to outcomes which

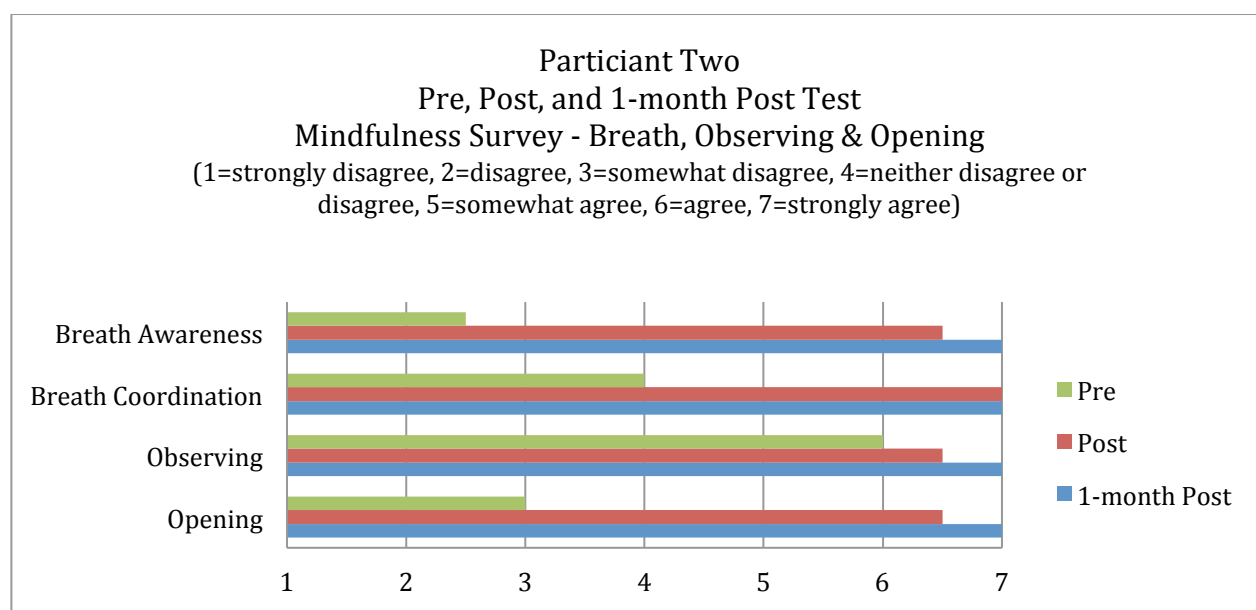


Figure 4.18. Mindfulness survey—breath, observing and opening – P2.

helped him to increase his clarity of what was important and what was not. To support his momentum, I introduced an exercise that included visualizing as if a power cord was being extended from the crown of his head through his tailbone. The idea was to do this when he sitting and feeling out of sorts and or in control of his circumstances. He said that this exercise helped him to become a better observer of self and as a tool to help him stay in tune with others

when he felt distracted. He made the following comment in respect to how staying in touch with his breath was helping him develop self-control,

I was able to control myself in tense situations this week by holding back and paying more attention to what I am feeling. Paying more attention to breath has helped me hold back my thoughts and interject as needed during meetings.

Moreover, his ability to notice behaviors was enhancing his ability to see things more clearly, including becoming more strategic when he interjected with a comment, and sensing when it was more prudent to hold back. His patience and self-discipline was increasing.

The suspending judgment score on all three abilities showed consistent improvement, changing from disagree to agree for noticing, from disagree to somewhat agree for letting go, and from somewhat agree to agree for accepting. Initial scores were all low which helped to account for the substantial change (Figure 4.19). My perception was that as his self-awareness increased, and so did his ability to notice his own judging tendencies, both toward himself and others. We spoke about this in the context of listening. He said that one of the reasons that he

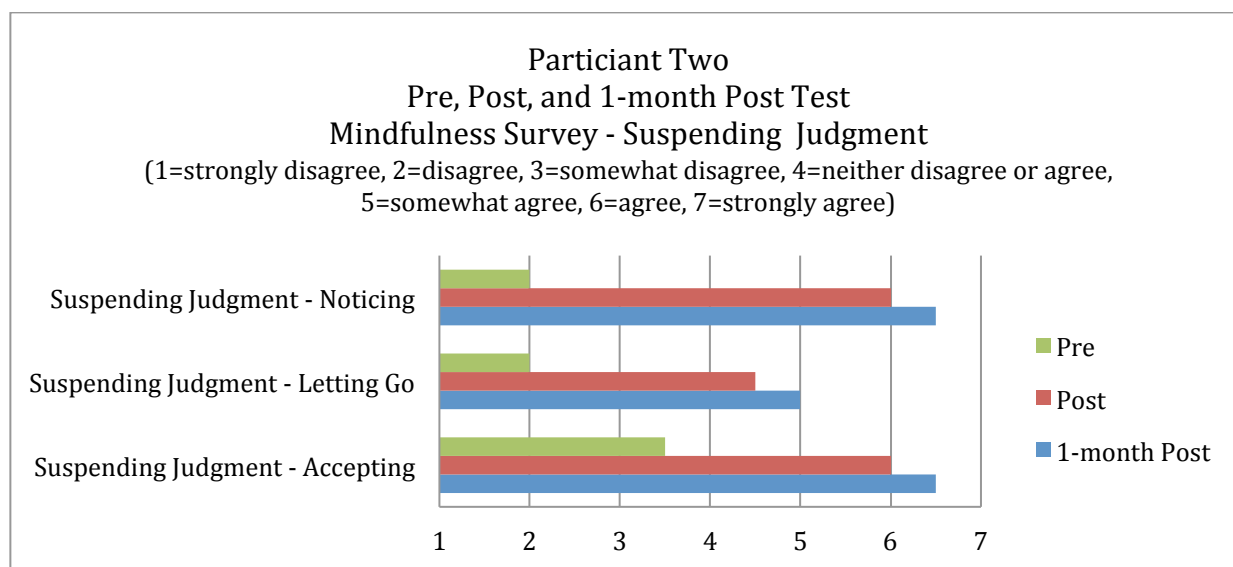


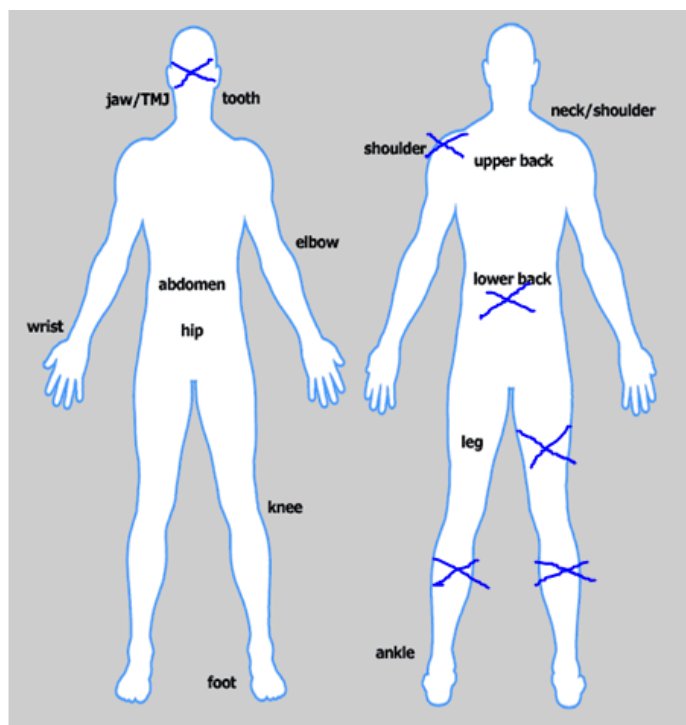
Figure 4.19. Mindfulness survey—suspending judgment – P2.

interrupted others was because he felt that he already knew the answer. His judging propelled behaviors which undermined his ability to relate and influence. This theme also came up in the context of his boss in terms of taking time to listen. Again, he often approached meetings from his own perspective as a way to serve his own agenda. As listening improved, so did room for new ways of experiencing others. Interestingly, the participant shared feedback that it was often during the evening that he was most self-critical. The after-work period allowed for time to decompress and reflect. Uncovering this pattern facilitated a new understanding of what was happening during the day and to notice triggers. This revelation coincided with experimenting with new behaviors, including a willingness to do so in the home context. He began exercising in the evenings which supported his overall well-being. Together, the mix of these positive choices created ripple effects on his ability to suspend judgment; he was slowly replacing unconscious behavior with new habits.

Body awareness. The participant initially reported stress in the shoulders and lower back (Figure 4.20). Lower back tension resulted from a variety of sources including stress and poor sleeping. Difficult interactions with others were a primary reason for the shoulder tension. The participant also reported tension in and around the eyes which he thought was due to frequent travel. He reported that during his four-month assignment that he experienced weight gain and exercised little. The participant stated that re-starting an exercise routine was an initial goal. The result in respect to eye tension was immediate and positive. He said that as he began exercising his ability to listen and stay present to others also increased.

By week three, the participant completed an on-line ergonomic assessment through work. His aim was to improve his awareness of posture while at the computer. He paid more attention

to shoulder stress and focused on breathing during these times. The incremental steps were having a positive effect on his overall body tensions. The following week he said that he was



Week	Symptom (Ache/Pain)
2	Eye area (tension goes away with exercise); Shoulders (holds them up); Lower back
4	Calf muscles (exercising soreness)
6	Lower back (poor night's sleep); Calf muscles/Quadriceps (exercising soreness)
8	No reported symptoms
10	Lower back (tension due to travel)

Figure 4.20. Body awareness map – P2.

able to feel his body more. He reported paying more attention to his feet as a way to keep grounded, and as a result, he said that he was finding himself reacting less to things and

becoming more conscious of thoughts. By week five, the only reported body stress was calf and hamstring muscle soreness due to exercising, and some lower back tension due to poor sleep the night before. At this time the participant began conducting a body scan in the evening. He said that this helped him sleep better and reduced body tension. He continued with this practice for the duration of the study.

Effects of the abilities. At the outset of the study, the participant reported that he agreed he paid attention, as reported on the weekly reflection report and the weekly practice report. This pattern slowly progressed and deepened throughout the study (Figure 4.21). The scores were high at the outset, so there was not much room for a higher level of agreement. However, the qualitative indicators provided a more nuanced understanding. For example, at the beginning

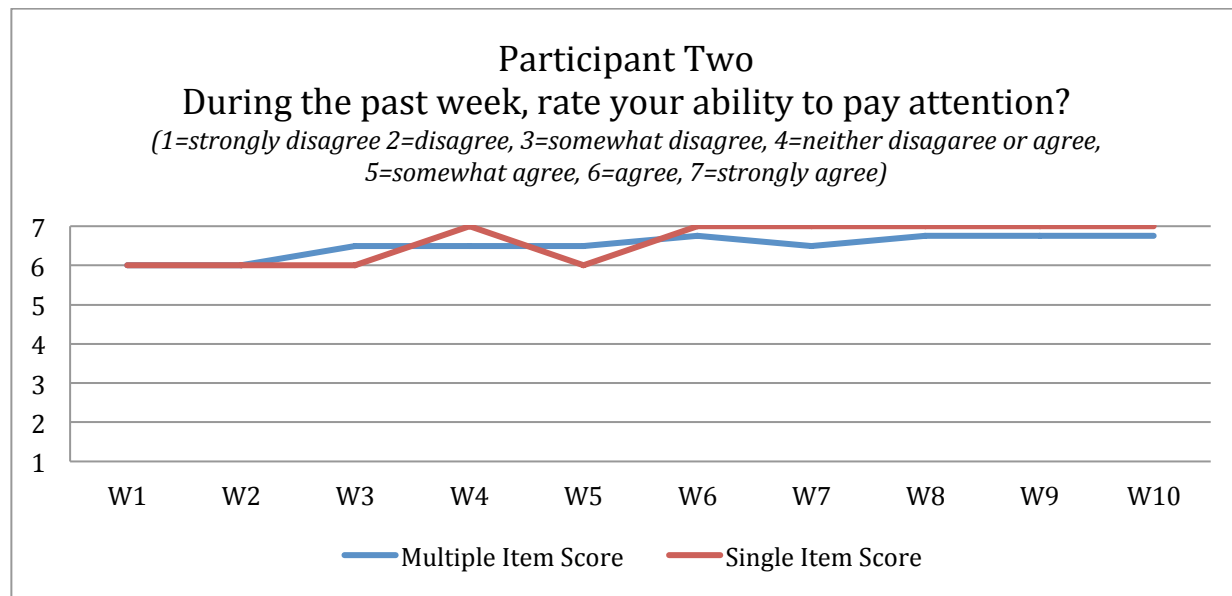


Figure 4.21. Paying attention (multiple and single item score) – P2.

of the study, having just completed a challenging performance review with his supervisor, I noted the following response he shared,

He felt that he received unfair criticism and that he did not handle it well. He observed that he did not pay attention to his breathing in the meeting, that he felt it was shallow, almost numb, and that his posture was weak.

The participant reported that he was visibly angry and that this had a negative effect on his ability to pay attention. He said that when he found himself upset, his breath was short, chest centered, and his face flushed. As a way to respond, we talked about simply noticing when difficulties arise and to pay attention to these conditions. If necessary, he had the option to take a short break to regain composure. Using breath and body awareness was a key strategy in mitigating the downward spiral. The following comment revealed the effect of the practice,

When I consciously did my breathing practice, I felt a lot more in control of myself. It was especially useful this week as I had several meetings with our global team head. I consciously did the breathing practice for 10 minutes before each meeting and I felt I was in control of my thoughts through the meetings. Another aspect I noticed this week was that I was able to let go of things which would not have been possible before. Also I was able to withhold my quick comments when one of my peer's made comments that I would normally have responded to immediately.

In time, noticing and making small adjustments were adding up to consistent and positive change. This was also helping him see things more broadly and to connect with others. The following comment puts this in perspective,

I was able to control myself in tense situations this week by holding back and paying more attention to what I am feeling. Paying attention to breath has helped me hold back my thoughts and interject only as needed during meetings.

Work was not the only area in which change was occurring. The participant said that it was common that by the end of the day he was mentally tired. His attention at home was one area that was consequently impacted, including quality time with his children. As the breath practice deepened, he reported feeling less stressed and more present to others. There was more space and give and take with the family. There was evidence that the family system was realigning. The participant stated,

I had a really good week. I tried to pay attention to the needs of my wife and children more than in the past. It was very refreshing and the change was well appreciated by the family.

As the participant was increasing his capacity to take care of himself, it was also affecting his relations with others, and in this case, with his spouse, which I recorded,

There have been several interesting behavior changes this week. One is that the participant spent four hours shopping with his wife on her birthday. This is something promised in the past but was never followed-through on. It was a good experience and he said that they would change roles when it is his birthday and do something that he has wanted to do. He has also found ways to give his son choices of how he goes about doing his homework. This is a change from the past where he said that he may have gotten mad – he created a homework incentive system and so far it is working. I am sensing that there is more flexibility in how things are done and expectations. The participant said that his wife has been giving him the freedom to work-out after work – something that was not afforded in the past. Last, the participant said that he is finding more space and energy to address things that he has not been able or willing to than previously.

Moreover, the participant's ability to pay attention was improving. Quantitatively, data showed moderate change, anecdotal and weekly feedback suggested a profound change was taking place.

Connecting with others was an aspiration that the participant expressed at the beginning of the study. He said that he wanted to improve his listening and, specifically, curtail his frequent interruption of others, something that I personally experienced during the early weeks of the study. The scores (Figure 4.22) suggest change both quantitatively and qualitatively. Scores at the beginning of the study were reported as neither agree or disagree and steadily improved to strongly agree by week nine. He had high enthusiasm at the beginning, but was slowed by a persisting cold. Despite the inconvenience, he kept-up with the breathing practice. I recorded the following,

The participant shared that he has been able to get into a daily breath practice – spending 5 to 10 minutes per sitting and that this has helped him to clear his mind more easily.

This example uncovers the importance of noticing his listening tendencies to better connect with others. Learning to listen deeply, noticing when he interrupted others, and becoming intentional about speech, was ground setting. My notes provided additional perspective,

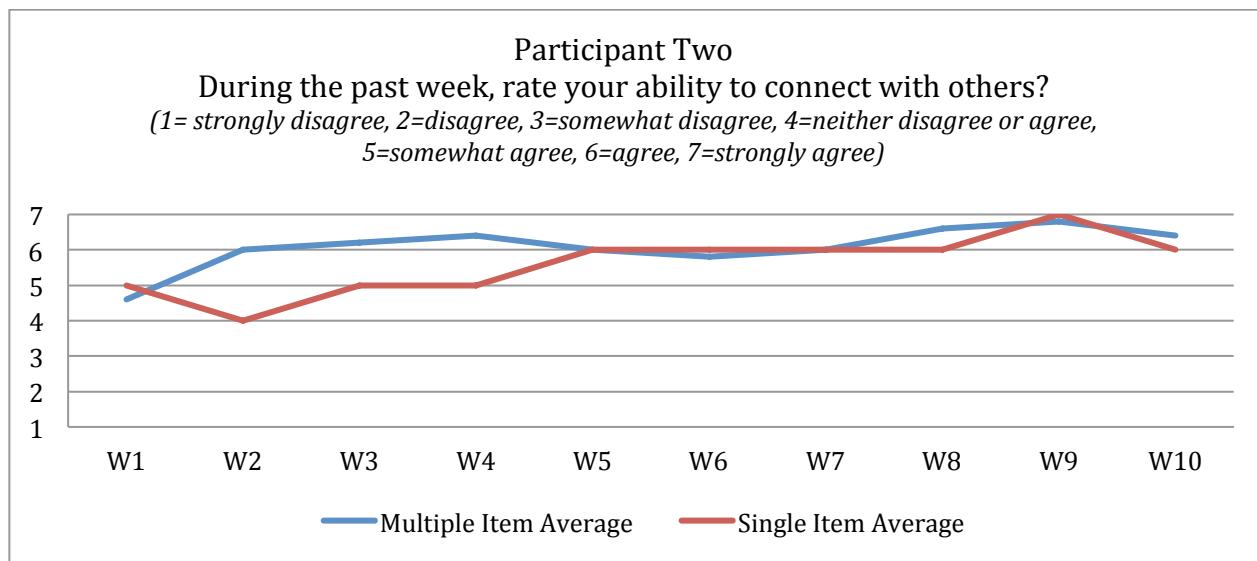


Figure 4.22. Connecting with others (multiple and single item score) – P2.

The participant shared an example today when someone was talking and he did not respond hastily but instead just listened – his response in the past would have been to finish the other person’s sentence. There was another circumstance he reported when he designated himself as the meeting facilitator but to his surprise others did not want him doing this but to participate as a peer. He said that he was able to let go of the expectation and agreed to the change. He was able to engage in a listening mode and it worked out well.

As the weeks unfolded, his increased awareness was resulting in behavior change. This was revealed in another example when he deliberately engaged in deep listening as a way to connect with others. My field notes provided additional context,

The participant shared that his nervous energy sometimes appears when interacting with others and that this has lessened. He said that he is more deliberate and is not easily provoked as he has been in the past.

During the final weeks of the study, it became evident that listening as a habit had ripened. He reported that he could be short with others, but that he was able to notice these tendencies and adjust. He was also able to use humor as a technique to reframe situations, with the participant sharing the following,

I had a good week especially with two situations that could have gotten tense. I was able to handle them by getting my point across without being aggressive. I used your suggestion of trying humor successfully with one of the situations where I expected to take on someone else's work without being consulted on it.

The participant said that the more he was able to rely on his awareness and quality of breath that it supported his ability to stay focused. By keeping focused and using humor more as a way of diffusing potentially difficult situations, he was also managing his stress more effectively.

The scores (Figure 4.23) showed a consistent and steady climb in the ability to manage stress, improving from somewhat agree to the agree level over the course of the study. Stress manifested itself in a variety of ways including interacting with others, driving change at the cost of interrupting others, the demands of young children, and feeling out of touch with his body and how stress manifested itself. Cumulatively, these factors suggested that the participant's stress levels were high. The participant also had a tendency to multi-task, which was a source of distraction. At one point, the participant revealed that he could be on a conference call, checking his email, and talking with someone who came into his office, all at the same time. This tendency revealed itself in his personal life as well, reporting that he could be doing multiple

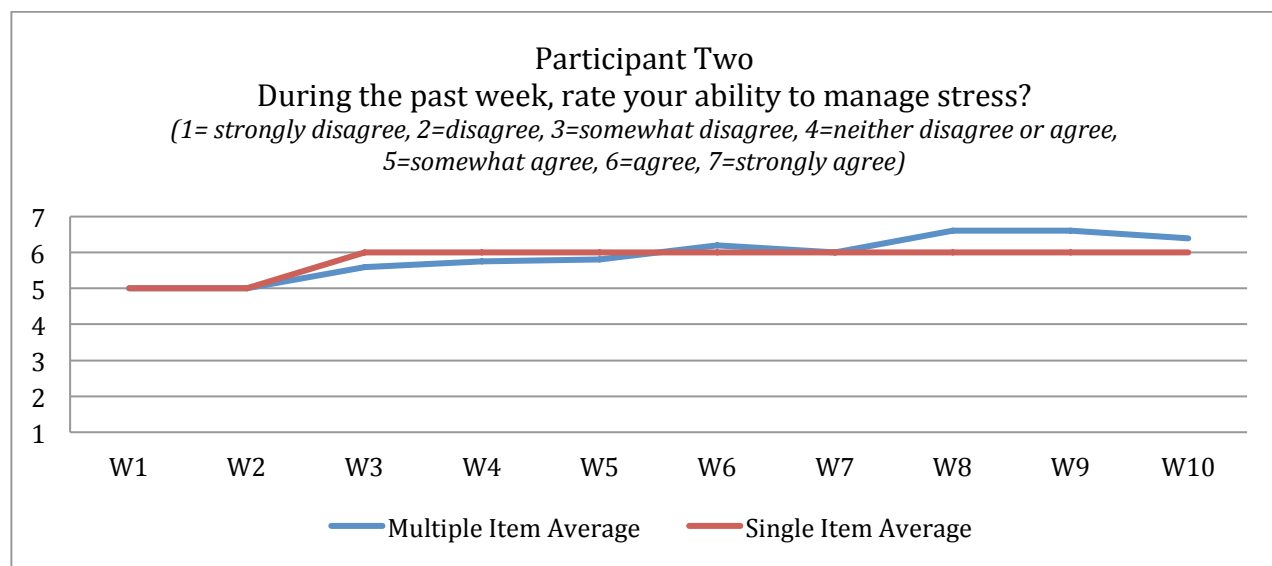


Figure 4.23. Managing stress (multiple and single item score) – P2.

things at once such as being on the phone while driving or while watching television while talking with others. I noted, “The participant said that he is most challenged in not being fully present when he is with others, especially during one to one conversations. It is during this time that he can easily let his mind drift.” His inability to be present was adding to tension and feelings of mindlessness. The coaching meetings revealed that he had strong expectations of others and these thoughts often got in the way of addressing how things really are, rather than what they should be. He reported that he made the connection that as he paid more attention to his breath and, particularly in respect to judging, that he was better able to let go. At one point, the participant reported, “I had a very good week. I started back on doing my longer breath practices. It helped me relax a lot and feel calm in tense situations.” These seemed to be a relationship between consistent breath practice, letting go, and managing stress.

By the end of the study, the participant reported that his overall stress level reduced, and that he was more present and better able to focus, both at work and home. My observations were consistent with the participant's remarks in that his ability to see things more objectively. At the one-month follow-up meeting, the participant said that there were a couple of moments that could have led to challenging interactions with others, but that he was able to notice what was happening and not get emotionally involved. He seemed to be better able to stay grounded and see things with a broader point of view.

By week three, Participant Two's ability to enhance his perspective rose steadily, moving from somewhat agree to the strongly agree level over course of the study (Figure 4.24). Feedback included a greater ability to build on the ideas of others. One example that he reported was his supervisor asking him to assume two new direct reports. The participant said that prior to the practices his immediate response would have been to quickly say yes. As this situation

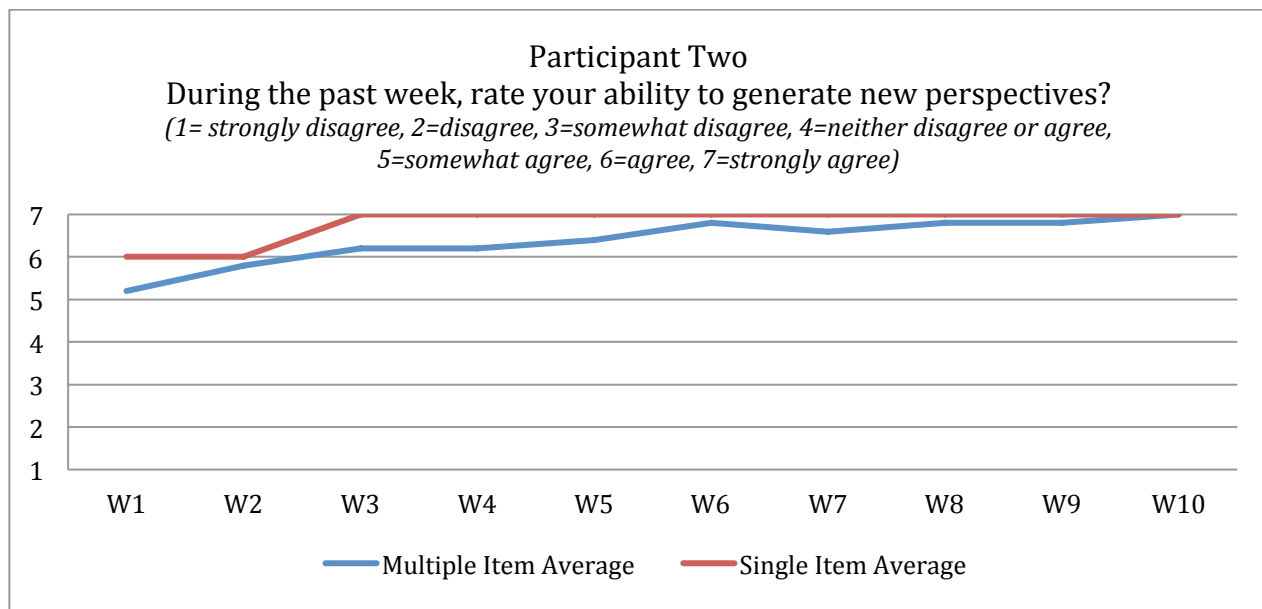


Figure 4.24. Multiplying perspectives (multiple and single item score) – P2.

unfolded, he said that he welcomed the opportunity, but he asked for a two-month period to plan their integration. He said that he wanted to think through how they can make the most impact possible, and to do so require planning. Moreover, the ability to see contexts within the wider context was supported through deep listening and an increased willingness to let go of expectations. In turn, he reported overall that this helped him to become a better leader.

The leader ability score reported a steady and significant climb, making an initial bump at week two, when he reported to neither disagree to agree, and rising to the high score of strongly agree at week five (Figure 4.25). Several things appeared to happen at these intervals, including an increase in practice frequency, a lengthening of the daily breathing exercise and the body scan, and an improved ability to connect with others. His increased self-awareness instigated a change from a highly directive approach to a facilitative one. More broadly, the participant reported that he was better able to focus more on the quality of interaction and less on the outcome, more willing to let it emerge based on input from others. He was also using humor as a way to engage others. Interestingly, at the one-month post meeting, he reported that people

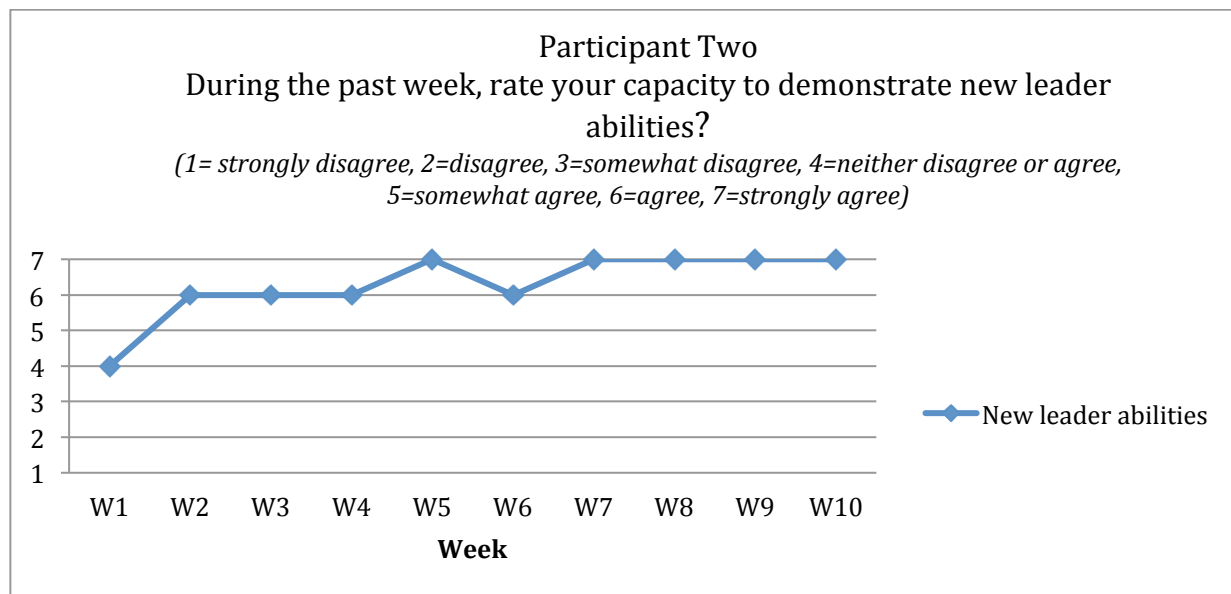


Figure 4.25. Leader abilities (single item score) – P2.

were more “chatty” with him. He said that he has taken this as a good sign in that people were finding him more approachable. He said that he was staying centered for longer periods of time and that he continued to notice body stress. My observation was that he has found new power directing his attention and this was giving him new and untapped energy in working with himself and managing his emotions; overall, an improved ability to relate to others and supply new leader abilities.

Summary. The participant entered the study at a time of high transition having returned from a four-month east coast assignment that significantly stretched his leadership. He meditated previously, but did not practice frequently. This background aided a rapid acceleration of the practices. He had a platform from which to build, as well as the confidence that it could have positive effects at work, at home, and on his general well being. Some of the most salient themes included:

- A transformed relationship with breath—he originally reported as being distracted when counting to a relaxed approach characterized by high focus.

- Initial body tension in the shoulder, eye, and lower back area to no tension by week eight.
- Increases in all five categories of the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, with improvements in ability to observe, and nonreactivity to the inner experience.
- Score improvements based on the Mindfulness Survey including breath awareness, breath coordination, observing, opening, and suspending judgment.

In respect to the weekly surveys, all categories showed improvement. Paying attention and multiplying perspectives showed the least score improvement. The ability to act deliberately and less reactively was a key improvement area in his ability to lead. This included being able to see contexts more broadly, connecting with others, and bringing others along through a facilitative approach that relied on deep listening. Moreover, the results suggested that a combination of consistent practice frequency, an experimental and curious orientation, and deep reflection, helped to spur positive change and new habits of being.

Participant Three

Participant Three is director of institutional giving for a human care service organization. Her role includes leadership for a team of three plus an individual outside of the group responsible for government relations and a hunger network. She has been in her current role for nine months. Additional responsibilities include training managers who co-write grants. She is currently balancing dozens of annual grants using a new model for the organization. This roll-out has added significant stress to her work load because it represented a significant change in how the managers approach their work. As a result, her role relies heavily on influencing with little authority. She must rely on her people skills to drive organizational change. She noted that she often over-commits, maxing out her time and energy, which in turn causes stress and burn

out. She reported that she has a tendency to take on too much work, including her participation on several boards of directors for education and women empowerment programs. Another area of stress includes making her future daughter a priority—she began the study when she was about six months pregnant and is concerned about how she will juggle commitments after she returns to work. She reported stress in relation to a direct report who has been with the organization for many years. She reports that her stress level is an 11 on a 10-point scale in this regard. Last, the participant shared several goals she hoped to achieve, including confidently responding to challenging situations at work, managing time more efficiently, preparing to meet the needs of a growing family, and more generally, increasing her well-being.

Practice frequency. Practice frequency in respect to breath awareness and breath coordination mirrored itself over the course of the study. Initially, she averaged between three to four times daily for the first week, then she increased to more than five times daily for breath coordination. After a dip to three to four times daily for both breath awareness and coordination, she leveled off between three to five times daily from week five through the remainder of the study (Figure 4.26). The participant had not had a formal meditation practice prior to the study, although she did practice yoga regularly. The initial feedback suggested an immediate effect. She stated,

The most noticeable difference I observed in the last week was the frequency of my breath awareness and coordination. Whether I was sitting in contentious meetings, drafting an email to a grant partner, or listening to a member of my team tell me about a challenge they faced, I found myself a) acutely aware of my breathing, and b) using this awareness to modulate my inhalations and exhalations to better connect with the task at hand. Breathing more deeply allowed me to listen more deeply, and to more meaningfully engage with others.

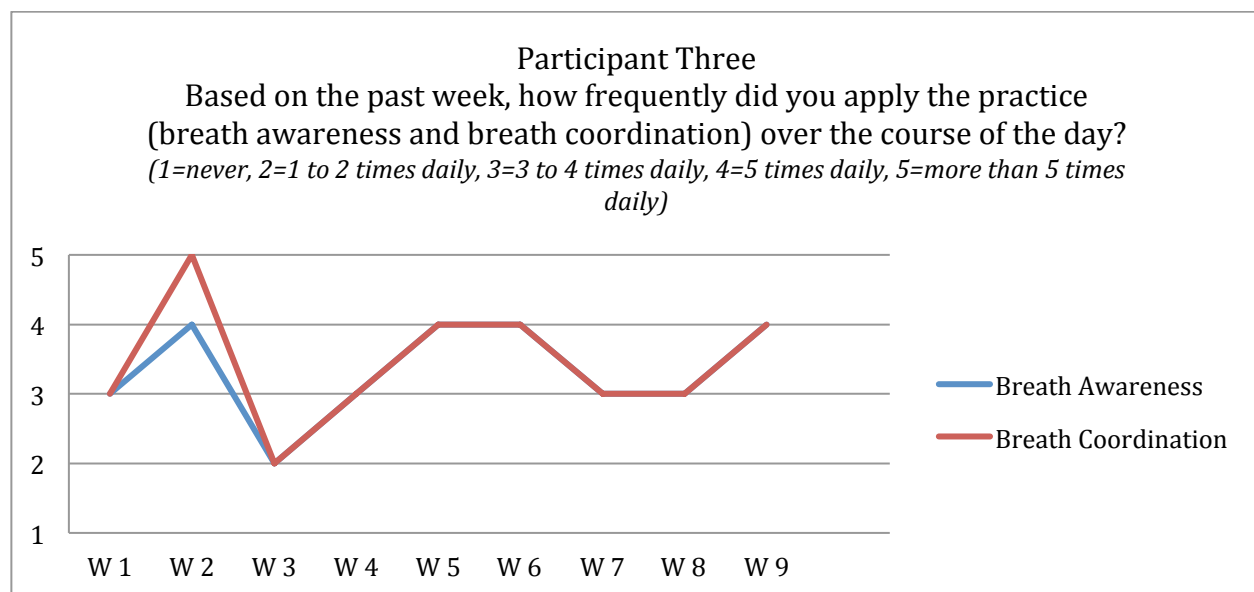


Figure 4.26. Practice Frequency: Breath awareness and breath coordination – P3.

I observed that when the participant discussed her breath, she typically included descriptions of awareness and coordination. This was not an uncommon description compared with other participants. She seemed to intuitively understand how both aspects were intimately linked, and as a result, was quickly able to develop the practices.

Early discussions at the coaching meetings included dialogue about the feasibility of a contemplative workplace. In other words, in a hurried and rushed work-life, is it possible to have a relationship that is contemplative in nature. I reflected,

[Participant] seemed to have found a rhythm early on, with the breathing exercise in particular, and all of the practices, in general. A take away she revealed was thinking that the workplace can be reflective. This was a significant statement in that she had questioned if the workplace can truly be contemplative.

Throughout the course of the study, the participant consistently applied the practices. There were times of regression, particularly around weeks three and four. She was quickly able to re-start the practices through a simple daily exercise that helped keep her centered. She said,

Unlike last week, where I felt rushed, and didn't devote the time and space needed to adequately incorporate breathing exercises and other mindfulness practices, this week I

was really able to slow down and be present. Specifically, I found time each morning to do a deep breathing exercise, slowly turned the key in the ignition before starting my car, and really took time to notice feeling in my feet while walking (more slowly and purposefully than usual) down the halls at work.

Turning the ignition key slowly was a purposeful way that she found helpful in directing attention. Since the car represented a natural time of transition (i.e., home to work), it provided a practical way to keep breathing at the top of mind; further, this exercise helped her stay grounded. In the ensuing weeks, we added an exercise that facilitated others ways of slowing down such as taking slow deliberate steps. She shared later that she found this exercise to be helpful because it helped mark the transition between wrapping up one task (i.e., meeting) and focusing her breath before starting something new.

The observing, suspending judgment, and opening practices all had a higher than average practice rates (Figure 4.27). The participant exercised each of the three practices between three and five times daily. The opening practices initially spiked, from three to four times daily to more than five times daily, and averaged five times daily for the remainder of the study. Both observing and suspending judgment showed a fairly high practice frequency with an average of three to four times daily for the first three weeks and then increasing to five times daily for the duration of the study. The participant reflected,

One thing that struck me throughout the last week is how much I observe my interactions (as if I were outside looking in) with those around me. While I hadn't previously been conscious of this as a mindfulness practice, it is something I engage in all the time. The time I notice this most is when I'm leading meetings--I constantly check in with myself to consider the way I'm communicating, how well I'm encouraging others to share their perspectives, whether I'm truly listening, and if I'm suspending judgment.

By focusing on what may be obvious, but not conscious, helped to make things explicit. She said that she was reassured because it confirmed what she was thinking but had never really acknowledged. In this way, she increased her awareness of herself and others.

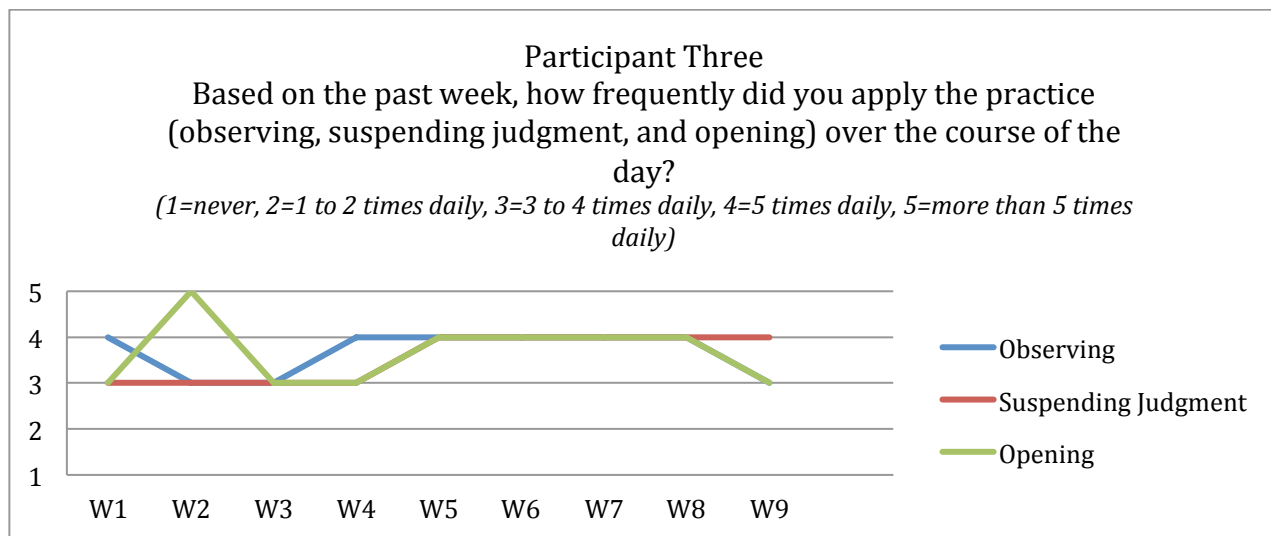


Figure 4.27. Practice frequency: Observing, suspending judgment, opening – P3.

In summary, the participant exercised the breath awareness and breath coordination practices between one to two times daily at the low end and three to four times daily at the higher end. The observing, suspending judgment, and opening practices were typically exercised three to four times daily at the lower end and five times daily for most of the weeks. While the participant reported some regression, she remained committed throughout the study.

Breathing exercise results. At the beginning of the study, the participant said that it was good to slow down with the breathing exercise and that it felt relaxing (Figure 4.28). She appreciated the opportunity to be still. She said that she was aware of people talking around her and this was distracting, but that she was still able to focus. She also reported one of her eyes burning, a similar comment that she made at the end of the study. Throughout the study, the participant kept pace with the practices; she was consistent, curious, and a learner. At our final meeting, it struck me that the participant was able to describe her breath in detail, with accuracy, and an awareness of its significance. She commented on how natural her breath felt, and that when compared to her first exercises, that it no longer required effort. This exercise had become a habit, a way of being. She said that she noticed sounds, as well as sensations, such as the light



Figure 4.28. Breathing exercise at pre, post, and 1-month post period – P3.

breeze touching her face, but that it was not distracting. Finally, she said that she was able to modulate the rhythm of her breath and settle into a normal flow. Overall, I observed easiness as she did the exercise, and an increased ability to experience her breath in a deeper way, which was similar to the increased awareness she gained in noticing body sensations.

Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire. Results for Participant Three for the observing category showed an increase of nearly 10% from the pre to post period, increasing from sometimes true to often true, and it remained at that level through the one-month post period (Figure 4.29). In the describe category, data for the participant increased 3% and it remained unchanged at the one-month post period, essentially remaining unchanged at the very often or always true level. In the act with awareness category, the participant reported a 5% increase from pre to post period, or often true to very often or always true, and was unchanged at the one-month post period. Data for non-judgment of the inner experience did not change and

was reported as often true and increased 5% at the one-month post period to the very often or always true level. Non-reactivity to the inner experience increased 14% from the pre to post periods, starting at often true and increasing just 3% at the one-month post period. Overall, these results accounted for positive change in all categories.

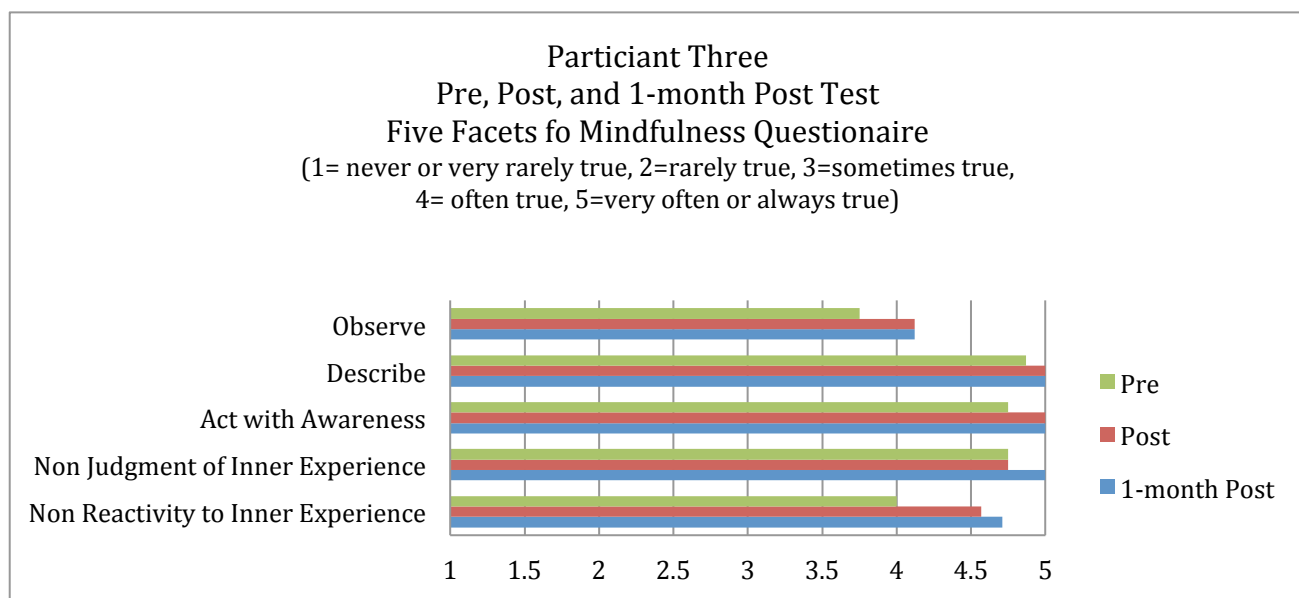


Figure 4.29. Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire – P3.

Participant Three began the coaching process with high scores, most at the often true levels. Despite a strong baseline, the participant was a student of the practices, often showing up to meetings with new insights about her behavior. One of her early reflections highlighted her willingness to see things from new perspectives,

One thing that struck me throughout the last week is how much I observe my interactions (as if I were outside looking in) with those around me. While I hadn't previously been conscious of this as a mindfulness practice, it is something I engage in all the time. The time I notice this most is when I'm leading meetings--I constantly check in with myself to consider the way I'm communicating, how well I'm encouraging others to share their perspectives, whether I'm truly listening, and if I'm suspending judgment.

The participant was willing to engage with others as an opportunity to learn about herself and it was one of her greatest strengths. From the beginning, she presented herself as ambitious, and

my observations attested to her comment. However, it was apparent that the combination of work responsibilities, external board work, and her pregnancy led to tiredness, and this may have caused regression. She stated,

This was an interesting week, as I made progress in some areas, but regressed in others. With the 3rd trimester of pregnancy upon me, I found myself much more tired and fatigued than usual. This decrease in energy caused me to focus just on the essential tasks required to get through the work-day, which often meant de-prioritizing or not carving out space for daily breathing exercises.

One of the ways we approached this was paying attention to these energy wanes and to notice her daily needs (i.e., needing to rest, slow down). In some cases, taking care meant modifying unrealistic expectations given all that she hoped to achieve before she left the office for the day. This effort may have been reflected in her increased score for non-reactivity to the inner experience, which improved by 14 percent, or an improvement from often true to approaching very often or always true.

Her openness to experiencing discomfort afforded her more opportunities to improve because she was willing to risk. She was willing to “lean into” her challenges as a way to encounter them rather than avoid them. Thus, her drive orientation and curiosity propelled moderate to high scores on the Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire even higher.

Mindfulness survey. Participant Three’s scores on the Mindfulness Survey increased in all categories, with the sub-scale, suspending judgment, experiencing less dramatic change (Figures 4.30 and Figure 4.31). The ability to coordinate breath increased 133% from the pre to post period, or from somewhat disagree to strongly agree, before it decreased 14% back to the agree level, at the one-month post period. Breath awareness increased 27% from the pre to post period, or from somewhat agree to strongly agree, then it reduced by 14% at the one-month post

period, or the agree level. Observing increased 8% from the pre to post period, and then it increased another 7% at the one-month post period, essential beginning at agree level and

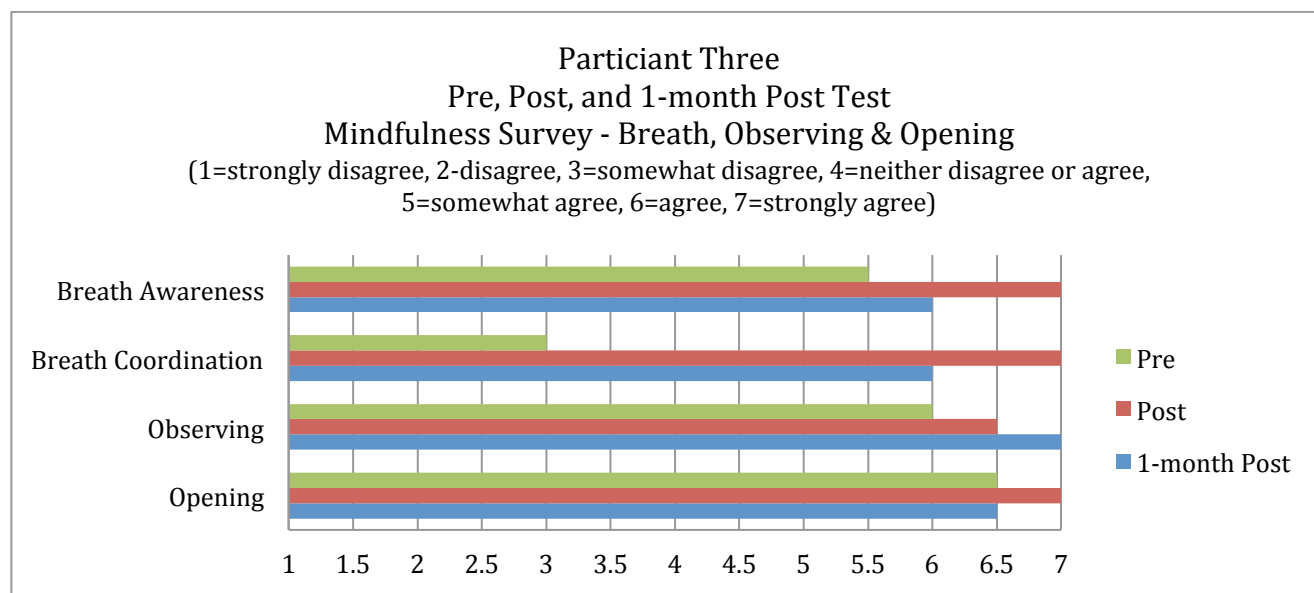


Figure 4.30. Mindfulness survey—breath, observing and opening – P3.

increasing to strongly agree by the end of the study. Opening increased 7% from the pre to post period, with the gains regressing by the one-month period, or from the agree level to strongly agree and then returning to the agree level.

The three aspects of suspending judgment (noticing, letting go, and accepting) were less conclusive quantitatively. The scores for noticing increased by 30% from the pre to post period, or from agree to strongly agree, and then it remained unchanged at the one-month follow-up (Figure 4.31). Letting go decreased by 33% from the pre to post period, or from somewhat disagree to disagree, and then by the one-month post period, she reported it as neither disagree or agree. Accepting remained unchanged, beginning and ending at the strongly agree level, or the highest possible score.

Several factors contributed to the changes in the scores. For example, from the beginning of the study, the participant felt that she did not regularly judge others as was reflected with the

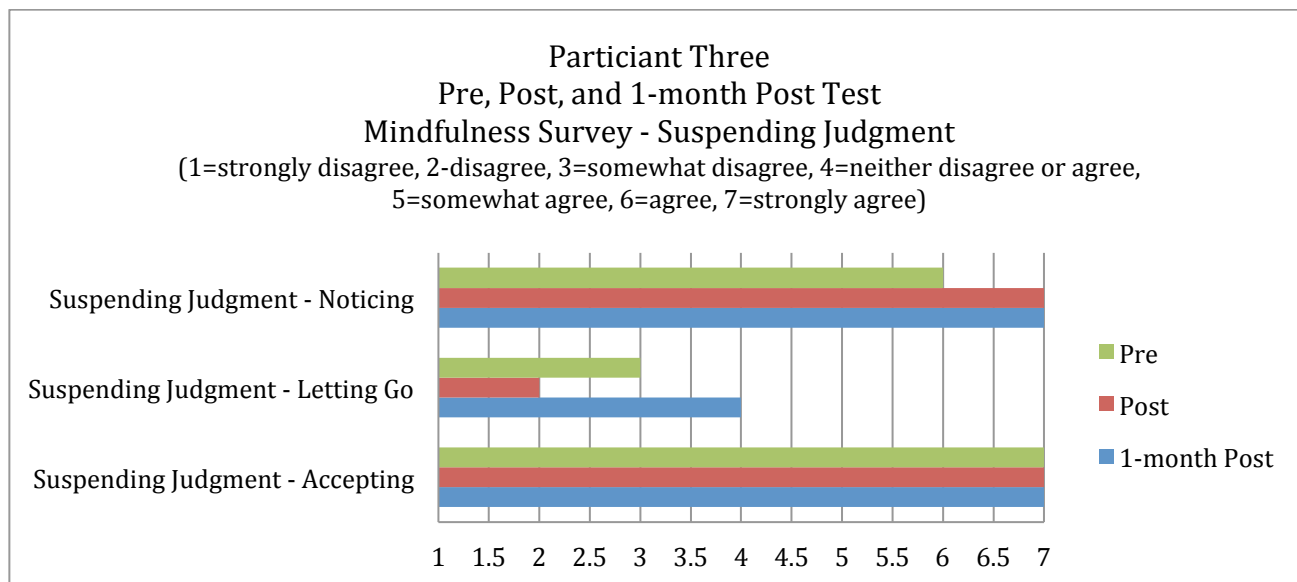


Figure 4.31. Mindfulness survey—suspending judgment – P3.

highest score possible (suspending judgment-accepting). Despite the high scoring, she was able to develop new awareness over the course of the study. She stated,

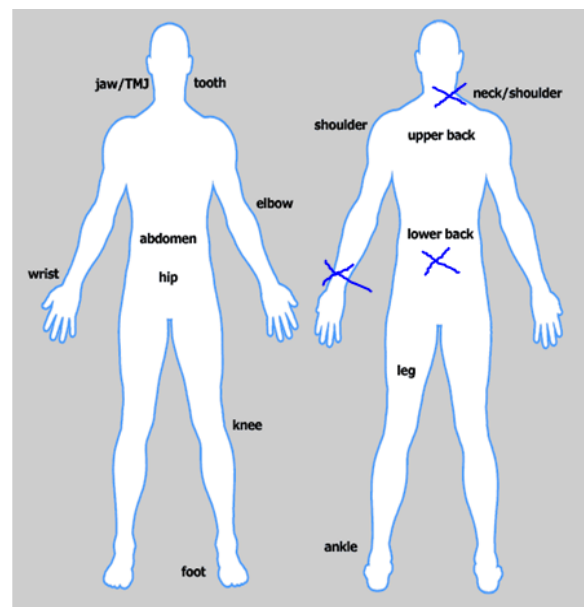
Last week I learned that there are times when it's okay to judge (and recognize that judgment), but that it's essential to let the judgment flow out just as I let it flow in. That was a big "Aha!" moment for me. This week, when meeting with [direct report]--a direct report who exhibits defiant behavior, and doesn't follow established department protocol--I found there were times when I was unable to avoid judgment, but I was able to let go of that judgment once our interaction ended.

Interestingly, the participant said that she was able to let go of the judgment once the interaction ended. Letting go was the one score that decreased before increasing significantly. Self-awareness may have heightened during the study, thus reflecting a lesser, but possibly, more accurate score. The participant actively used the practices to increase her ability to suspend judgment; this was accomplished through awareness of her breath and making in the moment adjustments as a path toward better leadership. She stated,

Since beginning to use Leading as a Way of Being, I have gained great clarity about working with [participant]. I've been able to use breath awareness and coordination to listen more deeply to [direct report]. I've also been able make decisions about his performance and impact on our team without being bogged down by judgment.

These examples helped illuminate change that took place. Also, the survey instrument may not have been sensitive enough to pick up these changes relative to what was occurring. On the other hand, if the participant did not have accurate self-awareness, a more sensitive instrument may not have made that much of a difference; it was through the coaching and reflective process that new meaning and nuances were uncovered.

Body awareness. Participant Three reported two types of body stress and tension: interpersonal and computer stress, as well as stress related to pregnancy (Figure 4.32). She



Week	Symptom (Ache/Pain)
2	Neck/Shoulder (general tension); Hip (pregnancy stress); Lower back (discomfort)
4	Neck/Shoulder (stress – feelings of overload/over-commitment)
6	Neck/Shoulder (posture/computer; can remember tension as far back as High School)
8	No reported stress or tension
10	No reported stress or tension

Figure 4.32. Body awareness map – P3.

described feeling overwhelmed and overcommitted, as well as experiencing strain from computer use. The second type of body stress was pregnancy related. Symptoms often appeared in her hips and lower back areas and were a result physical strain on a changing body.

Throughout the study, there were occasional references to pregnancy discomfort, but by week six, nearly all tension dissipated. By the end of the study she reported, I feel free of stress, and attribute this to my use of mindfulness practices over the last nine weeks. Carving out time to breathe deeply, coordinate my breath, listen intentionally, let go of judgment, and open myself to the ideas and perspectives of others, has made a meaningful and measurable impact on my personal and professional life. I know these practices will serve me well as a leader and a soon to be mother.

The participant's transformation from a moderate level of body stress to none while being in her last weeks of pregnancy was no less than amazing. Around the middle of the study, I inquired if she planned to take breathing classes (i.e., Lamaze). She said that the daily breathing exercises that she was already conducting were providing her enough support to give her the confidence that it was not necessary. Toward the end of the study, she said that she and her husband attended a pregnancy class that introduced breathing techniques. She said that during and after the class, that she found herself helping her husband incorporate the breath practices she was already exercising. She said that knowing how to describe her breath to her husband was powerful and lent itself to a shared experience. Moreover, the participant's regular and consistent use of the practices showed significant progress in respect to alleviating symptoms of body stress, suggesting that the practices may hold promise for women who are pregnant and open to contemplative approaches to enhance their well-being.

Effects of the abilities. Participants Three's score for the weekly surveys—the weekly reflection report and the weekly practice report —were high from the start. This included highest scores possible in three categories: paying attention, connecting with others, and

multiplying perspectives, or equal to the strongly agree level (Figures 4.33, 4.34, and 4.35). The ability to pay attention had minimal variance and it remained elevated. One question I had early

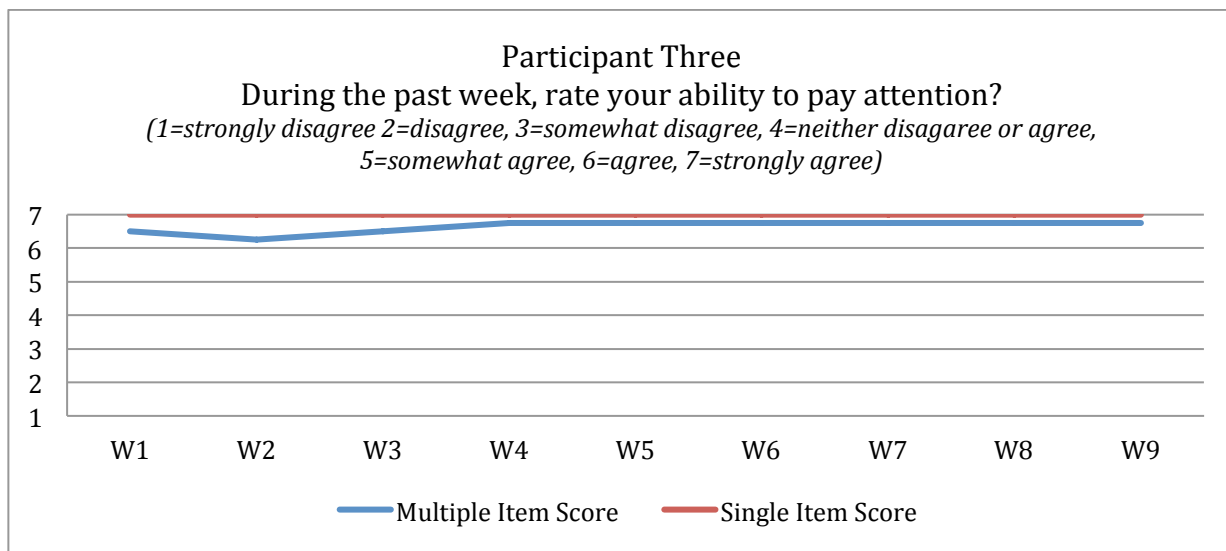


Figure 4.33. Paying attention (multiple and single item score) – P3.

on was accuracy in respect to self-awareness. There seemed to be gaps in terms of how she was scoring herself and what I observed. During the coaching meetings, the participant was open to exploring a host of topics. Perhaps it was during these times that she was able to deconstruct meaning and explore new ones that lead to a more accurate observation of self. On one hand, the instrument may not have been sensitive enough to pick up these nuances. While on the other hand, an abstracted sense of self may not have made a difference in discerning these subtle adjustments.

The ability to pay attention also seemed to have a positive effect in her ability to connect with others, an aspiration that the participant identified at the onset (Figure 4.34). She stated, One of the priorities I identified at the beginning of this process was utilizing mindfulness practices (breath, insights, deep listening, action) in my interactions with [direct report], one of my direct reports. This week I had multiple interactions with him, and found that while I was easily able to incorporate breath awareness and coordination when meeting with [direct report], suspending judgment was more difficult. During one instance, in particular, I felt we had talked through an issue and identified a good solution (which he actually came up with), and were on the same page with implementation of this solution.

It was evident that the participant focused on being present and was able to notice how the practices were showing up, and then using this knowledge and insight to relate with her direct

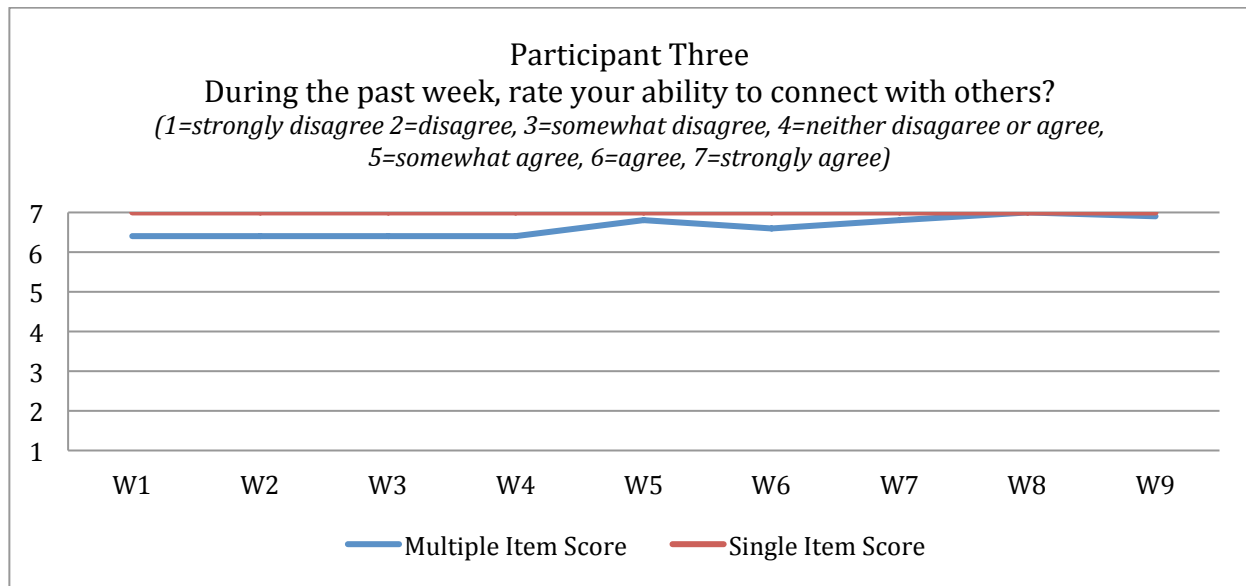


Figure 4.34. Connecting with others (multiple and single item score) – P3.

report. As her ability to stay centered increased, she was able to better observe judging tendencies. At the same time, she appeared more willing to let go of these impulses. The participant's orientation to experiment was propelling her to new levels of self-awareness and connecting with others.

One of the underlying assumptions that the participant had was that all people could grow and develop, and that if she could create the right environment to inspire them, they would change. She said that she had, for as long as she could remember, operated with this belief. This was another area in which she reported making a breakthrough. She mentally shifted to the possibility that, perhaps, not everyone could change despite working for a highly effective leader. The situation with the direct report culminated several weeks later. The person was let go from the organization due to a lapse in judgment that led to an unethical decision. She

expressed great disappointment in the time she invested supporting and mentoring him, to see him choose to do something so clearly wrong. The participant said that the helped her to better move through the situation.

Participant Three's stress level resulted from several things (Figure 4.35). One was in respect to her direct reports. Another reason was the amount of work still needing to be completed in anticipation of her leave of absence. She discussed how she placed pressure on herself to have everything taken care of, but there was still much to accomplish. Her need to have things in place before leaving had a consequence on quality time at home. She said,

This week I have been focusing on reducing stress by creating smoother transitions--especially at the end of the day going from the office to home. Each evening this week, as I prepared to end my day in the office (and inevitably felt like I had just one more thing to accomplish), I asked myself, "What am I holding on to?" and "Why am I holding on to it?" I'm realizing that while I thought I rarely imposed self-judgment, I clearly do.

Participant Three was becoming better able to self-correct in terms of identifying what was

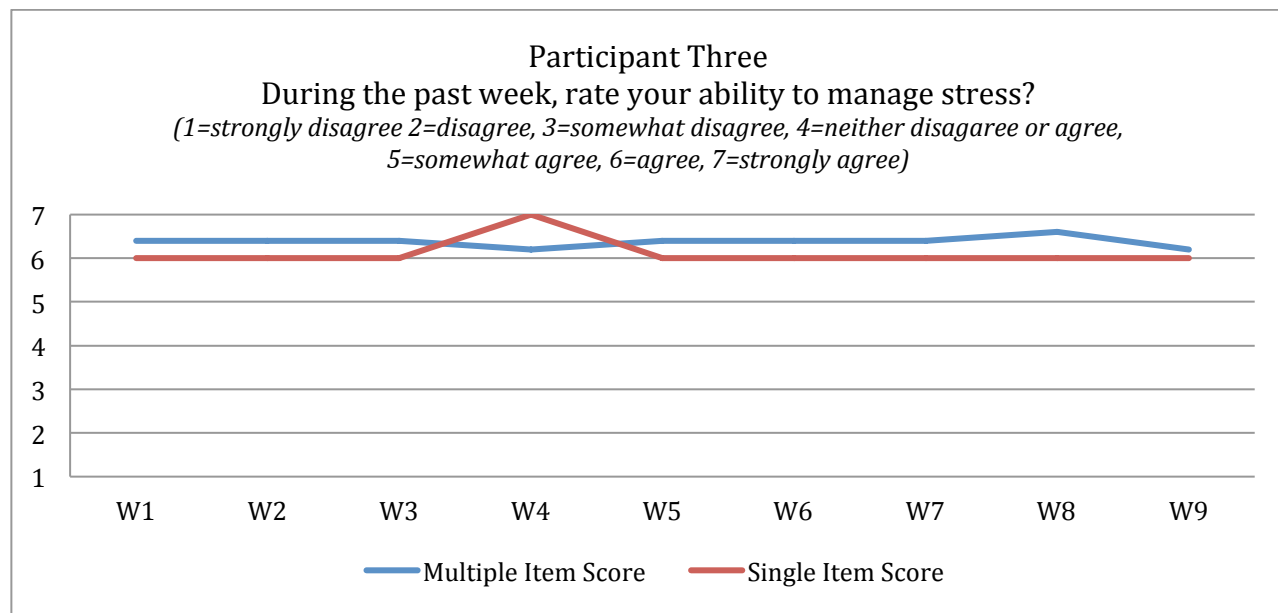


Figure 4.35. Managing stress (multiple and single item score) – P3.

important and what was not, and she was able to do something about it. This realization helped her to slow down and think critically about what she really needed to accomplish. She stated,

Each evening I judge whether I achieved enough, and I am now working to let go of that judgment in order to create smoother transitions and establish the work/life balance I seek.

The strategy of asking reflective questions, coupled with the breathing exercise, was working. By the end of the study, the participant said that an overarching take away of the practices had been her ability to not get so tied up in others emotions – she was better able to let go of attachment with greater ease. Additionally, she said that since beginning the practices that she never reached a “super stressed” level that she previously experienced. The practices helped to manage her stress and were supporting her ability to make transition. Remarkably, she said that since beginning the process, she did not have any of the chest tension or stomach aches (tightness) from being pregnant which she had previously experienced. She said that she still felt anxious and worried at times, but she was able to see things more clearly. Moreover, the weekly survey score was unable to pick up these subtleties, despite the evidence that stress was being managed more effectively and her well-being was enhanced.

The participant’s ability to manage daily stress supported other practices, specifically multiplying perspectives. Her scores for multiplying perspectives were very high (or equal to the strongly agree level that continued throughout the study), leaving little room for quantitative improvement (Figure 4.36). Again, the instrument may not been sensitive enough to pick up subtle changes as they occurred. The following participant reflection highlighted how the practices, when integrated, can support perspective-taking,

My morning breathing exercise allows me to carve out time to get centered and focused before the day really begins; being aware of and coordinating my breath--especially during meetings--helps me to listen deeply to others and remain open to new perspectives and ideas; operating without judgment has been especially transformative, as it has provided me with deeper clarity about the behavior and intentions of those around me in both professional and personal settings.

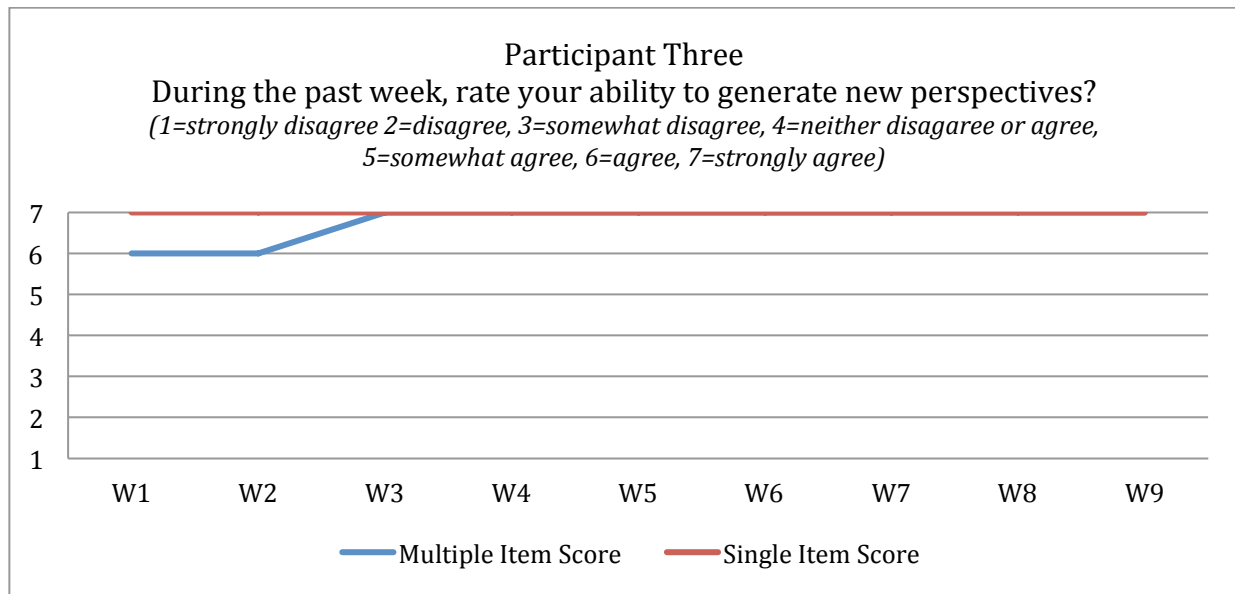


Figure 4.36. Multiplying perspectives (multiple and single item score) – P3.

At the end of the study, it was evident that the participant was at a much better place in terms of being ready for her leave of absence. She was able to prepare the team, including training her temporary replacement. She stated,

In anticipation of this extended leave I was able to work with my team to ensure a smooth transition. I took time to listen to them and really remain open to their ideas and suggestions for moving our work forward in my absence. I feel free of stress, and attribute this to my use of mindfulness practices over the last nine weeks.

Without the practices, it may have been more difficult to be open to the suggestions from others.

Her statements reflected that she was ready and excited for the transition, despite being wary from winding down work and being pregnant – the following week, she delivered a baby girl.

More broadly, the participant's ability to reflect based on her statements suggested an increase in the abilities. Her thinking became more inclusive and team oriented. She was more discerning as a leader and judged others less. Interestingly, she viewed her ability to transition from one task to the next as being related to suspending judgment because she was more present. These improvements were supporting her overall leadership. Quantitatively, the scores relating to new leader abilities were superlative and equal to the highest score of strongly agree for all

weeks (Figure 4.37). If one was only looking at the weekly score, a quick impression is that change did not occur. The qualitative data suggested that this could not be further from what happened. Her willingness to ask herself hard questions were an integral part of her growth, particularly about what is a leader and how can her role support the performance of others. At about the mid-way point of the study, I reflected,

What is she holding onto and why,” and why she is trying to “jam in” as many tasks and to-do’s at the end of the day as possible or have them spill over to evening work. She added the question, “How am I judging myself?” More broadly, [participant] is asking herself more questions about her leadership, i.e., “What is the role of the leader on the team?” This suggests that she may be making more connections with leading as a way of being as she spoke about the emphasis on modeling and leading by example.

A direct way that the participant’s perception of leadership was evolving was during the direct

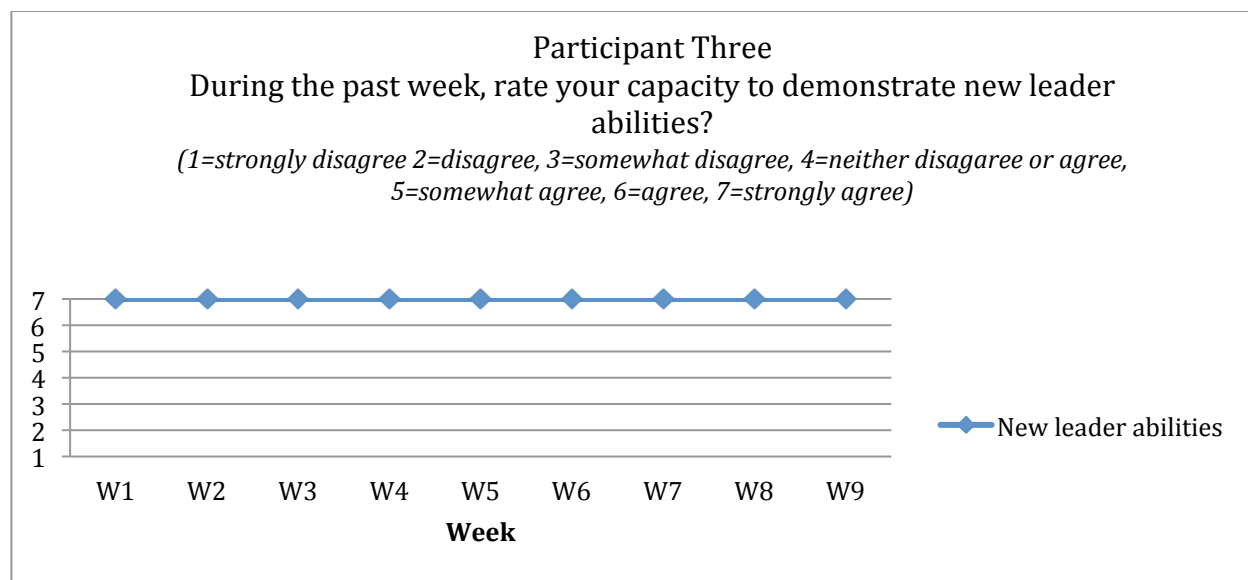


Figure 4.37. Leader abilities (single item score) – P3.

report’s performance review process. Prior to the debacle with her direct report, a performance plan was put in place. She was concerned about his reaction when she communicated the plan.

Fortunately, the mindful practices had taken hold at this critical time. She stated,

In the last week I was faced with a challenging situation that culminated with a combination of aggressive and unacceptable behaviors by [direct report]. While his actions were disruptive and offensive, I was grateful for the mindfulness tools I was able to use in assessing and responding to his performance issues. Because of the work I’ve

done over the last 6 weeks I was able to create the space needed (without getting tied up with [direct report's] bad behavior) to determine a plan of action free from judgment and undue stress. I felt empowered to make a decision about this situation that considered the needs of the agency and my team.

The participant's leadership thinking was expanding with her actions coming from a more confident and resilient place. The practices were supporting her ability to suspend judgment, which, in turn, facilitated clearer decision-making and communication. These were significant strides in her leadership journey.

At the time of our last coaching meeting, the participant reflected on why she thought it would be beneficial to participate in the study. She admitted that she was unsure of what to expect, but thought that it would be good and could lead to a more mindful and thoughtful approach to leadership. She said that an overarching take-away had been feeling clearer on how she managed others and seeing the situation for what it is, rather than what she thought it should be. Being able to move through transitions more easily (with the support of the breathing exercise) helped to free the false expectations of others and relate with others in new ways. She said that she was less apt to get "tied up" in others emotions and could separate from them more quickly. She added that during meetings, she was more open to others and their perspectives. This included a willingness to speak up and encouraging others to notice their own judging tendencies, and being willing to say something, reinforcing the importance of modeling.

In respect to feeling connected with others, she said that being able to see the broader perspective had improved her leadership. She said that she is now aware that she was, at times, not fully present. Additionally, she said that prior to the study, she was unable to get beyond her own wants and needs, and was unable to perceive sufficient team needs. She said that she is now able to see things more clearly. In this way, her level of consciousness increased—extending beyond self to others. She said that she has been able to grow as a leader by being able to really

hear what others were communicating and embracing their ideas (she reported that she did not do this as much previously). She said that she is less reactive and does not get drawn into drama as easily. Moreover, while the weekly survey did not tap into these nuanced and leadership-changing transformations, her testament speaks to how she was able to incorporate the practices into daily encounters, thus serving as a catalyst in how she relates with herself and others.

Summary. Participant Three was curious and highly motivated. She entered the study while being six months pregnant desiring to improve her leader abilities as well as to effectively transition her work life in anticipation of a growing family. She is a practitioner of yoga but had little formal exposure to mindfulness principles. Despite some days when she did not keep pace with the practices, overall she was consistent. She reported fairly high frequency scores, often exercising each of the practices three or more times daily. Some of the overarching themes included:

- Being able to describe her breath in a general nature to a detailed and nuanced way that emphasized a natural and even flow and an ability to not be distracted by others;
- Increases in all five categories on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, typically improving from sometimes true to often true or often true to very often true;
- Increases in all Mindfulness Survey scores, with the ability to coordinate her breath as changing dramatically, improving by 133%, or from somewhat agree to strongly agree;
- All body stress was reported gone by week eight.

The weekly survey scores were very high from the start (agree or the strongly agree level), and largely remained unchanged for the duration of the study. The survey instruments may not have been able to pick up subtle changes. Another possibility could have been the participant's self-

awareness, which may have influenced the self-reporting. More broadly, the improvements in leader abilities including deepening her listening, connecting with others in meaningful ways, moving from a self to other orientation, more confident decision-making, less reactivity and more strategic thinking, and broader perspective taking all attest to change. Last, her application of the practices for enhanced well-being and managing stress may hold promise for women who are pregnant.

Participant Four

Participant Four is an operations manager of an animal facility at a large pharmaceutical company. She has 20-years of experience, currently supervises three direct reports, and is responsible for seven contract employees. The participant has an M.A. in creative writing and literature and she said that she is motivated by using her creative skills and being challenged. She is the chair of a global committee promoting women's leadership and likes using her influencing and organizing skills. She says that her stress level is about a four on a 10-point scale. Her stress comes from working with people who are not as driven as she is—she said that she notices her tension rise during these interactions. She has benefited from limited life coaching but has not practiced meditation. Her biggest challenges include 1) mentoring staff and learning to how to adjust to different personalities and 2) being a “type A” personality with those who are not – she described herself as high energy and she said that can be assertive and aggressive at times. She would like to be more effective beyond her current role including having a global reputation within the company. She shared that she recently completed an emotional intelligence assessment and that the scores suggested that she is very high in optimism and low in empathy. She said that she is aware of this feedback, but she is not sure how to develop in these areas. She shared that she is an Introvert-Sensing-Thinking-Judging person according to the Myers-Briggs

Type Indicator assessment. Overall, Participant Four expressed a high interest in the study and starting the practices. My initial impression was that she likes pushing herself to learn and develop and thinks that this opportunity will help her further her goals of improving her working relationship with others and developing as a leader.

Practice frequency. Participant Four reported a moderate level of practice frequency throughout the study (Figure 4.38). The first four to five weeks she moved back and forth between one to two times and three to four times daily for the breath awareness and breath coordination practice. Breath awareness remained consistent at these levels (typically between

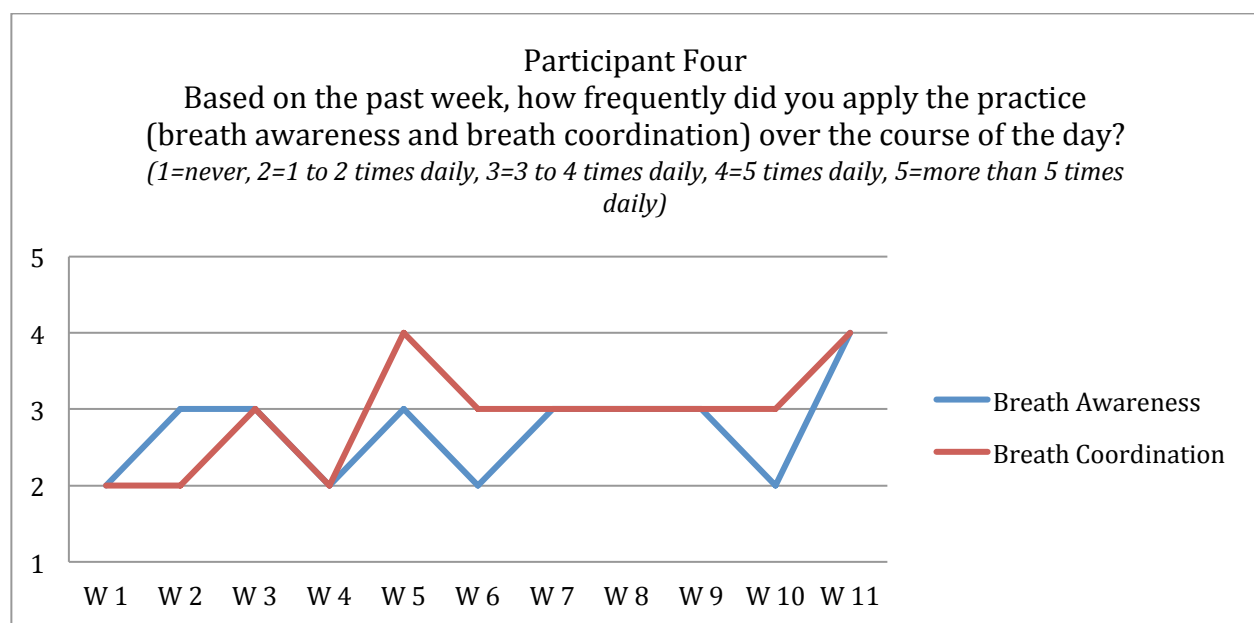


Figure 4.38. Practice frequency: Breath awareness and breath coordination – P4.

one to two times daily) throughout the study, with an increase to five times daily by the end of the study. She reported two jumps to five times daily at weeks five and eleven for breath coordination. The coaching meetings confirmed this moderate, but steady, increase pattern and the positive effect that it was having on the participant's well being. By the second week she reported,

I felt calmer this week than last, even in the face of a very hectic schedule. I deliberately focused on my breathing in both moments of calm and stress. I used the counting/breathing technique and found myself able to relax and deal with the stress at hand.

Participant Four found the counting of her out breaths beneficial. While some participants found it helpful to use a word, such as let go, to anchor the breath, others simply relied on their breath to ground them. The participant reported an immediate effect of the breathing practice, and by the end of the second week, she said that she was applying the practice in a variety of situations ranging from challenging interactions with others to being in traffic. She said that the breathing practice was able to help her to relax and feel calm.

The practice frequency for observing, suspending judgment, and opening mirrored the breath awareness and breath coordination patterns with alternating between one or two times and three to four times daily on a weekly average (Figure 4.39). Participant Four initially reported

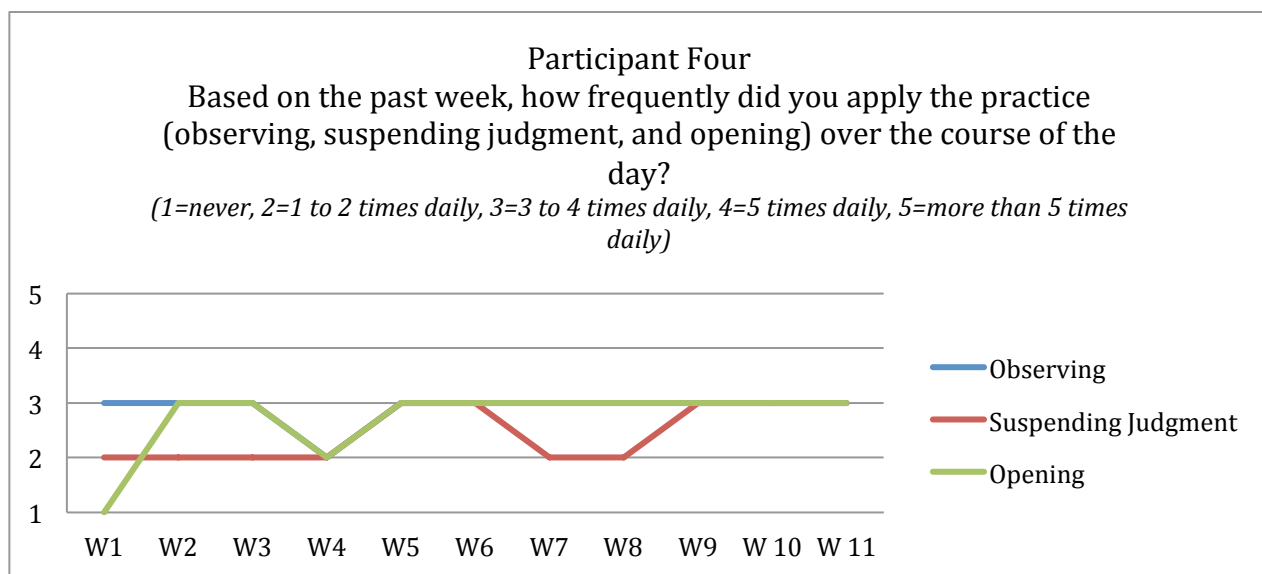


Figure 4.39. Practice frequency: Observing, suspending judgment, opening – P4.

feeling overwhelmed at trying to exercise all five practices for the first several weeks. After she developed confidence, her proficiency improved. The following reflects the participant's early reaction to the practice,

I practiced the observing technique in both a leadership meeting with my peers and in a meeting in which my direct reports were present. I was pleasantly surprised to see how "listening" to my body changed how I felt about my presence (state of being) and how I thought others might have seen me.

This comment revealed openness to trying the practices and how she was beginning to develop awareness of the mind body relationship. She reported in a coaching meeting that she was able to interject humor as a way connect with her boss's boss, a relationship that she said was difficult. She said that by paying attention to how she was feeling and by withholding judgment, that she experienced a higher quality of relationship. A steady, but consistent, practice frequency was suggesting that change is possible even with moderate levels of application.

Breathing exercise results. Participant Four struggled with the breathing practice the first time it was introduced (Figure 4.40). She said that she saw numbers as she was counting, but that she was unable to stay focused. She said that it took her several minutes before she could really start to feel her breath. She reported feeling distracted by noises around her. She said that she was not sure where her breath was originating, but she did notice her mid-section and ribcage area.

By the end of the study, Participant Four reported a changed experience in respect to her relationship with her breath. She said that she was more intentional in her breathing and that she was able to have a better quality of breathing within several minutes. She said that she felt calmer, and that while she heard noises around her, she did not feel distracted.

At the time on the one-month follow-up meeting, she reported similar positive gains that she shared at the end of the coaching meetings. She said that she was able to go deeper into her breath within a short-time (a couple of minutes), she was able to focus, and she was not distracted by surrounding noises. I found it interesting that she was only able to feel to her calf,

but not all the way to her feet, by the end of the study. Feeling the feet is a good indication that one feels grounded and rooted in breath; she said that she had tried to notice sensations at the

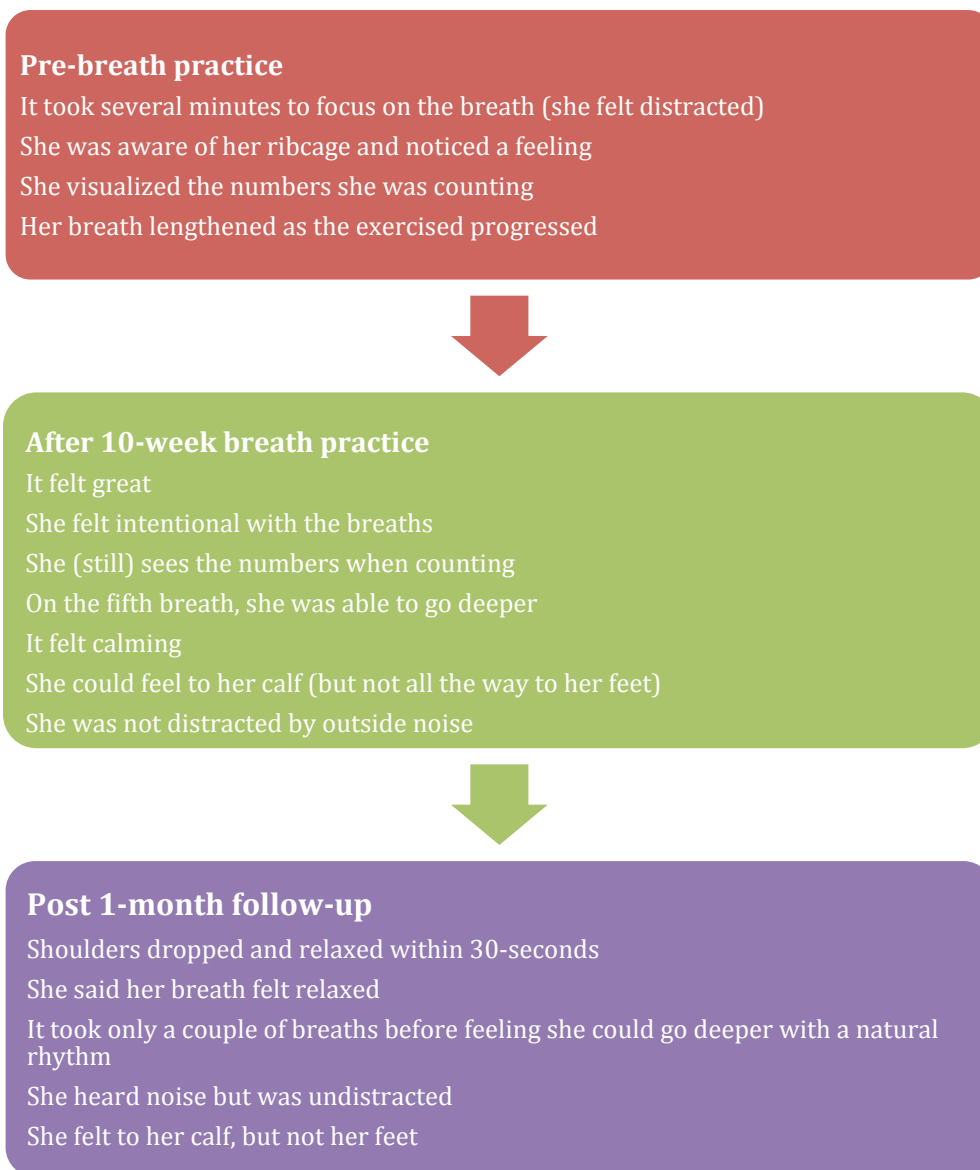


Figure 4.40. Breathing exercise at pre, post, and 1-month post period – P4.

bottom of her feet throughout the study, but was unable to do so. Overall, she reported a changed relationship in respect to how she experienced her breath, to slow down and feel calm.

Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire. Participant Four reported gains in four of the five categories (Figure 4.41). Observing increased by 28% from the pre to post period, from sometimes true to the often true level, and the score remained unchanged at the one-month post period. The ability to describe increased slightly by 3 percent, remaining at the often true level throughout the study. Non-judgment of the inner experience increased by 14%, or from the often true to always true level. Non-reactivity to the inner experience remained at the sometimes true level from the pre to post through the one-month post period. Acting with awareness experienced a slight decrease of 3 percent from the pre to post period, essentially remaining at the sometimes true level through the one-month post period.

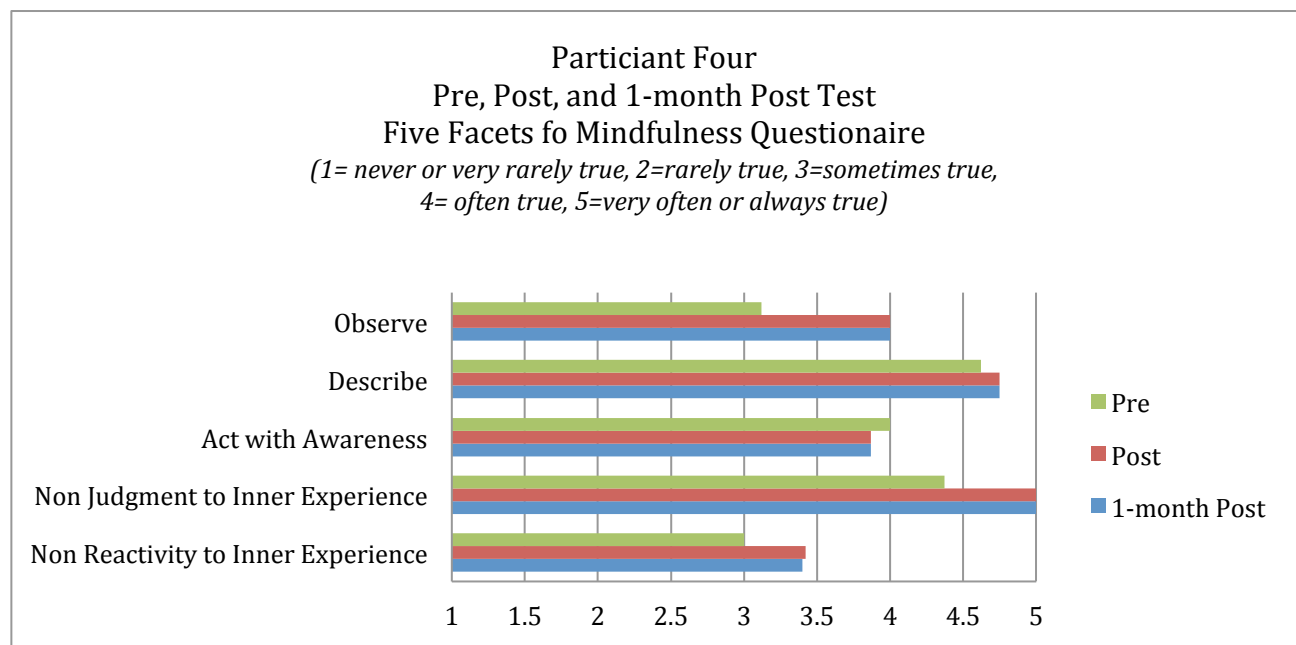


Figure 4.41. Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire – P4.

Despite the slight decrease quantitatively in the act with awareness category, the qualitative feedback suggested that she was learning more about herself and her needs. At about the half-way mark of the study, she said,

I worked on my breathing in stressful situations and I tried to notice my breathing more often in relaxed situations. I learned a lot about my basic needs as an introvert and I have a game plan for next week when I will be in a high profile, highly extroverted meeting.

In our weekly coaching meetings, we often discussed why it was difficult to empathize with the others, particularly with those who do not meet her standards or expectations. She said that by paying attention to when these feelings arose and noticing her breath, she was less apt to judge herself or others. She said that it has been helpful to uncover her patterns of thinking so that when she interacts with others it is from a place of awareness attunement to her own needs.

Mindfulness survey. Participant Four scores on the Mindfulness Survey increased by 30% or more in six of the seven categories, with all categories reaching the agree or higher level (Figure 4.42). The one exception was with respect to one of the sub-scales, suspending judgment noticing, which did not change (Figure 4.43). Breath awareness and breath coordination

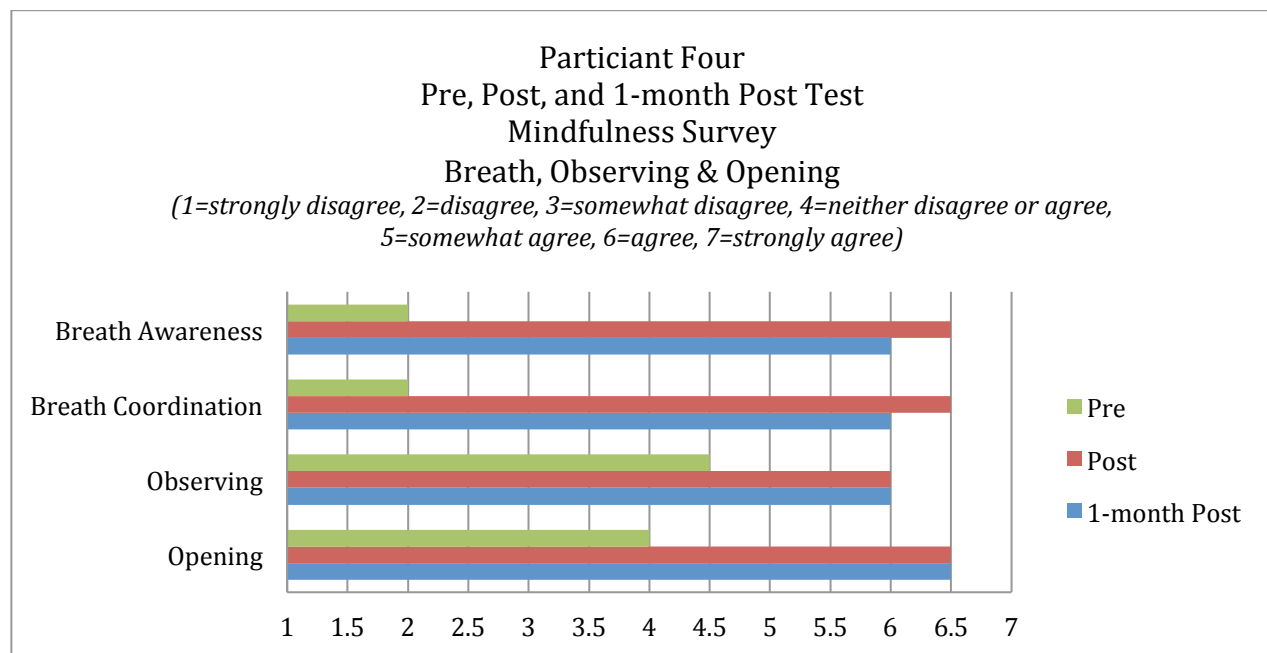


Figure 4.42. Mindfulness survey – breath, observing and opening – P4.

improved by 225%, or from disagree to agree, and showed slight declines at the one-month post period, still at the agree level. Observing increased by 33% from the pre to post period, from

neither disagree or agree to the agree level, and remained unchanged at the one-month post period. Opening increased by 62% from the pre to post period, or the neither disagree or agree level increasing to agree, and remained unchanged at the one-month post period. The breath practice seemed to lead the way in supporting gains in the other categories.

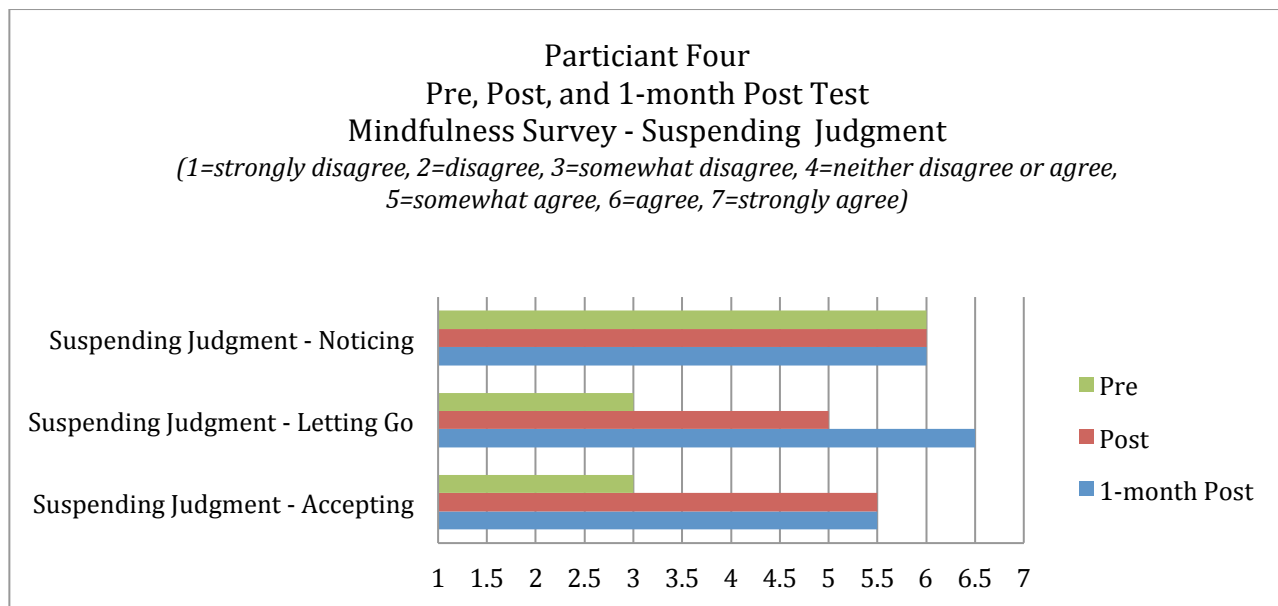


Figure 4.43. Mindfulness survey – suspending judgment – P4.

At the sixth week she stated,

The biggest aids to my “success” this week were: concentrating on my breathing and using it to help control any anxiety of stress, withholding judgment, building on the ideas of others. I had a great week!

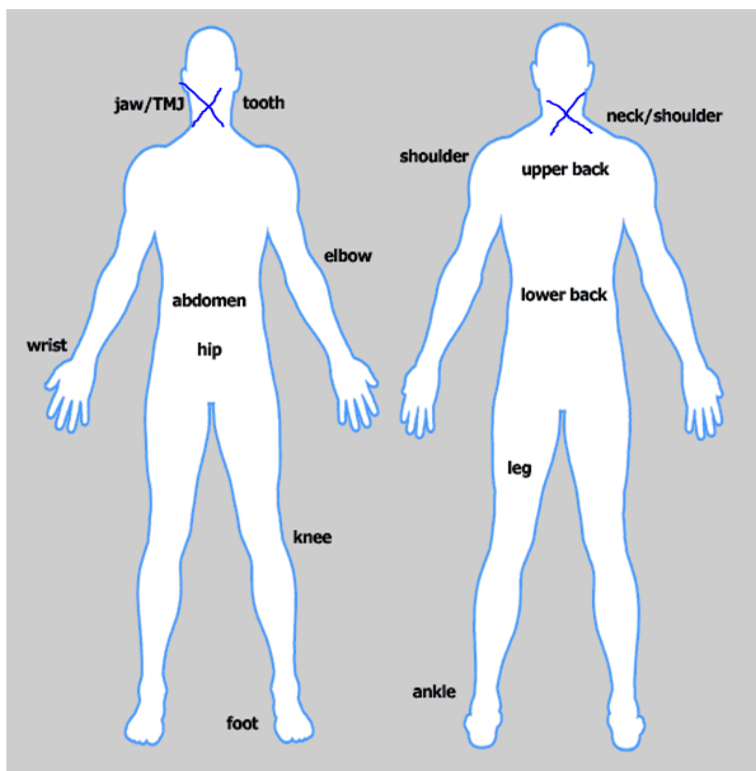
I observed that the participant effectively built a foundation around her breath practice; everything else seemed to use this as a point of reference. She was deliberate in her approach, and she tended to focus on one area of importance each week. For example, she asked questions about deepening her skill at noticing emotional triggers when she visited family. She stated,

The time with my family was very rough and I shed quite a few tears. However, on the plane ride back home I had a wonderful moment of clarity and realization that made the

time with my family more meaningful. Breathing and meditation definitely got me through the week!

The quantitative data supported her ability to let go (increasing by 66%), or changing from somewhat agree to the agree level, and accepting (increasing from 83%), or from somewhat disagree to somewhat agree. The participant said that she was able to recover from difficult situations more quickly than before she started the practices. My observation was that she was increasing her observing skills – she used these insights to learn more about herself and adjust her expectations. Moreover, the participant reported change in virtually all respects of the Mindfulness Survey.

Body awareness. Participant Four reported stress in the jaw and the back of the neck during the first four weeks (Figure 4.44). The participant said that the jaw stress was related to



Week	Symptom (Ache/Pain)
2	Back of neck (possibly due to recent international flight)
4	Jaw (clenching – ongoing)
6	No reported stress or tension
8	Lower back (strain/tired – due to cross-country flight/travel)
10	No reported stress or tension

Figure 4.44. Body awareness map – P4.

tension resulting from work and life pressures. By week six, the participant no longer reported stress with an exception at week eight that was attributed to tension resulting from cross-country travel and a difficult family visit. There seemed to be a relationship between the breathing practice and the effect that this was having on her body. She reported,

I have found that concentrating on my breath in stressful situations (traffic, running to a meeting, etc.) and purposefully slowing down and intentionally feeling my breath cause most of the stress to go away. While the effect on me physiologically, is immediate, I feel the true effect later, as I reflect on how smoothly the meeting went or how I arrive at work without the usual neck cramps and stressed outlook.

During the second week, the participant said that the tension she identified in her neck was virtually gone. She said that she most often feels this with her daily commute which typically includes stop and go traffic. She affirmed that this was the first time for more than ten years that she remembers the tension in her neck dissipating. At the one-month follow-up meeting, she reported that there had been several times that she experienced some shoulder stress, but that she had been able to manage it by paying attention and using the breathing practice. Overall, Participant Four reported that she was able to alleviate body symptoms by week six and effectively respond to stresses when they arose.

Effects of the abilities. Participants Four’s score for the weekly surveys—the weekly reflection report and the weekly practice report—showed improvement in all abilities (Figures 4.45, 4.46, 4.47, and 4.48). The ability to focus and pay attention was uneven, ranging from neither disagree nor agree to strongly agree, but the scores consistently improved. At week four, the participant reported, “I have noticed that I am much more relaxed and efficient due to my breathing and focusing on my “being” at meeting and in stressful situations.”

I observed that it was easier for her to catch herself when her mind wandered because she was better able to notice her distractions. She said that in situations where she lost focus that it was difficult to get it back. At week ten, the participant contacted me, asking for ideas to help pull herself out of feeling unfocused. We talked about several strategies to re-center such as taking slow and intentional steps to slow her thinking down and heighten awareness. Several days later she contacted me and stated,

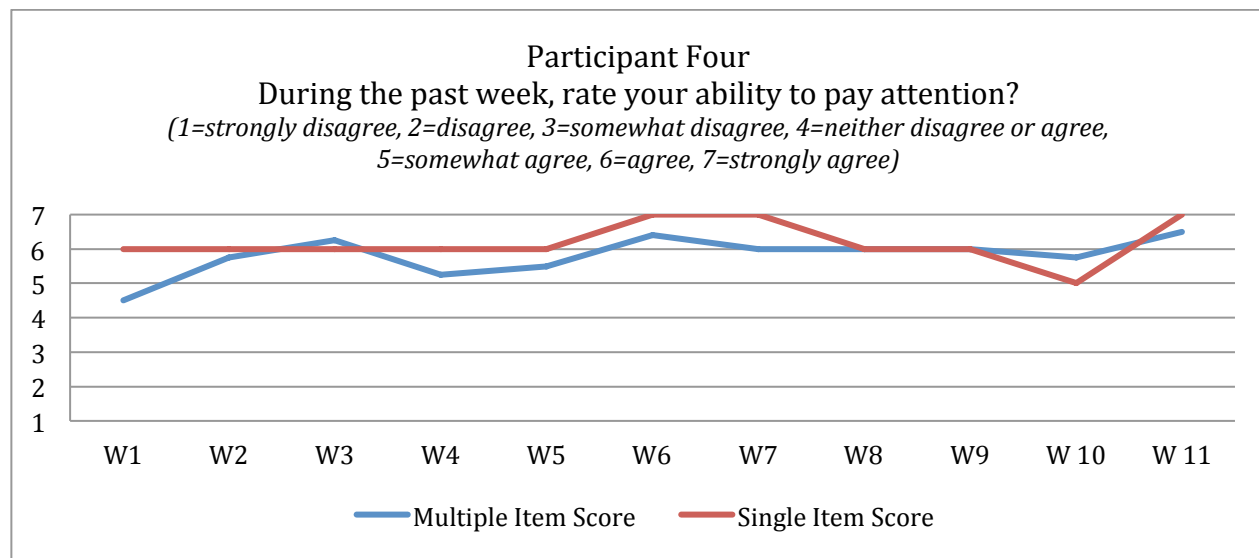


Figure 4.45. Paying attention (multiple and single item score) – P4.

I’ve had a GREAT afternoon. Smiling, happy, calm, and breathing from my diaphragm. I took intentional and mindful breaks four times since we spoke, and each time it was easier to break away and to concentrate for longer on my centering. I’m not 100% back, but I feel so much better.

By doing several small but cumulative acts, the participant said she was able to focus on the task at hand and relate to others in a more open and fluid way.

The ability to connect with others showed a consistent and steady rise in respect to the quantitative data, ranging from somewhat agree to strongly agree (Figure 4.46). Early on in the coaching process, I introduced a technique that helped her to step back from situations and re-frame which included a three step process, pause-relax-open (Kramer, 2007). This strategy teaches you how to pause before jumping in with a response, a common way that people deal with conflict. The participant wrote,

I tried the pause-relax-open exercise with two express individuals this week and while I still found it challenging to do it with one of the people, it was easier and helpful with the other individual and helped open up our communication.

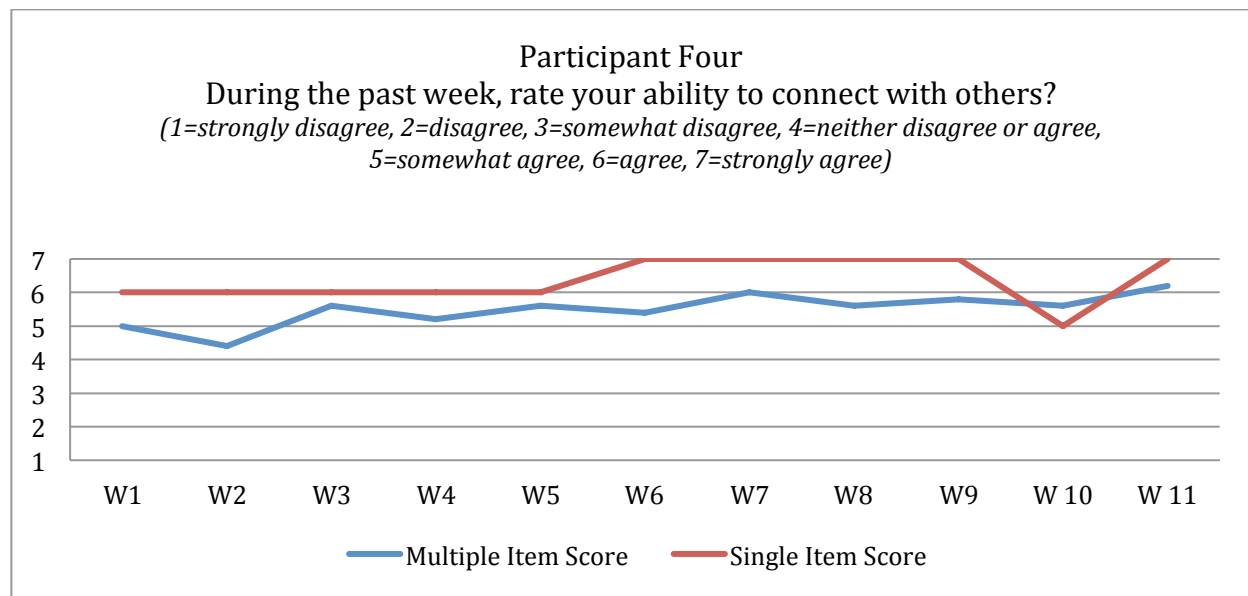


Figure 4.46. Connecting with others (multiple and single item score) – P4.

In the coaching meetings, I found that it was important for the participant to regulate her energy. I recall at our first meeting, she said that she was an introvert and often needed time to

reflect. She said that the pause-relax-open strategy helped her to re-center her emotions regardless of how she felt. Several weeks later she said that she continued to do the technique as a way to connect with others, and reported finding it helpful. At the on month follow-up meeting, she again, reiterated the value of that approach in work life, and has been extending it to her personal life as well.

The ability to manage stress showed a similar pattern to connecting with others in that the improvement occurred incrementally, beginning at somewhat agree and increasing to strongly agree by the end of the study (Figure 4.47). Paying attention to triggers and using the pause-relax-open technique, again, was helpful. She was able to notice her stress manifest in herself through the expression of others. She stated,

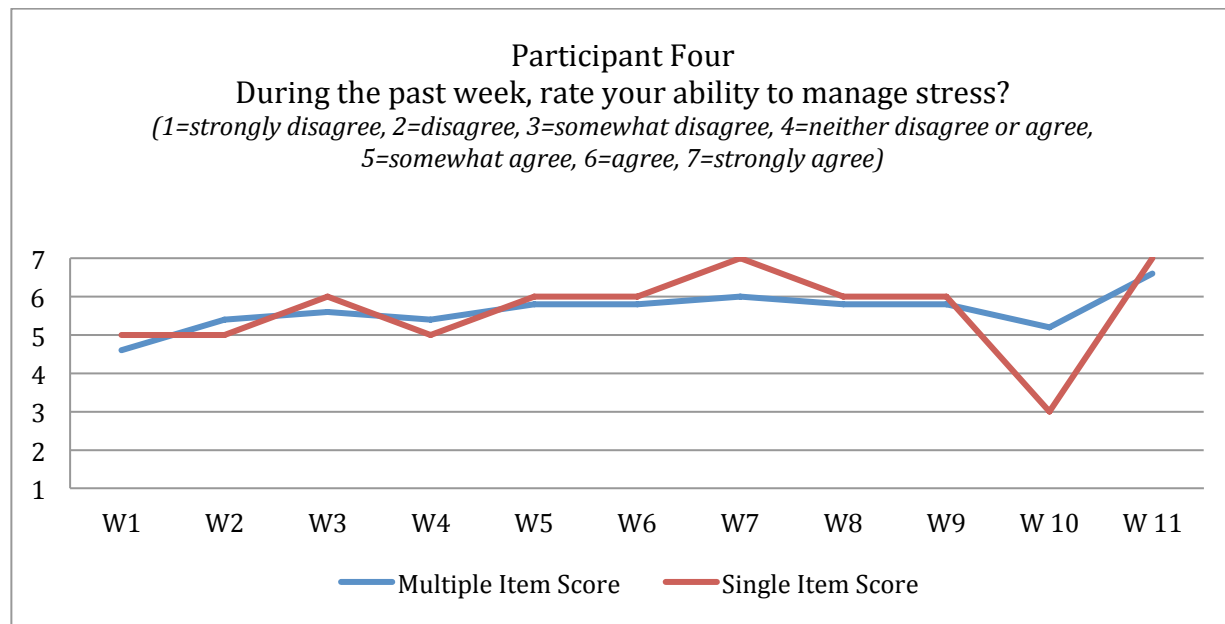


Figure 4.47. Managing stress (multiple and single item score) – P4.

I saw my reflection in the face of others and I didn't like the stressed person that was showing up to work every day. Practicing the simple but effective observations and "slowing down" on Friday morning, helped bring balance and peace back to my work and it carried me through the weekend.

Overall, the participant was able to increase her ability to manage stress quantitatively. Her increased observational skills, and incorporation of practical and in the moment strategies, were helping her manage stress, and strengthen her well-being. By the end of study, she reported having a “night and day change,” in terms of her ability to manage stress. She stated that she “has never felt more capable of handling stress.”

Participant Four’s ability to multiply perspectives also showed a steady and positive change, increasing from neither disagree or agree to agree and strongly agree (Figure 4.48). This was the one practice that she reported not trying the first week. She said that she was overwhelmed with the other practices and was not ready to take it on initially. When we did discuss it, she said that she had a tendency to close out during conversation when she knew the

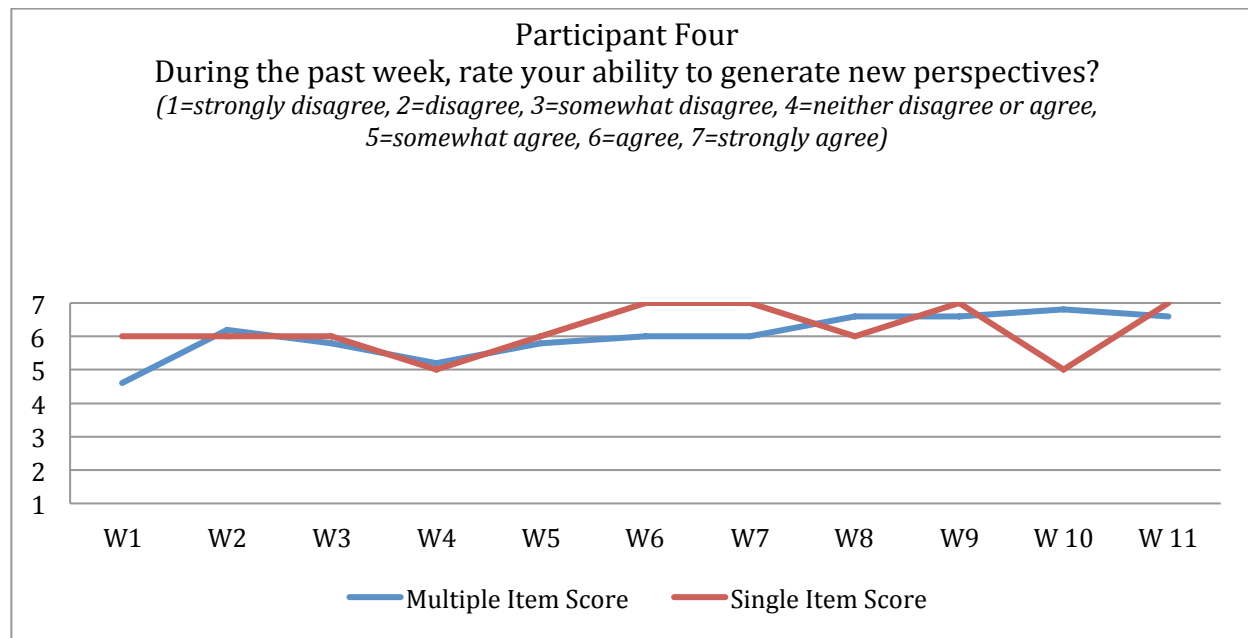


Figure 4.48. Multiplying perspectives (multiple and single item score) – P4.

answer. She said that she would quickly move on to the next topic when this occurred because she thought that the conversation was not worthy of her time. She said that through the course of the study that she has learned to stay open to others’ ideas for longer periods of time and is doing a better job of suspending judgment. She also said that her ability see things from a wider lens,

and to notice when her body feels tight, is helping her to be more empathetic because she is listening more deeply. As a result, she said that she is more open to others than she would have previously described. She said that this has helped her to become a better leader overall.

Quantitative scores for Participant Four showed some improvement, increasing from agree to strongly agree, despite regressing to somewhat disagree at week ten (Figure 4.49). The opportunity to make a large improvement quantitatively was limited because the participant began at an already high level (agree). Similar to the other abilities, by week seven the leadership score increased to its highest level, a seven, or strongly agree. Then it dropped at week ten as already stated. The participant was able to quickly recover; she said that she had developed habits and skills, despite the ups and downs. More generally, she said that she is more open to others and her team, that she is leading with more confidence, and that she even

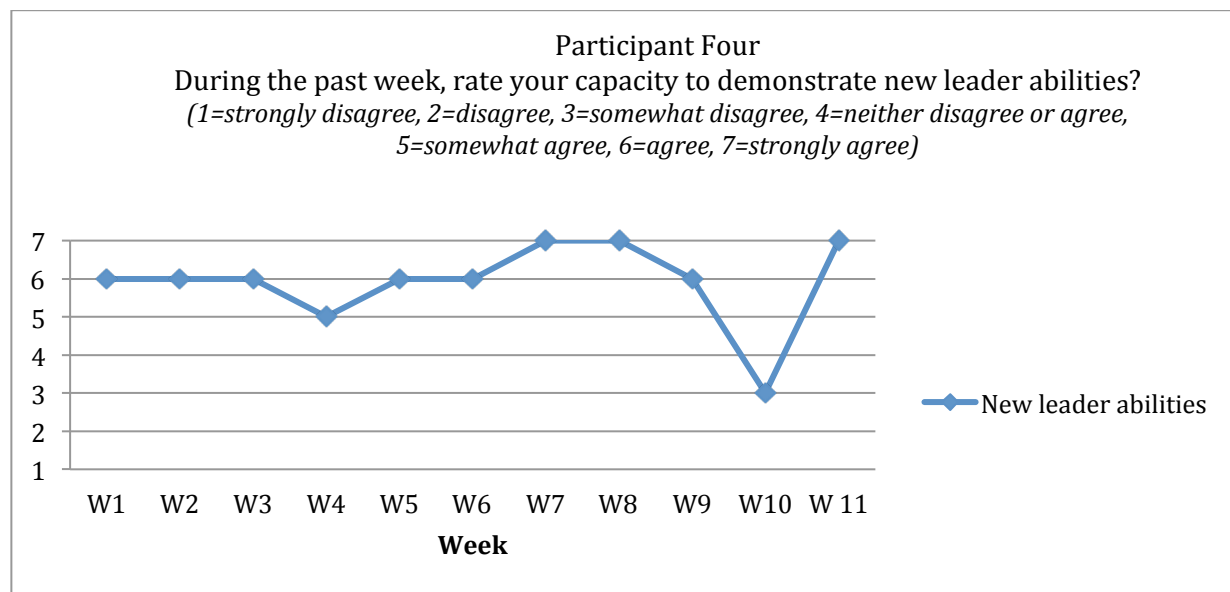


Figure 4.49. Leader abilities (single item score) – P4.

introduced the breathing exercise to her team. She said that she is less reactive (before she said that she was all in or all out) and better able to consider other people's ideas when she disagrees. She also said that increased flexibility has made her more aware. She added, "once the switch

(mindfulness) came on, she could not go back.” In this respect, her feedback, and the narrative, suggested a change in her leadership abilities. The quantitative score did not bear this out, in part, because listening scores were high from the beginning. The sensitivity of the instrument as a single item score may have simply been too general to have picked up the nuanced changes that were taking shape.

Participant Four reflected on salient themes and experiences from the study. During the final coaching meeting, she shared that one of the surprises she encountered throughout the process was the powerful effect of the breathing practice. She said that the first time that she engaged in the practice was an amazing experience from which she experienced immediate results. She said that her ability to recover from challenging situations has given her insight into her tendencies. She said that there was a “vanishing point” in which she could recover from difficult circumstances, but she struggled to cognitively describe it. She said that it happened almost magically and sometime around week six to seven—which was reflected in the weekly scores. She said that she has near constant awareness of her breath. She still struggles with the fluidness of the breath, but she notices it in an effortless way. In terms of her listening abilities, she said that it has improved dramatically. Before, she would shut people off (mentally)—now she is able to remain open longer and with more attention. She said that she has benefited from recognizing her listening filters, and how she actually shows up versus how she thinks she shows up. She said that she is more aware of her behaviors and can observe others’ behaviors better and with more insight. She said before the practice that she had some awareness, but she was unable to figure out how to change behaviors (i.e., finishing people’s sentences). She also said that she is aware when she is not empathetic and feels that she can see it and modify her thinking with greater ease. In terms of connecting with others, she said that the pause-relax-open

technique was highly beneficial. The tool helped her be more open to others. She said that she can better see what others perceive because she cares more about what is important to them. She said that this has been a change from how she was before the process. In terms of managing stress, the change has been “night and day.” She said that she no longer has physical stress. It has been gone for over a month, and she attributed the breathing practice as deepening this change. She said that she was unaware of the tension that she was carrying in her shoulders. In terms of perspective-taking, she is thinking more broadly and is more aware of others’ ideas because she is judging less. In respect to leading others, she is more open to the team, she feels that she shows up well in respect to being open and she is open to changing her position more easily. She said that she is less reactive, can see positions and ideas more broadly, and is more present and adaptable. She commented that overall, she is more flexible and in a better position to lead others because she is more in tune with herself. As she stated, once the “switch came on, she could not go back.”

Summary. Participant Four could be characterized as a learner; she was interested in knowing herself better in order to experience more quality in her relationships, and life, in general. She applied herself and genuinely desired to make positive changes. She described herself as highly ambitious, driven, and willing to learn from experiences. She began the process with good awareness, but did not know how to specifically address development areas. She had little knowledge of mindfulness practices prior to the study. She kept a steady and consistent approach to applying the practices, and over the weeks, reported improvement. The participant showed that with moderate, and on-going application of the practices, change is possible. Some of the overarching themes included:

- Reporting a changed relationship with her breath; initially feeling distracted and unfocused to feeling calm, in touch, and able to go deeply in her breath;
- Increases in four of the five categories on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, with the a 28% gain in the ability to observe or from sometimes true to often true;
- Increases in six of the seven Mindfulness Survey categories, and a 225% improvement in breath awareness and breath coordinating, moving from disagree to strongly agree;
- All body stress was reported gone by week six (with an exception at week eight due to tension resulting from a cross-country flight).

The weekly survey scores were moderate to high from the start. Despite this, the participant reported gains in the abilities. The high scores made it difficult to pick up the subtle changes that occurred on a weekly basis, yet change did occur. The pre and post surveys were better able to uncover the changes. The participant's ability to apply and deepen the breath practice appeared as a gateway for her increased ability to listen and focus. Her relationship with others improved. Most notably, she reported that her ability to demonstrate empathy helped her relate to others in a more genuine way. She said that overall, her stress level decreased, and in turn, helped her to be more open and adaptable. She said that her leader abilities could be characterized as less reactive, more responsive and better able to see the bigger picture. She said that this was facilitated by increased awareness of her listening filters and her willingness to suspend judgment. Overall, Participant Four reported gains in virtually all facets of the study and showcased someone who combined elements of being a learner, having little to no mindfulness background, and a desire to apply the practices in moderate yet consistent ways.

Participant Five

Participant Five is a human resources leader for a large biotech organization. She oversees a team of three and is part of a site leadership team that provides strategic and operational direction for the Campus. She reports directly into an HR lead who is part of the larger organization in northern California. She said that she is the only female on the site leadership team and it is challenging to interact with the men, both as a group, and as individuals. She noted that she has had six supervisors in the last seven years. The participant describes her personality as a strong and serious, and that she has been given feedback on tempering her influencing style. She has spent time working on her listening skills with some success, and hopes to continue to improve. The participant is originally from Boston, and has now lived in San Diego as long as she was on the east coast, about 21 years. She described her stress level at work as an 11 on a 10-point scale, and at home a five. She is a single mom of two boys. She describes her standards as being very high. She has practiced yoga in the past, but at the start of the study was not practicing. She described herself as a distance runner and hopes to restart her training soon. She identified her strength areas as being a driver, getting things done, seeing different viewpoints and perspectives, assimilating ideas, and listening. Her biggest challenges are creating a collaborative environment—she said that others misunderstand when she makes a statement feeling she is being authoritarian rather than collaborative. One of the goals for the study is to start a breath practice, to use new skills to improve her relationships and influencing abilities, and feel a sense of calm.

Practice frequency. Participant Five's frequency, in respect to the breath awareness and breath coordination practices, was moderate throughout the study, ranging from one to two times daily to three to four times daily (Figure 4.50). There was some unevenness during the first six

weeks; thereafter, she leveled off averaging between one to two times daily. I observed in the coaching meetings that she was more aware of her breath, even after the first week of practice. She initially tried to practice in the morning and in the car. She continued to practice in the car throughout the study and sometimes at home. Early on in the study, she said that she simply observed others during a site leadership meeting. She paid particular attention to her breath and the breath of the other team members. She said at one point in the meeting felt the need to leave the room because she became agitated and did not want to engage in discussion. Others noted her apparent lack of engagement. She said that they were used to her jumping into the conversation, either as a facilitator or referee. She said that she did not want to be in this role so she took herself out of it. She said that by paying attention to herself and her surroundings she

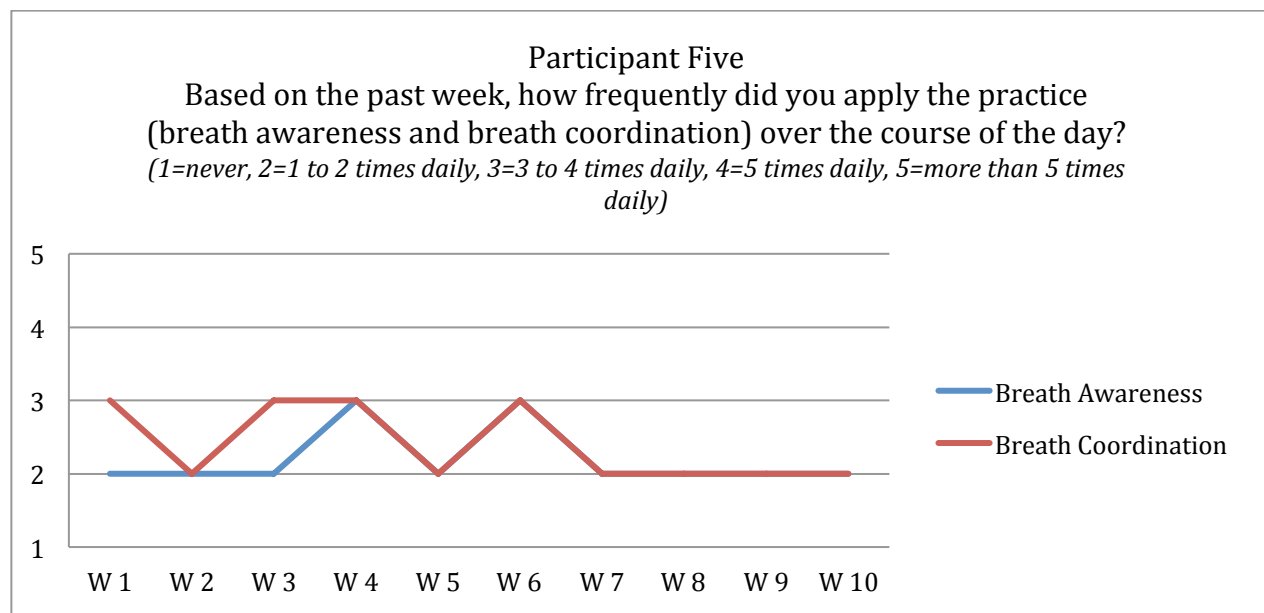


Figure 4.50. Practice frequency: Breath awareness and breath coordination – P5.

was able to see what was really happening in the meeting, and re-establish a sense of calm and center.

Participant Five’s practice frequency in respect to observing, suspending judgment, and the opening practices averaged between one to two times daily and as high as five times daily for

observing and suspending judgment (Figure 4.51). The quantitative data suggested that the application of the practices was uneven, with increases and decreases, before the scores leveled off at one to two times daily from week to the end of the study. One of my observations was that the participant became easily frustrated with others and found it difficult to suspend judgment. In the example above, she said that she struggled not to become attached to the ideas and content of others at the leadership meeting. She said that one positive of the meeting was that she was able to observe others in ways that she had not previously. She said that despite feeling agitated, she was able to notice how their angst manifested physically (i.e., shortness of breath). This gave her insight about how the lack of being grounded in breath can contribute to poor listening.

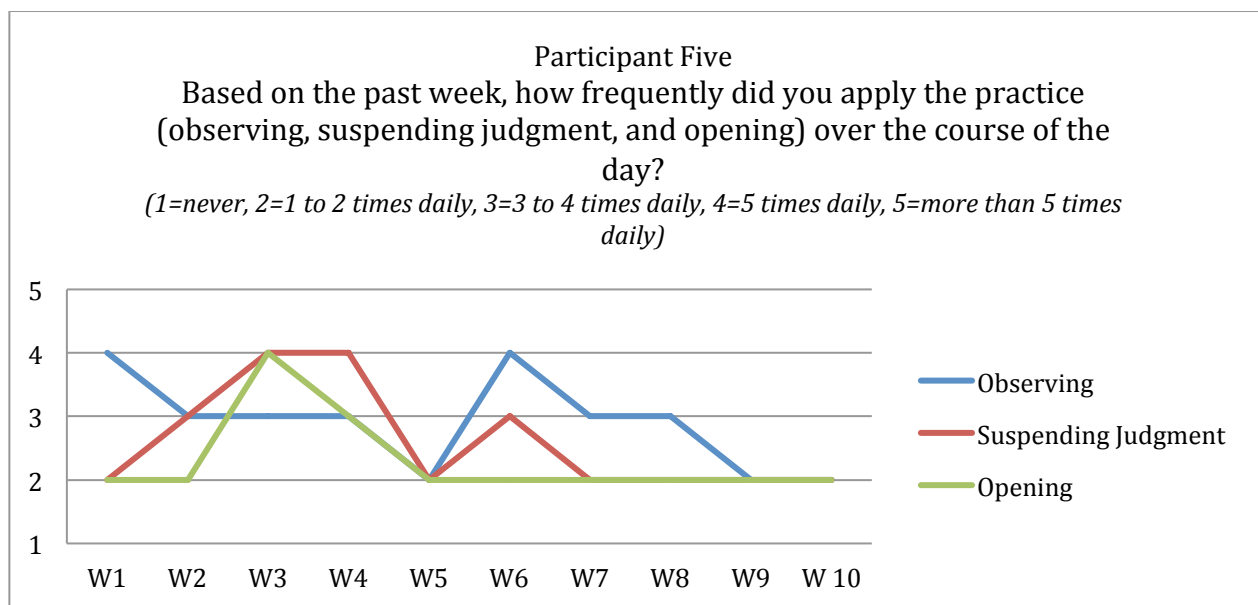


Figure 4.51. Practice frequency: observing, suspending judgment, opening – P5.

She said that this was insightful because it helped her see her own reactions in context – she did not want to mindlessly escalate her behaviors simply because others did. This incident helped her to think through how she wanted to approach similar situations in the future.

Breathing exercise results. Participant Five said that the first time she conducted the breathing exercise, she was “just breathing” (Figure 4.52). She said that she was highly aware of

what was happening around her including the noises, people talking, and the cars going by (we were located outside at a café). She said that she lost track of counting the out breaths and had a hard time getting into any sort of a rhythm with respect to breathing. She was acutely aware of doing the exercise outside and said that it was uncomfortable.

Throughout the study, the participant said that she found comfort and steadiness in the breathing exercise. When I asked her how the breathing exercise was going, she typically responded that it was fine, and that she consistently practiced three to four minutes each day, usually in the morning. At the beginning of the study, she experimented with finding a consistent practice time, and found immediate benefit. She stated, “I was much more aware of



Figure 4.52. Breathing exercise at pre, post, and 1-month post period – P5.

my bodily reactions during the day overall. I have not found the right time each day to be consistent at the same time for breathing.” By the end of the study, she said that she felt that the breathing practice had become a habit (typically practicing at work), but that it takes more effort to remind herself to do it at home on the weekend.

During the final breathing exercise at the end of the study, the participant said that she is more aware and conscious of her breaths, and breathing, in general. She said that there has been a positive change since the beginning of the study. She said that she still felt uncomfortable doing the breathing exercise outside (we were at the same café as the first time that she did the exercise). She said that she still was distracted by the noises, but not to the same extent.

Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire. Results for Participant Five were mixed in respect to the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (Figure 4.53). The observing practice increased by 25%, increasing slightly from never or very rarely true to rarely true.

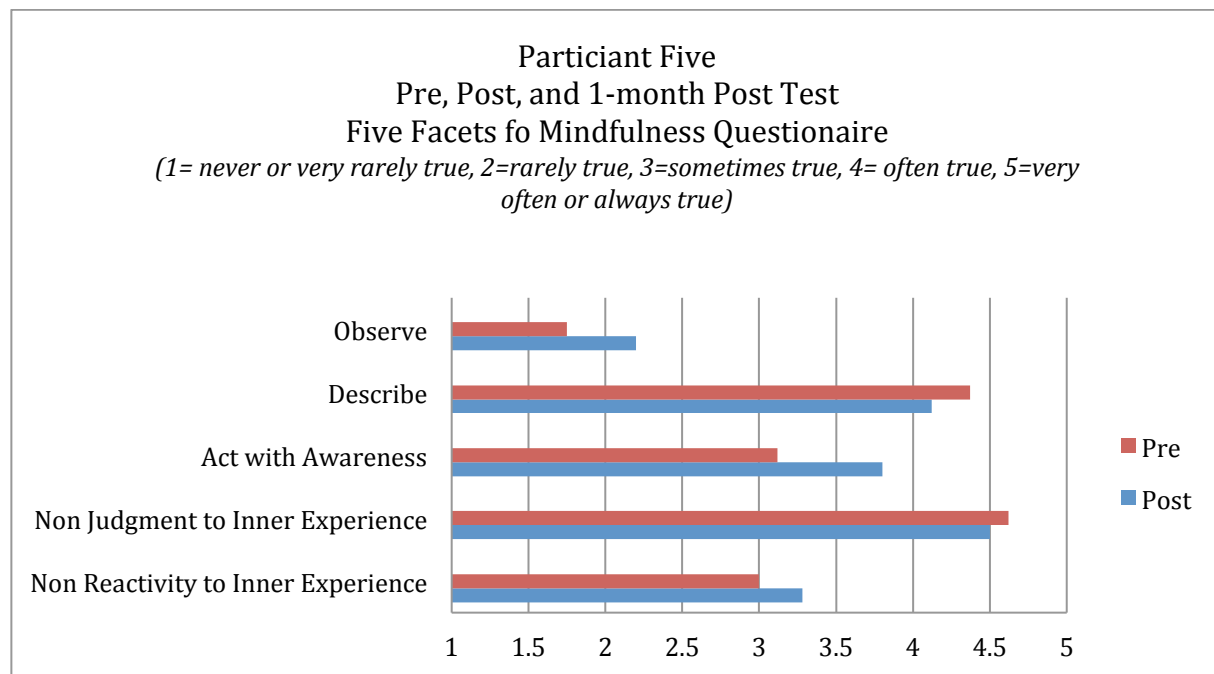


Figure 4.53. Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire – P5.

Acting with awareness, which increased by 21 percent remained at the sometimes true level. Non-reactivity to the inner experience, increased only slightly by 9%, largely staying at the sometimes true level. The describe category decreased by 5%, remaining at the often true level, and the non-judgment of the inner experience decreased by 2 percent, essentially staying the same at often true level.

Qualitatively, the participant often commented about the behaviors that she saw in others. An example included one member of the leadership team continually dropping by her office without an apparent reason. This had been an on-going frustration of the participant for several weeks. Based on my observation, she initially tried to accommodate him and be responsive, but became increasingly agitated. The situation culminated with the participant informing the person the number of times he had stopped by her office, and the time impact that this was having on her. Coincidentally, this time period was noted by having two of her direct reports not available due to a leave and work assignment, and consequently, a greater workload. The quantitative scores suggested that she made overall gains, but it was tempered with flat scores in respect to describe and non-judgment to the inner experience categories.

Mindfulness survey. Participant Five improved on three of the four categories in the Mindfulness Survey (Figure 4.54). Breath awareness increased 12%, staying at the neither disagree nor agree level, while the pre to post period and breath coordination increased by 33 percent, from somewhat disagree to neither disagree or agree level. Observing increased 20%, from somewhat agree to agree, while opening decreased 7%, essentially staying at the agree level, from the pre to post period, respectively.

The other three aspects of the Mindfulness Survey included suspending judgment

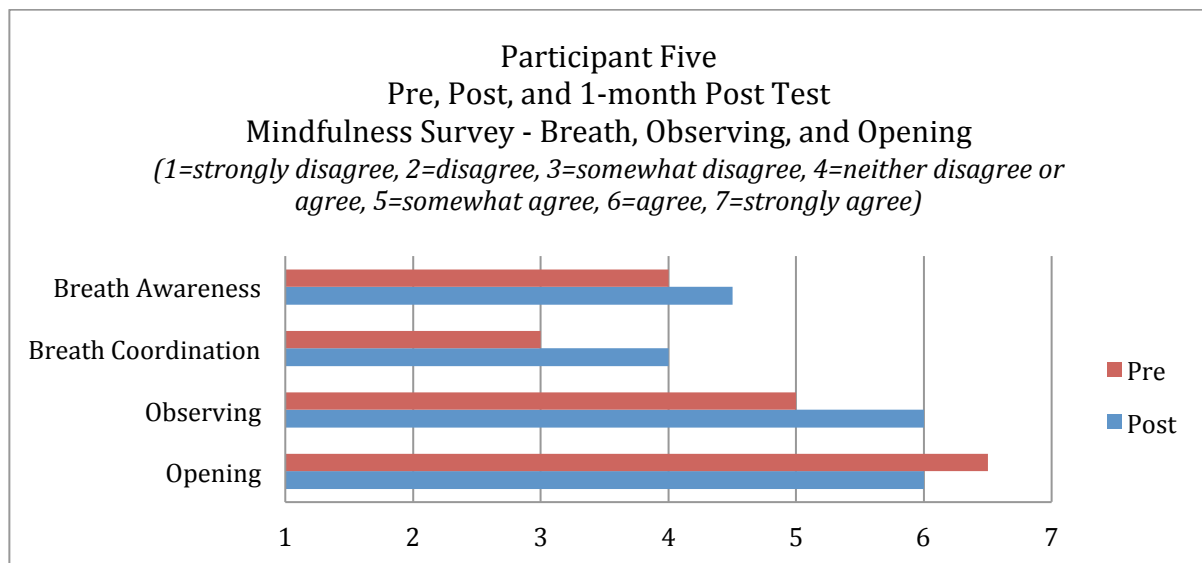


Figure 4.54. Mindfulness survey—breath, observing and opening – P5.

(noticing, letting go, and accepting) which were less conclusive quantitatively (Figure 4.55).

The scores for accepting increased by 50%, or from neither disagree nor agree to agree, from the pre to post period, while letting go decreased by 25%, from neither disagree nor agree to somewhat disagree, during the same period. Noticing was unchanged from the pre to post period, remaining at the agree level.

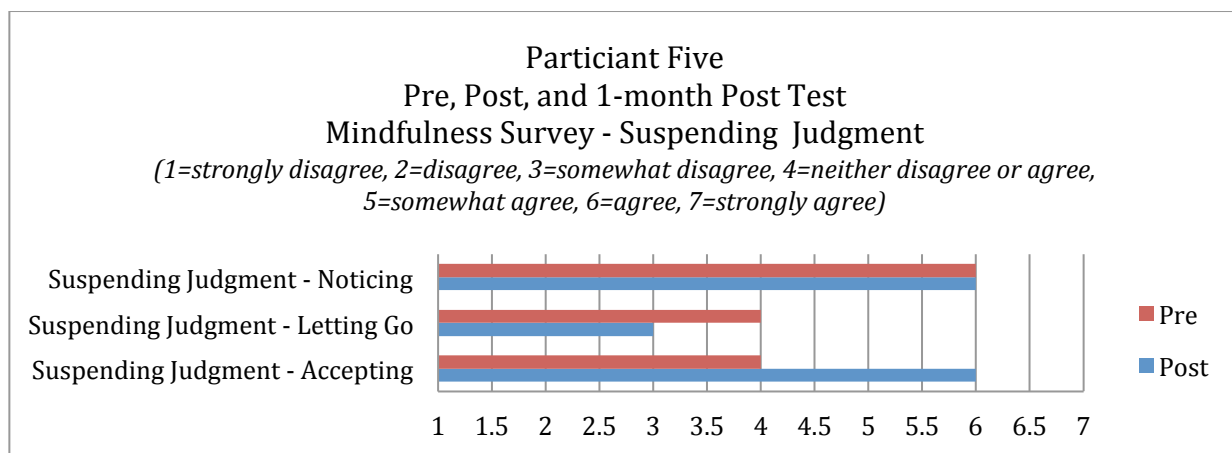
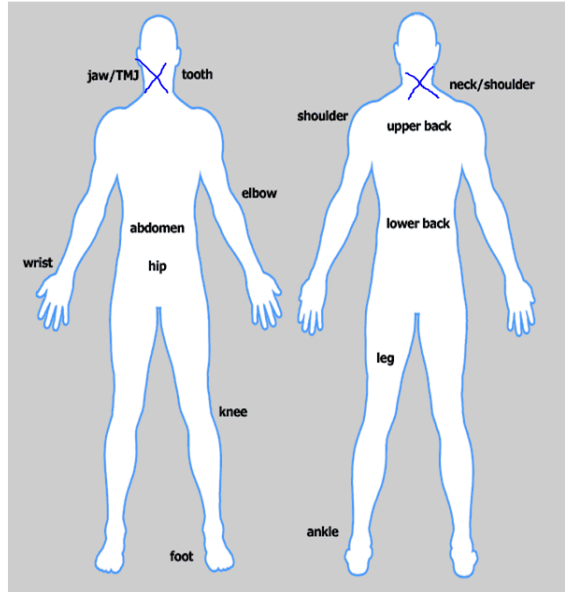


Figure 4.55. Mindfulness survey—suspending judgment – P5.

Similar to the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, the ability to observe increased. Quantitatively, this increase was consistent in both surveys and was reflected in my

observations during the coaching meetings. She shared, on multiple occasions, that she found it helpful to focus on her breath first as a way to feel calm; in turn, she said that it helped her to be a better observer and less reactive. At week seven, the participant said that she wanted to continue to focus on the breathing practices and observing others, at the exclusion of the other practices. This rationale may have accounted for some of the uneven reporting.

Body awareness. Participant Five reported feeling stress in her neck and shoulder areas for the first six weeks (Figure 4.56). She said that this stress largely resulted from work, dealing



Week	Symptom (Ache/Pain)
2	Neck/Shoulder (Holds stress in this area)
4	Neck/Shoulder (Holds stress in this area)
6	Shoulder (work stress, running/training – mostly from running more)
8	No reported stress or tension (began boxing and had massage)
10	Neck, back strain (from running), Shoulder/arm strain (from boxing)

Figure 4.56. Body awareness map – P5.

with conflict, and difficult personalities. She began exercising at week six, returning to running as well as kick boxing. She also reported having a massage around this time. By week eight, she did not have stress to report, and at week 10, she reported some tension related to exercising and boxing, but not work related. It was unclear, based on her feedback, if there was a relationship between the reduced stress resulting from the breathing practice and how much resulted from exercising.

Effects of the abilities. Participant Five's quantitative score (on the weekly reflection report and the weekly practice report) in respect to paying attention (Figure 4.57) showed a

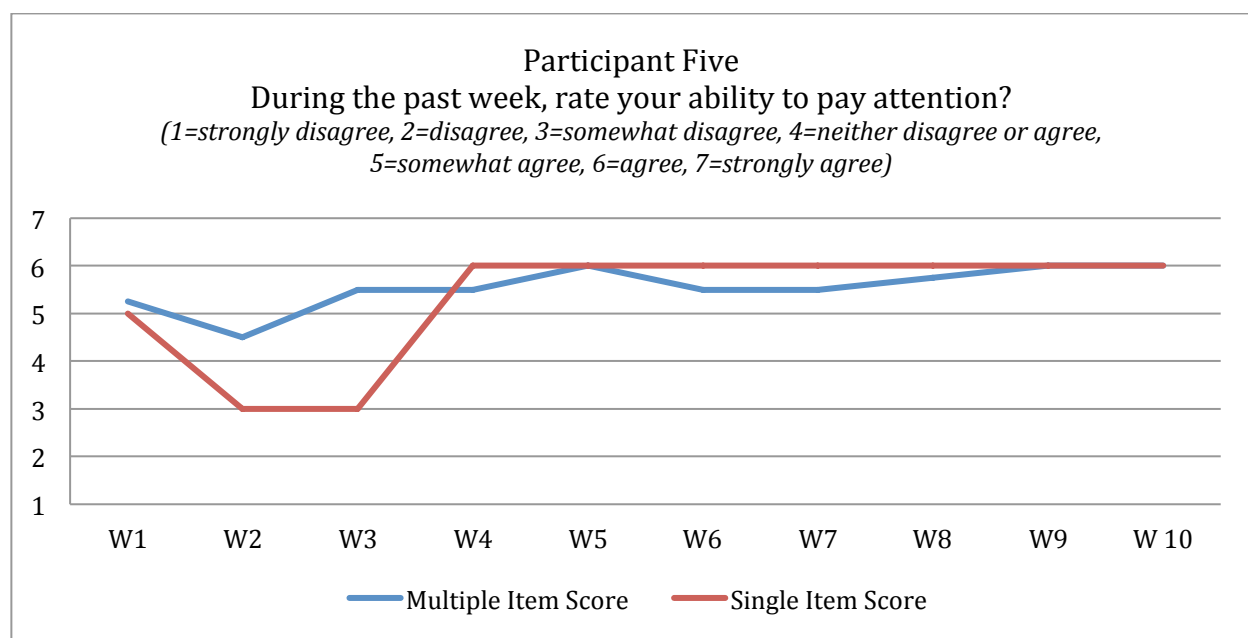


Figure 4.57. Paying attention (multiple and single item score) – P5.

similar pattern as did connect with others and managing stress. The score at the start was moderately high, or the somewhat agree level, and then sharply decreased during weeks two and three to the somewhat disagree and neither disagree or agree levels; thereafter, the scores rebounded to the week one score and then slightly increased, culminating at the agree level. Qualitative feedback was unclear as to why the changes occurred. It is not uncommon, when

learning something new, to see regression before improvement. This may have been the case with Participant Five. The participant did say that through the breathing exercise she was better prepared to listen and be present, and that may have contributed to the score increase beginning at week four.

The ability to connect with others was flat from the pre to post period, beginning and ending at the agree level (Figure 4.58). Again, the score dipped from agree to neither disagree nor agree at week two, then returned to the agree level at week four, and remained at this level

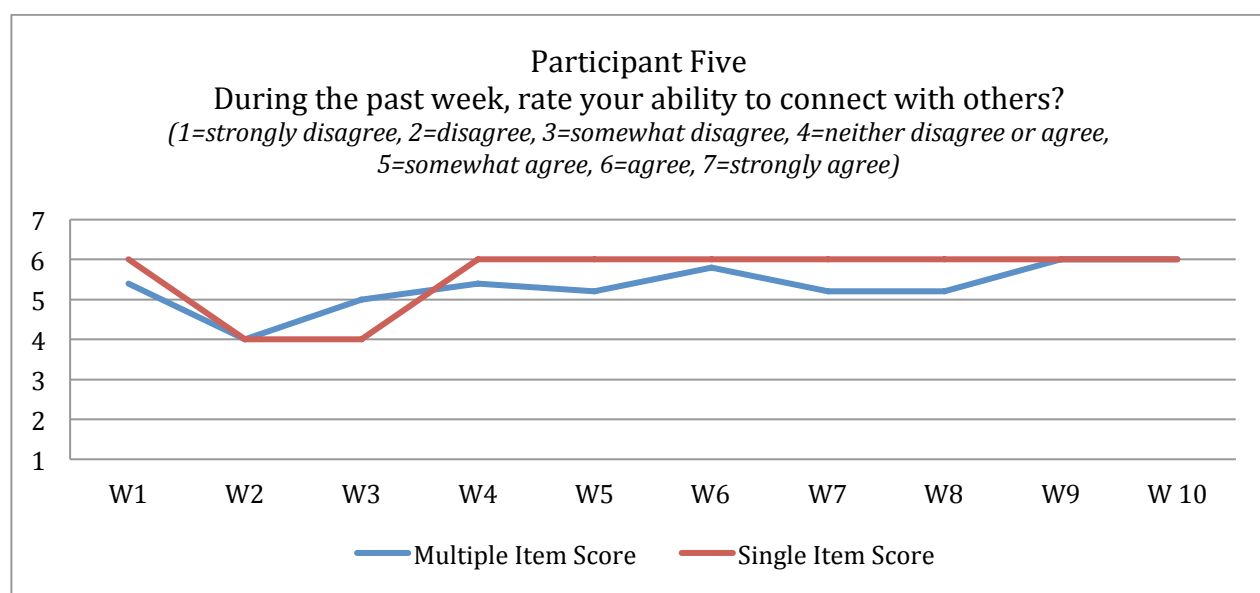


Figure 4.58. Connecting with others (multiple and single item score) – P5.

for the duration of the study. During the second meeting, she said that she often comes across as serious-minded and that this is also a way that she deals with conflict. She said that when she was able to connect with others it was typically by feeling relaxed enough to let her guard down – similar to previous accounts, this was accomplished by keeping aware of and grounded with her breath. She said that when she did not feel grounded and centered in her breath that it was more difficult to relate to others, particularly when the topic was contentious. At the beginning of the study, the participant said her stress level was 11 out of 10 at the workplace. This stress

was reported to have come from her responsibilities and interactions with senior members on the site leadership team. Similar to previous scores, her ability to manage stress began at a moderate level, or somewhat agree, dipped at week two to neither disagree nor agree and somewhat disagree, then increased to somewhat agree in week five and then to agree at week seven onward (Figure 4.59). Moderate but steady improvement was demonstrated in this category.

Participant Five said that during the first three to four weeks of the study, she used the breath practice more and noticed its effect right away. Thereafter, as work evened out and she experienced less stress at work, she said that she did not turn to the informal breath practices as

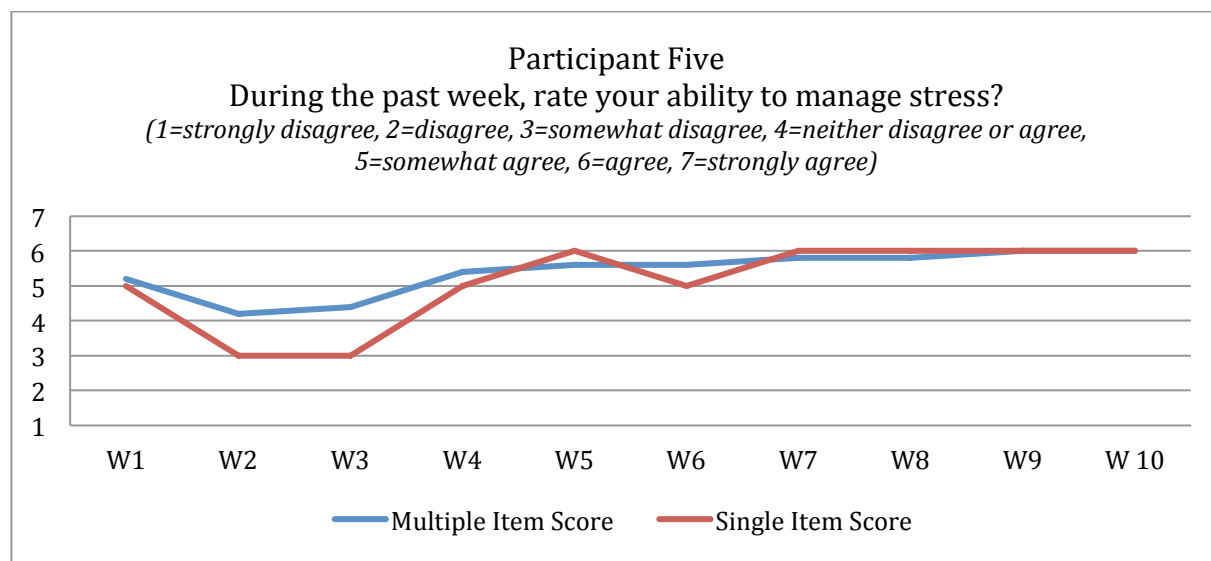


Figure 4.59. Managing stress (multiple and single item score) – P5.

much. She said that she was waiting for a more stressful time or situation to apply it. This feedback may have been one reason that accounted for the dip. She reported having used the practices more, but this did not necessarily negate a lower score. Thereafter, she provided continual feedback that she struggled to apply the practices because there were not enough stressful situations. The qualitative feedback revealed her thinking, progress in some respects, hesitation in others, and a contributing factor as to why the scores took the shape they did.

The participant's multiple item score for perspective taking showed a slight upward trend, from neither disagree nor agree and agree to strongly agree and agree, but by week nine it essentially returned to its original score, albeit a slight increase in the agree level (Figure 4.60).

The single item scores showed continual improvement from week one to week six

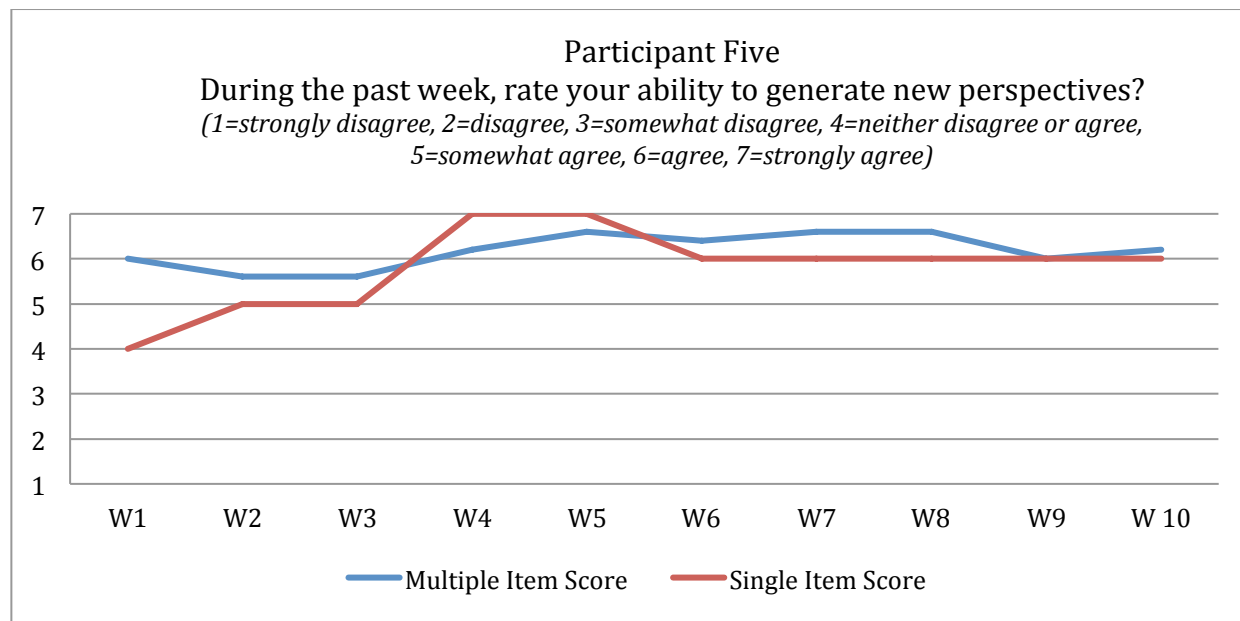


Figure 4.60. Multiplying perspectives (multiple and single item score) – P5.

(neither disagree nor agree to strongly agree) and then dipped to agree, but still remained above the starting score. In one example, the participant shared how she used her breath as a way to be thoughtful before sending e-mails. It appeared that this tactic helped her to increase her perspective-taking, notice her breath and tension in the body, before acting. She stated,

The biggest success I am finding is through e-mail and preparing for meetings. I really think through an e-mail and feel how my breath is while writing and if it is heavy or uncontrolled. I wait on sending the e-mail and many times re-write. Also, before going into a meeting that I am not looking forward to or know that it can get stressful for others, I am able to better prepare myself to react more neutrally.

The simple act of thinking through her mental and emotional state before sending an email, may have contributed overall to acting with awareness and observing, scores that increased in the

Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire and the Mindfulness Survey.

The participant increased her score in her capacity to demonstrate new leader abilities from neither disagree nor agree to agree at week five, and remained at this agreement level for the remainder of the study (Figure 4.61). Qualitatively, it was not fully clear how her leadership

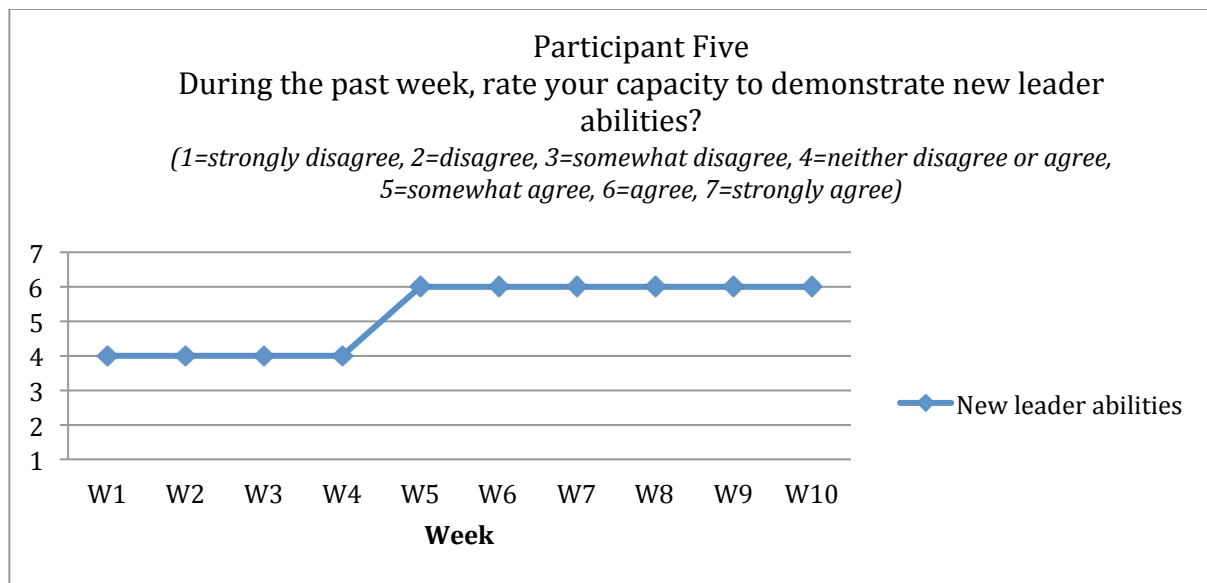


Figure 4.61. Leader abilities (single item score) – P5.

benefited. It was the intermediary acts of paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, and multiplying perspectives more generally, that contributed to her overall quality of leading. These data points add qualitatively to the improvements that the participant made, and seemed to reflect the ones that I observed in the coaching meetings.

Summary. Participant Five was highly focused on the breathing practice and observing others. She gravitated toward the formal breathing practice as much as, or more, than the informal aspect of the practices. She began the study in a state of high stress, saying that her stress level was 11 on a 10-point scale. She had practiced yoga in the past, but the mindfulness arena was new and unfamiliar. She reported quantitative improvements in most of the facets of the study, but qualitatively appeared to struggle with the day to day nature of the mindful

practices. As the study unfolded, it became apparent that there was disconnect with how deeply she was willing to explore and apply the practices against the backdrop of her expectations for deep personal and professional change. Despite this dynamic, she reported benefits, which included the following:

- Increases in three of the five categories on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, with 20% plus gains in observing, or moving from never or very rarely true to rarely true, and acting with awareness, but remaining within the same agreement level of sometimes true;
- Increases in four of the seven Mindfulness Survey scores, with observing improving from somewhat agree to agree and suspending judgment-accepting changing from neither disagree nor agree to agree, both categories posting gains of 20% or greater;
- Body stress and tension was reported gone by week eight, with minimal tension related to exercising reported at week ten.

The weekly survey scores showed a similar pattern for paying attention, connecting with others and managing stress— moderate initial scores, a drop at week two, followed by increases to the starting level, and then slight gains by week four and beyond. The multiplying perspectives and leadership abilities in respect to the quantitative data increased two points on a seven-point scale. Participant Five demonstrated that gains were possible with minimal to moderate application.

Participant Six

Participant Six presented herself equally as a professional and as a mother of two – one adult child is in college and the other is a senior in high school. She spent 16 years at home before returning to work. During this time she was involved in a number of volunteer efforts relating to capital campaigns at a local university and a refugee network. She said that her mom

is in declining health and that she is responsible for her estate and general care. Her background included growing up on the east coast and she has five siblings located throughout the US. Her most recent role was as a senior manager of development for a large network of hospitals and health care clinics. In her current role, she is responsible for fundraising and development activities for a religious organization to support sisters nearing retirement. She is dealing with multiple issues at the organization, including a reporting structure that she described as misaligned, and a direct report who is not open to feedback.. She identified her strengths as creativity, collaborating with others, problem solving, interpersonal relationships, and getting the job done. She also shared that she often thinks that “if I only work harder, I will be able to solve or fix the issue.” Participant Six participates in yoga regularly and has had some, but not direct, exposure to mindfulness practices. She said that she currently has a high level of stress at work, concerns relating to her children, being the primary support person for her mother, and working through these major life transitions. She said that the timing for this study is ideal and she welcomes the opportunity.

Practice frequency. Participant Six reported an average of between three to four times daily and increasing consistently to five times daily at week four for the breath awareness and breath coordination practices (Figure 4.62). At the third week, she reflected on how the breath awareness practice supported paying attention. She stated,

I found myself paying more attention to my breath and whether I was feeling any tension in my body. I did not have a problem with my lower back so this may have been why I was focusing more energy on my physical sensations and any “clenching” of my body. I know something was up.

The participant said that she quickly found ways to apply the breath practices. Initially, her stress levels appeared high based on her feedback, and she was trying to find a rhythm with the practices. In the coaching session, we focused on noticing how she experienced breath in respect

to interacting with her challenging direct report. In subsequent weeks, she reported that she became increasingly proficient in noticing her breath and being able to modify its quality.

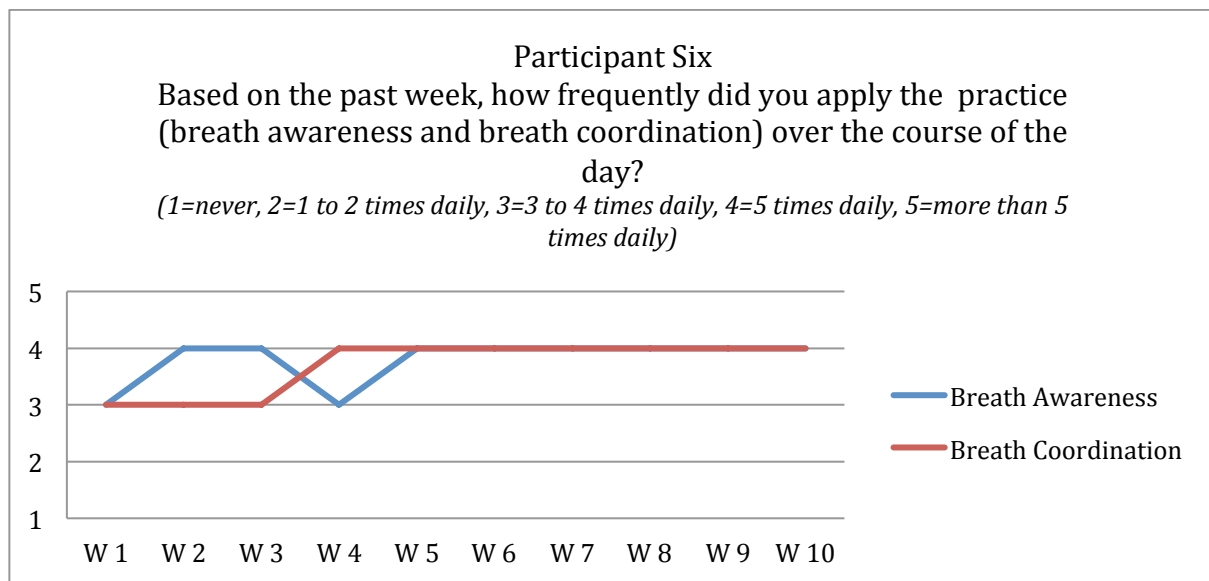


Figure 4.62. Practice frequency: Breath awareness and breath coordination – P6.

The observing, suspending judgment, and opening practices began at moderate rates, between one to two times daily for suspending judgment, and three to four times daily for observing and opening (Figure 4.63). By week three, the frequency jumped to five times daily

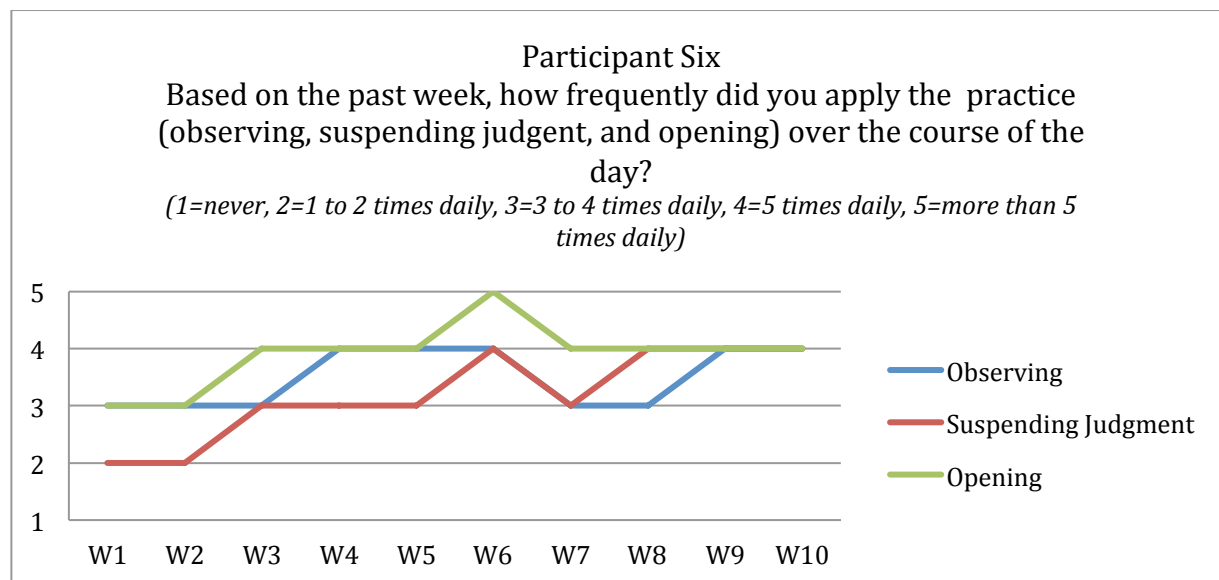


Figure 4.63. Practice frequency: Observing, suspending judgment, opening – P6.

for all the practices and more than five times for opening at week six. I observed in coaching meetings that by week three she had found a consistent and steady application of the practices. Her feedback ranged from how she interacted with her team to issues relating to her teenage and young adult-aged children.

Breathing exercise results. Participant Six reported at the initial breathing exercise that she was distracted by noise, did not have a good sense of where the breath was originating, and felt stressed while counting (Figure 4.64). She said that it would have been helpful to have had a

Pre-breath practice

She felt distracted by conversation around her (in cafe)
 She felt stressed while counting
 She wanted to slow down her breath
 Her breath wanted to hurry up, "like my life"
 She wasn't sure where her breath was originating (i.e., diaphragm)



After 10-week breath practice

Breath felt normal
 She noticed her breath - just breathing
 The surrounding noise was just there
 If felt different than the first time - more normal



Post 1-month follow up

She felt peaceful after the exercise
 Her attention was inward
 She felt focussed
 She was relaxed and calm
 The experience was methodical (it had a rhythm)

Figure 4.64. Breathing exercise at pre, post, and 1-month post period – P6.

quieter place to do the practice (we were inside at a café). She wanted to slow down her breath, but her breath felt like it wanted to hurry, “like my life,” she said.

By the end of the study, the participant said that her breath felt normal and that she was able to just breathe in a more effortless way. She noticed the noise outside, but said that she was not too distracted, and that her experience was different in a positive way compared to the first time that she did it. At the one-month follow-up meeting, she said that she felt more peaceful and noticed that her attention turned inward, as opposed to what was happening around her. She felt focused, calm, and relaxed, and was able to find rhythm. The participant said that she had continued with the breathing exercise after the study period.

Participant Six said that she found immediate benefit from the breathing practice. I noted on the first week during the coaching meeting that she was surprised that the exercise was only three minutes in length. She said that she was expecting the commitment would be more, but that the shorter time period worked well into her daily schedule. After a particularly challenging week at the beginning of the study, she reflected,

This was a very difficult week. The practice helped, but this was a very stressful week due to my employee's behavior after my attempt to make things clearer. The meditation helps, but it is often hard to quiet the mind for me in such a short period although I LOVE that it is short enough to fit into my every day, even multiple times.”

The participant was experiencing a challenging relationship with a direct report during the first four to five weeks of the study. One of her responses was to increase the time for the breathing exercise and to see if she experienced any change. She said,

I stepped up meditation length from 3 minutes to 10 minutes. As a result, although issues are not yet resolved, I was able to feel like I had better control but keeping in a calmer state of mind. This also allowed me to feel less emotional in sharing my thoughts with my boss which I felt was helpful. I remain stressed about this difficult situation, but wish to remain calm and stay focused on the work that needs to be done so I do not get distracted and emotional. I will continue to commit to meditating daily to allow myself to maintain proper control over this situation.

Based on the participant's feedback, she experienced multiple benefits from the increased time. She also began using guided meditation tracks offered through the UCLA mindful awareness research center. These meditations ranged from three to thirty minutes in length and she found the targeted approach (i.e., deepen your concentration) helpful. The participant said that her ability to practice the informal exercises throughout the day came more naturally because she was building off of the morning meditation. The participant continued to apply an extended period (beyond the three minutes) for the breathing practice throughout the study.

Five facets of mindfulness questionnaire. Participant Six reported increases in all of the categories for the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (Figure 4.65). Observing increased 22%, increasing from sometimes true to often true, from the pre to post period, and decreased 3%, dipping slightly back into the sometimes true level, at the one-month post period.

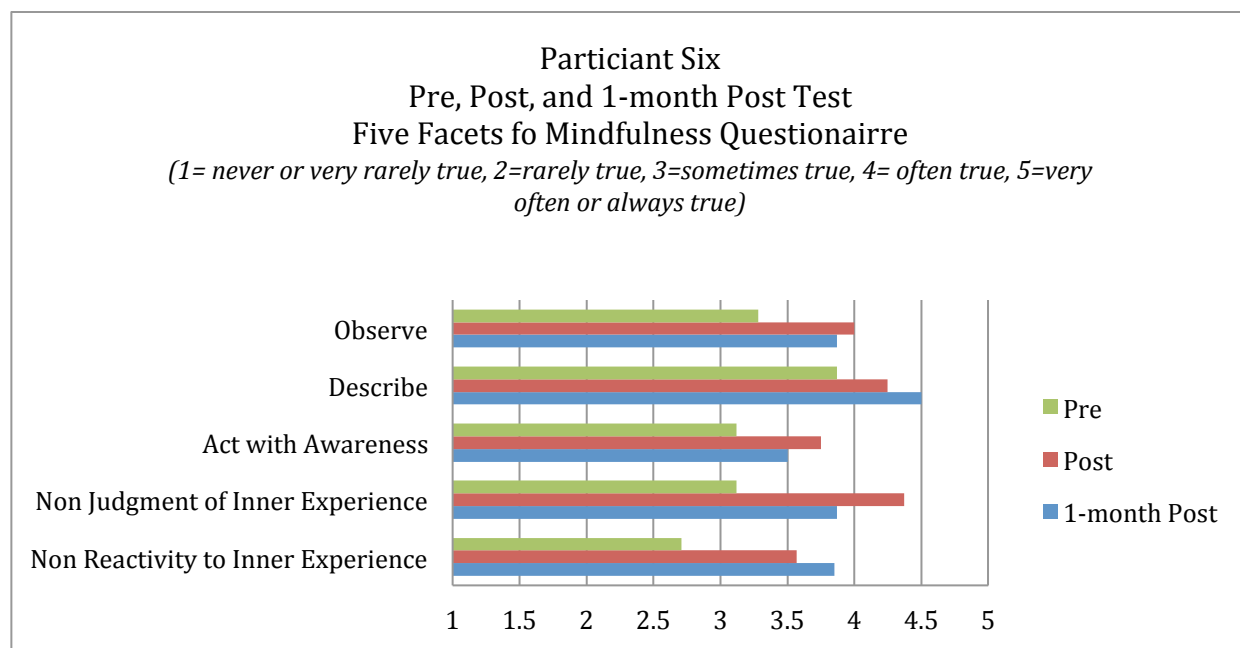


Figure 4.65. Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire – P6.

Describing increased nearly 10%, from sometimes true to often true from the pre to post period, and increased another 5% at the one-month post period. Acting with awareness increased 20% from the pre to post period, and then decreased 6% at the one-month post period, still remaining at the sometimes true level.

Nonjudging of the inner experience increased 40%, from sometimes true to often true at the pre to post period, and then and then decreased 6% at the one-month post period, returning to the sometimes true level. Nonjudging of the inner experience increased 40%, from sometimes true to often true at the pre to post period, and then decreased 11% at the one-month post period, remaining at the sometimes true level. Nonreacting to the inner experience increased 31%, from rarely true to sometimes true at the pre to post period, and increased another 7% at the one-month post period and remaining at the sometimes true level. In four of the five categories, the increases were 20% or higher, typically increasing from sometimes true to often true, with the participant reporting the highest gain in respect to acting with awareness.

Qualitatively, the score improvements were consistent with what I observed in the coaching meetings. During one meeting, the participant shared how she was distracted by judging a leader at work with whom she disagreed—she was able to identify discomfort that manifested in her body as a reaction. She also noticed how her breath tightened when the person spoke. She said that her ability to notice these factors was something that she would not have been aware of before the study. She found that her ability to observe what was happening in herself and others, to act with awareness, and to decrease her inner judging (just allowing the judgment to occur without dwelling on it), were all positive indicators that mirrored the quantitative scores posted in the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire.

Mindfulness survey. Participant Six reported increases in six of the seven categories on the Mindfulness Survey (Figure 4.66). Breath awareness increased by 33%, or increasing from neither disagree nor agree to agree, from the pre to post period, and remained unchanged at the one-month post period. The breath coordination category increased by 37%, increasing from neither disagree or agree to somewhat agree, from the pre to post period, and then increased

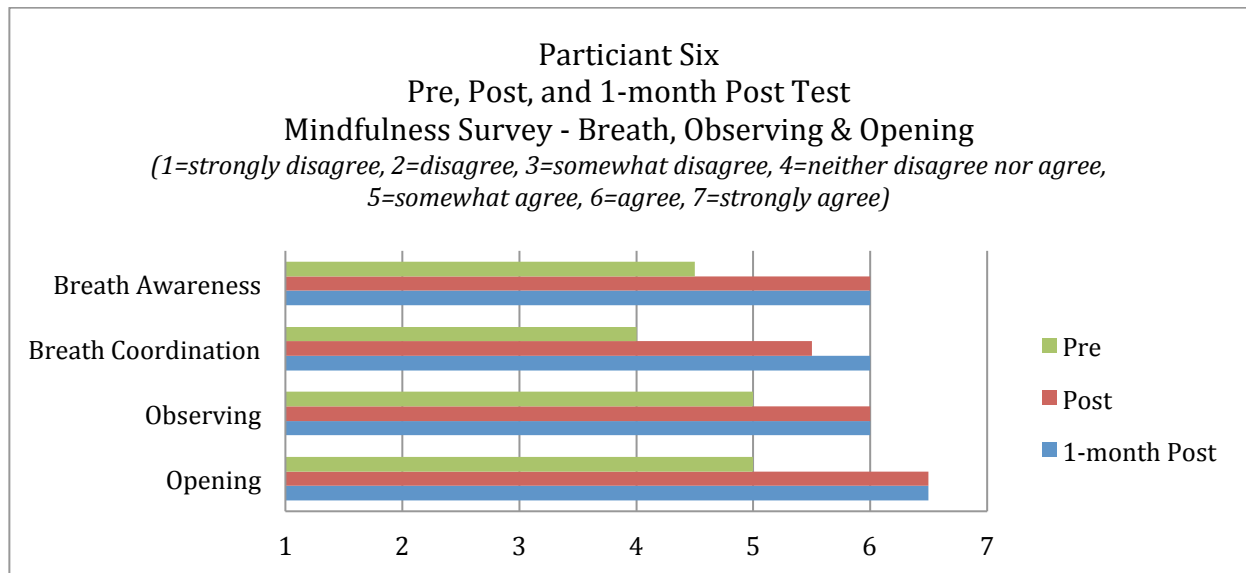


Figure 4.66. Mindfulness survey—breath, observing and opening – P6.

9% to the agree level at the one-month post period. The observing category increased by 20%, or from somewhat agree to agree, at the pre to post period, and remained unchanged at the one-month post period. The opening category increased by 30%, or from somewhat agree to agree, from the pre to post period, and was unchanged at the one-month post period.

Participant Six's ability to stay grounded in her breath appeared to have positive repercussions for her personal life, too. After one difficult weekend that involved her teenage daughter in one instance, and her ailing mom in another, the participant said that she was particularly depressed. She said that her response was to pay attention to what was happening at that moment and to try to re-center herself. She stated,

I sat and did a meditation and I was really glad I did because of the very volatile and stressful situation that occurred a few hours later. The fact that I had meditated allowed me to stay in control of a very difficult situation. I know I would not have been so grounded and at ease throughout this process had I not happened to "step back" to meditate. I was particularly grateful I had done so. I give myself no room during the work week to miss my morning meditation when I have scheduled meetings because I can see the outcomes very clearly; I am more focused, relaxed, more logical and less emotional. There is a definite difference in how things unfold. I am doing my best to keep the commitment to meditation because it really helps me have a more productive and happy day at work.

The participant's response reinforced her ability to step back and observe what was happening.

Rather than wallowing in a depressive episode, she was able to observe her feelings and respond in a positive way through meditation and acceptance of the situation. In effect, the situations did not necessarily change, but her response to it did. She said that she felt more focused, relaxed, and less emotional when she took the time to center.

The participant reported improvements in two of the three categories relating to suspending judgment (Figure 4.67). In respect to noticing, the score increased by 9% from somewhat agree to agree from the pre to post period, and was unchanged at the one-month post period. The participant did not report a change in letting go, remaining at the neither disagree or

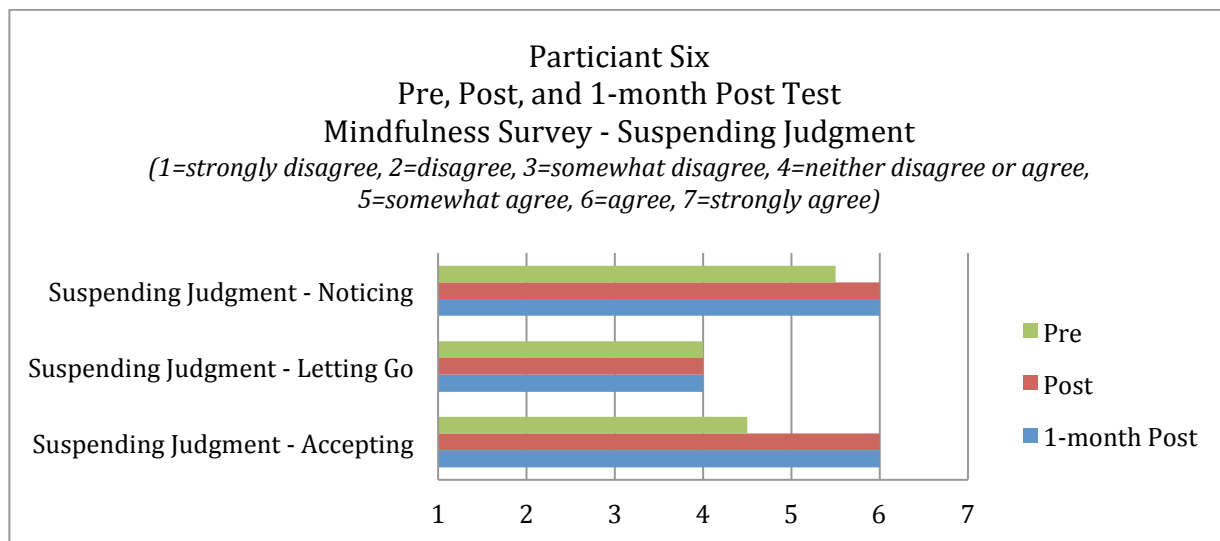
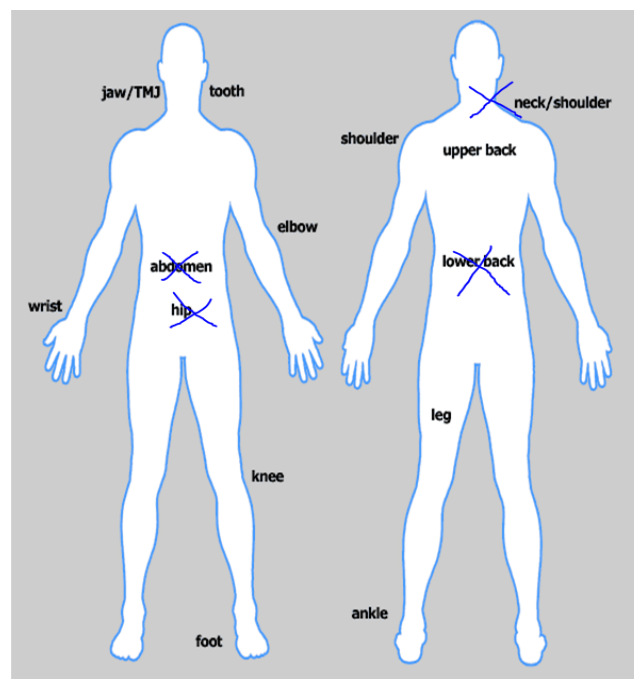


Figure 4.67. Mindfulness survey—suspending judgment – P6.

agree level. The participant reported an increase of 33% in respect to accepting from the pre to post period and remained unchanged at the one-month follow-on period. Toward the end of the study, I observed that the participant was able to recall times in which she judged. There were examples that came up in respect to her boss, her daughter, and a direct report, in particular.

What I noticed was her ability to recall these situations and not to judge herself; rather, she said that she was increasingly able to acknowledge the bigger context of what was happening. She said that when she did this she was less reactive and that helped in relating to others. She also said that there were situations when she judged, but it was only after the fact that she realized it – she said that these moments were powerful because she was able to recognize that the desired outcome could have been different. Moreover, I observed that she increased her proficiency in noticing– she appeared to be self-correcting her behaviors.

Body awareness. Participant Six reported numerous tensions relating to work and life stresses including, neck and shoulder, jaw, and the lower back (Figure 4.68). She also reported abdomen and hip pain that were related to a physical condition and not necessarily from work



Week	Symptom (Ache/Pain)
2	Neck/Shoulders (where stress/tension shows up); Lower back ; Abdomen, Hip
4	Neck/Shoulders ; Forehead ; Jaw (clenching); Lower back (all stress related)
6	Neck/Shoulders (stress/tension); Lower back (stress related)
8	No reported body stress/tension
10	Neck/Shoulders (minor strain related to computer use)

Figure 4.68. Body awareness map – P6.

stress. The participant reported most of these symptoms during the first six weeks. By week eight, the participant did not report any body stress. My observation is that there was a relationship between the levels of stress she was experiencing (which was high) and how this manifested in the body. At week ten, the participant reported minor stress related to computer strain. I observed over the course of the study that she gave greater thought to how the stress in her life manifested physically. At about the midpoint of the study she reflected,

I felt more aware of my physical sensations because of my lower back issue and physical therapy sessions and exercises. It made me notice areas of tightness and the awareness helped me isolate those areas and relax those muscles. I also tried to focus on completing just one task when I was feeling overwhelmed. If I felt like I could "check one item off the list", I was more relaxed and open to completing other tasks as well.

It struck me that the participant was overloaded in terms of body tensions and physical stresses from the start of the study. On one hand, she was making strides as the first few weeks unfolded in terms of simply noticing the stress. In another way, the level of difficult circumstances she encountered was on the rise. A culminating discomfort she shared was in respect to one of her direct reports who had been dismissed from the company during the course of the study. She

said that after he left that she still needed to retrieve the files that were left in his office. She said that it was a difficult process and one that experienced pain, physically. She reflected,

As soon as I sat down in "his" office chair, I felt an uncomfortable feeling in my left chest which I realized is where my heart is. The feeling was strong and uncomfortable, impossible to ignore. I tried to breathe through it but could not get rid of the discomfort. I noticed my feet and legs felt tingly/numb as well. I was in this office for a half hour or more until I completed getting what I needed. Even after getting back to my office, it took a while to get rid of the uncomfortable feeling in my left-side of my chest.

Two weeks later, the participant did not have any stress to report. I observed that the participant adapted quickly to noticing the relationship between stress and how this was experienced in the body. She said that as she noticed these tensions, she became more adept at using the breathing practice or another contemplative exercise. Sometimes her response to stress was a walk, other times it was just sitting and breathing, and other times it was changing things up and doing something different. At the one-month follow-up meeting, she said that she was able to continue monitoring her stress and manage it successfully. She said that she still had feelings of being overwhelmed, at times, but the extent to which she experienced body stress and to respond, gave her confidence in managing her life.

Effects of the abilities. Participant Six's quantitative scores (weekly reflection report and the weekly practice report) for the abilities were high. Most of the scores began at six on a seven-point scale, leaving little room for improvement. My observation was that she rated herself higher than her true baseline. It is possible that the sensitivities of the instrument only picked-up minor change. A lack of self-awareness may have factored into the rationale. Yet, the quantitative scores on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire and the Mindfulness Survey both showed baselines that were lower, and having improved by the end of study. The qualitative feedback was rich in respect to the effects of the abilities and, overall, painted a more accurate picture of change that occurred.

The participant reported a score of six on a seven-point scale (equal to the agree level) on her ability to pay attention and remained flat throughout the study (Figure 4.69). During one coaching meeting, I introduced the pause, relax, open technique, similar to Participant Four. The

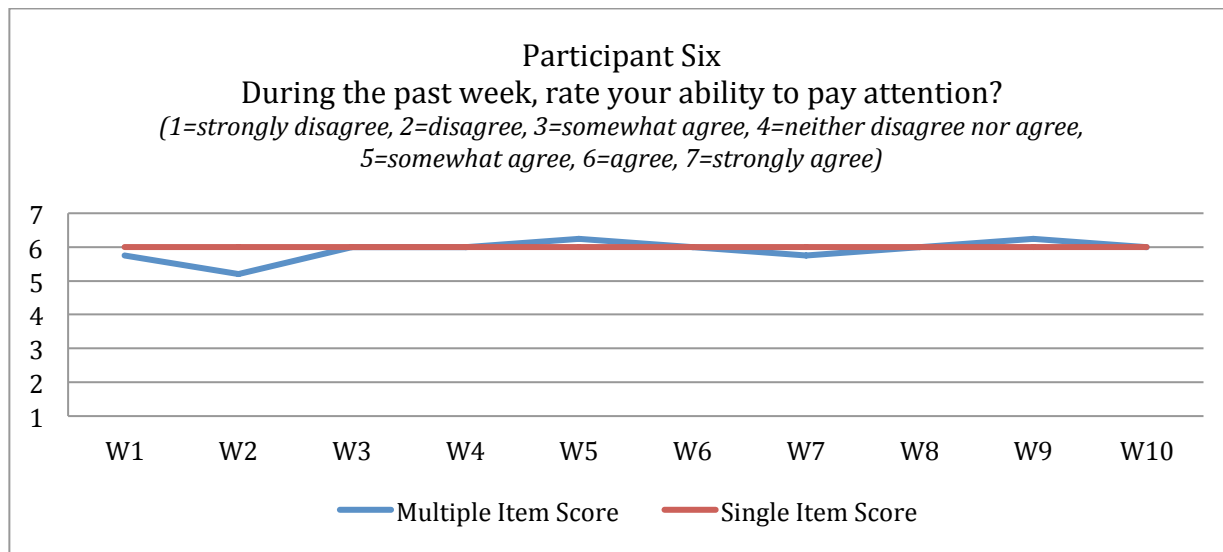


Figure 4.69. Paying attention (multiple and single item score) – P6.

following week she reported that it was beneficial to keep her focused and present when speaking to someone. By the end of the study, she reflected that she had not realized how distracted she had really been—either caught up in the moment or unable to take a step back to see what was really happening. She said that the breath practice supported her ability to pay attention and keep focus in difficult circumstances.

In another example involving her teenage daughter, she said that after they had a difficult conversation, she noticed how her body tightened. She said that she was unable to keep focus during the conversation because she was caught up in the moment and held tight to her point of view. She said that with the practices that she was better able to let go of expectations and to be a better listener. At a later time, she reported another potentially challenging interaction with her daughter. This time, the results were different. She stated,

I had done my morning meditation Friday, even though I was not going to be in the office that day. Shortly thereafter, I ended up in an unexpected, significant conversation with my teenager. It was clear to me that I was able to deliver a consistent, unemotional message to her that I would not have been able to convey, had I not "stepped back" and meditated first.

The ability of the participant to focus and not get tangled in an emotional downward spiral was paying off. The participant said that over the course of the study that she was able to make steady progress in her ability to stay present; in turn, she said that she was increasingly better able to step back and adjust in situations that otherwise could have resulted in confrontation.

The participant reported a score of six on a seven-point scale, or equal to the agree level in respect to her ability to connect with others. This score remained the same throughout the study, with an increase to strongly agree at week six and seven before returning to the original level of agree (Figure 4.70). The participant said that one of the ways her ability to connect with

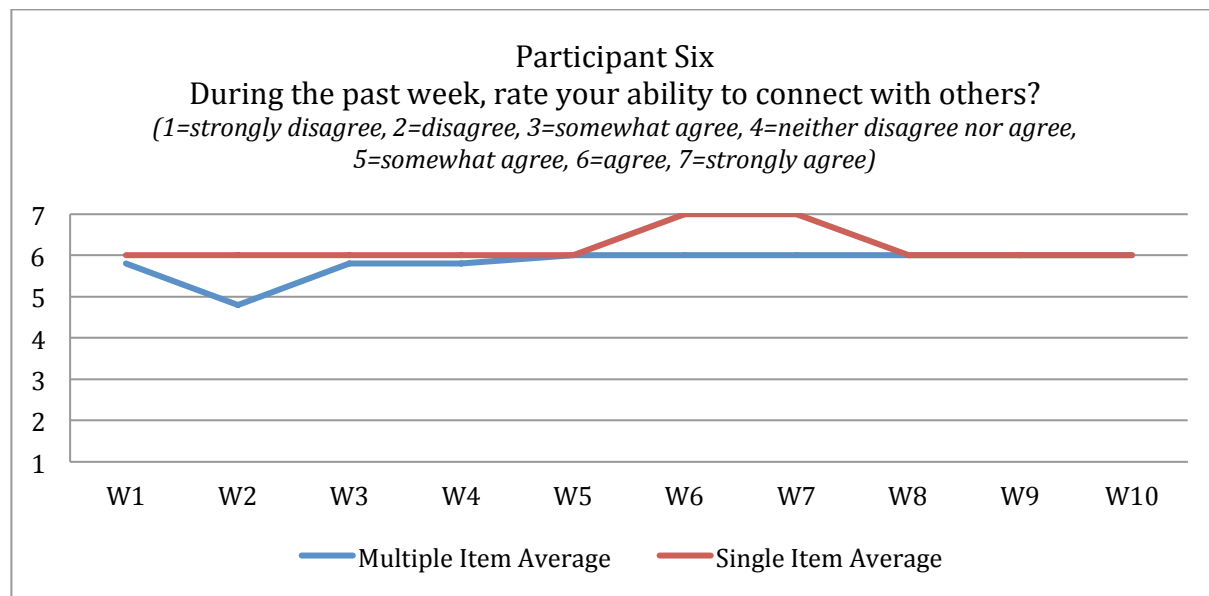


Figure 4.70. Connecting with others (multiple and single item score) – P6.

others had improved was that she was becoming more patient. I observed at the beginning of the study that she wanted to achieve her goals quickly. This was the case with one of her direct

reports. Her thinking was that she would be able to connect with her because her other direct report who was very time-consuming had left the organization. Through the practices, she reported that she was able to slow herself down and re-align expectations. We explored ways that she could make moderate inroads with her direct report so that their relationship could develop over time. She said toward the end of the study that it was an increased understanding of herself that facilitated a more realistic expectation of the time necessary to nurture the relationship.

Participant Six reported her ability to manage stress as “agree” for most of the study (Figure 4.71). The finding was similar to the ability to pay attention and connect with others. The starting point was high (again, a six on a seven-point scale) and with little room to demonstrate improvement. The participant reported an increase in the score at about week four, which coincided with the timing that one of her direct report’s left the organization. Thereafter, she reported her ability to manage stress a seven on the seven-point scale. Despite these high

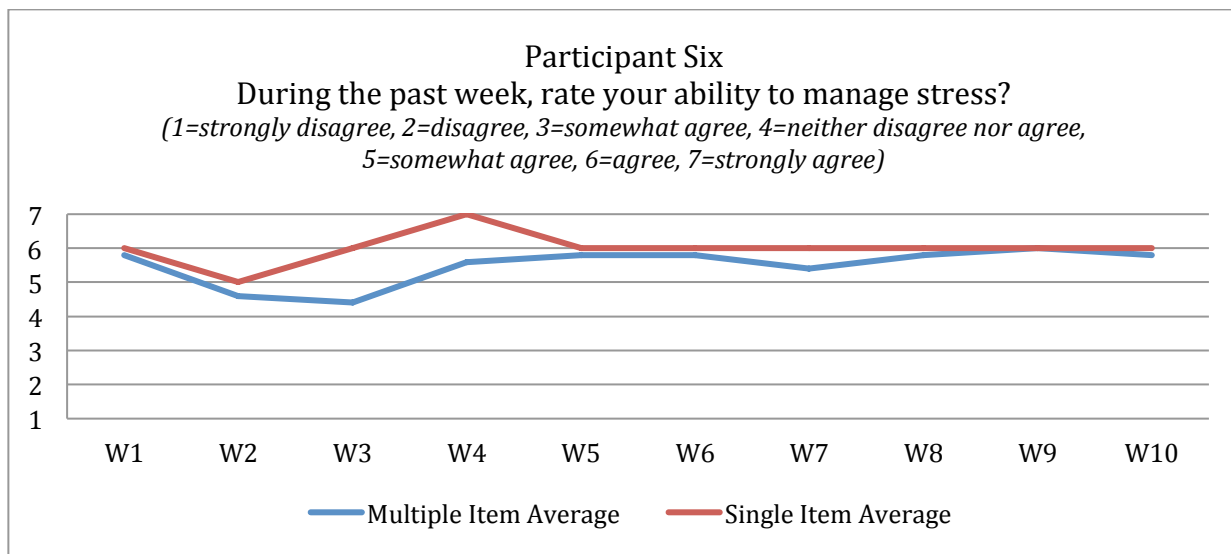


Figure 4.71. Managing stress (multiple and single item score) – P6.

scores, I observed high levels of stress in our coaching meetings. The body mapping exercise also confirmed physical tension. One of the ways that she managed stress was through the pause-relax-open technique. She placed a note on her computer as a reminder to keep the idea top of her mind. She said that she found this helpful because it helped remind her to step back and look first.

The participant said that she has more appreciation for maintaining the breathing practice. She said that when she was able to keep consistent that she could get a lot more done and, generally, felt more productive because she had clarity about what was important and what was not. She said that this puts her in a better mood, too. Moreover, the qualitative feedback suggested that the participant began with a high degree of stress; she said that with the application of the practices, she was better able to manage stress and difficult circumstances.

The ability to see things from a wider lens and multiple perspectives was reported very high (equal to the strongly agree level) from at the start (Figure 4.72). In fact, her score for the multiple item average was near perfect (strongly agree), and the single item average fluctuated between six and seven for the study (agree to strongly agree). Qualitatively, she shared that the

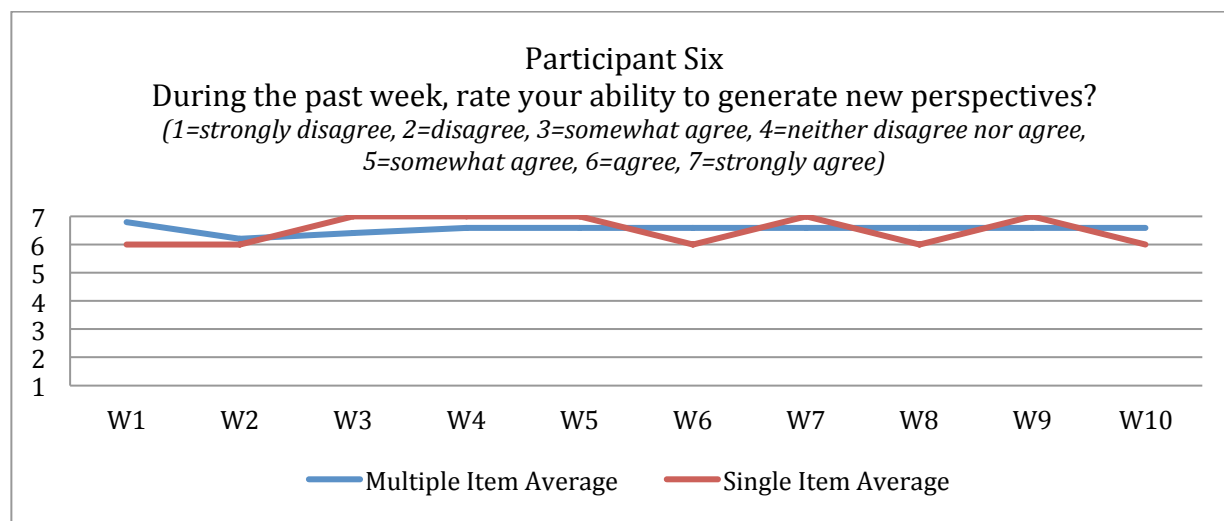


Figure 4.72. Multiplying perspectives (multiple and single item score) – P6.

meditation practice, more generally, supported her ability to step back and see things from a broader lens. She said there was, “no doubt in my mind, the meditation practice is key to successful communication and interactions with staff and a great increase in focus and productivity as well as creative thought. Win, win, win.” At the end of the study, I asked how she thought that her ability to multiply perspectives had changed. She stated, “I believe that the meditation practices made me a better person and a better listener and in a better space to consider perspectives and things that I could not have considered otherwise.” She went on to say, “I was not as open to others and listening to what they had to say without the practices.” My observations at the coaching meetings were similar to her feedback. She entered the study thinking that she already did this practice well. The one on one dialogue facilitated the opportunity to uncover new opportunities to look at challenges in different ways.

Participant Six reported high scores on her ability to demonstrate new leader abilities (Figure 4.73). An agree score was reported for the first two weeks, then it increased to strongly agree through week seven, before returning to agree for the remaining three weeks of the

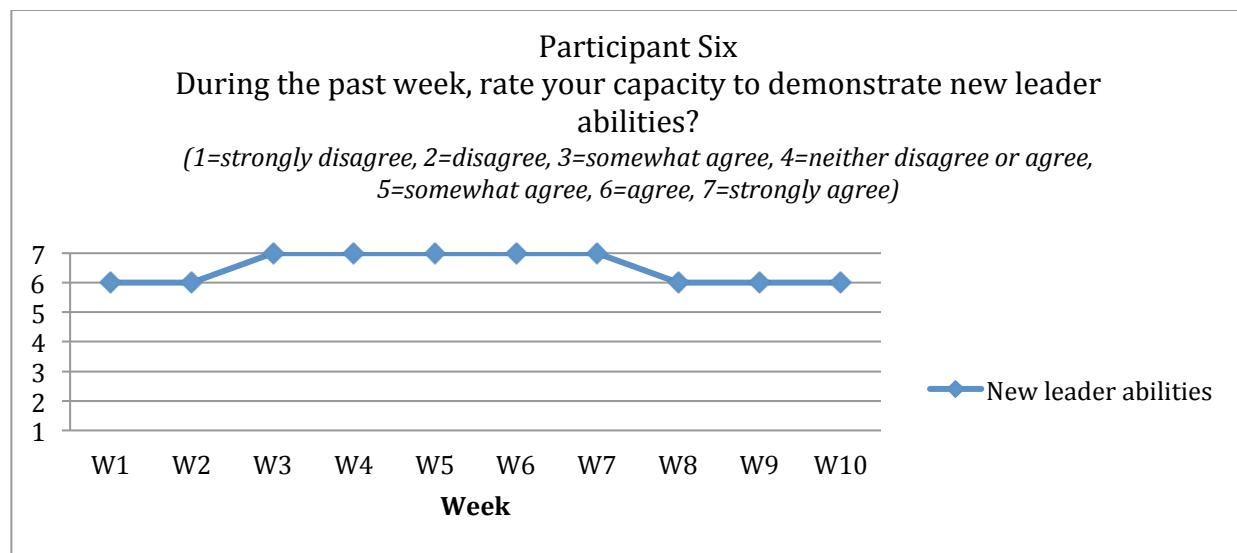


Figure 4.73. Leader abilities (single item score) – P6.

study. The quantitative scores were similar to the other weekly scores in that the baseline was high. The qualitative feedback, however, provided a deeper understanding of the change that occurred. The participant stated, “I have changed. I am able to stand back and see things more objectively and see things in perspective. My communication and thinking is much better. I don’t always know what is coming next and I am better able to accept this.” She said that she is more methodological in her approach and that she can see things more clearly. She said that she used to think of herself as a methodical listener, but with increased awareness, she noticed how she might judge, and how this could cloud her thinking. The participant said that she judged herself and others less, as a result of becoming a better listener. She said that she is more patient and empathetic because she can see things in new ways and does not hold on to ideas as much. She went on to say that because she tries less often to things, her stress is much reduced allowing her to be a better leader. She also said that she feels more productive and is able to get out of a victim mode. Last, she said that the change of taking control of her emotions has been huge, and she feels that missing meditation is not an option. She closes, “I think the practices are potentially life changing and a transformational experience. I can’t see a downside to them – this is a huge plus for any company and employee to have greater well-being.”

Summary. Participant Six entered the study with a high degree of stress and uncertainty with respect to her team and her future with the organization. The participant reported immediate benefit from the breathing practice with respect to coping and navigating difficult change. The participant had little to no introduction to mindful practices, but regularly practiced yoga. As the weeks unfolded and her proficiency with the practices increased, her feedback was that the practices were having a positive effect in multiple and unexpected ways. Many of the challenges that she encountered did not go away, but she said that her response to them did. Most

notable was being able to stand back and see things objectively, less reactively, and with less emotional entanglement.

Some additional salient themes of the participant included:

- A transformed relationship with breath – she originally described her breath as wanting to hurry up and felt stressed while doing it, to describing it as peaceful, focused, and relaxed;
- Body stress in the shoulder, neck, forehead, jaw, hip, abdomen, and lower back to no reported stress by week eight, and minor computer strain at week ten;
- Increases in all five categories of the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, with nonjudging of the inner experience increasing by 40%, increasing from sometimes true to often true;
- Improved scores in five of the seven categories on the Mindfulness Survey, with the ability to coordinate her breath increasing by 46%, improving from neither disagree nor agree to agree.

In respect to the weekly surveys, the quantitative data was flat, with scores typically beginning and ending at the agree level. Most of the scores were reported high at baseline (either agree or strongly agree). The qualitative feedback suggested that change took place, consistent with the findings reported on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire and the Mindfulness Survey. The ability to demonstrate new leader behaviors included being able to step back and gain perspective. The participant said that she was less reactive and more objective. She said that she was less emotional and was a better listener, less judgmental, and more connected with others. Last, Participant Six was a learner; she was willing to experiment with the practices and

go deep in discussion to understand herself. This orientation supported her confidence and propelled her toward positive change.

Chapter Summary

The integrative analysis included a holistic review of the quantitative and qualitative data. The study was guided by the research question: What is the effect of contemplative practice on organizational leaders? Underpinning the question were four sub-questions: did the participants engage in the practices frequently and daily, if regular practice resulted in any change in the abilities (paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, multiplying perspectives) as a result of the pre post and weekly surveys, and if the change resulted in a heightened self of perceived leader effectiveness.

The analysis found that participants engaged in the practices on a daily basis. Participants reported that each practice was exercised between two to four times daily, or between 13 to 15 times daily with the five practices combined.

All participants reported an improvement in their awareness and quality of breath. These enhancements included reporting that their breath felt natural, they were relaxed and calm, and that they were better able to focus. This was in contrast to the start of the study when the relationship to breath was characterized as difficult or awkward, thoughts rushing in and out of the mind, and a limited ability to direct attention.

All participants increased skills in observing and nonreacting to the inner experience, as reported on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire.

All participants reported improvement in breath awareness, breath coordination, and observing, as reported on the Mindfulness Survey.

All participants reported body stresses at week two and all but one (Participant Two) continued to report tension at week four. The tipping point in a lack of body stress occurred at week eight with two people reporting body stress and only one (Participant Six) at week ten. Participant Six did not report body stress at week eight (the only time that she did not).

Participants reported a change in their ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and multiply perspectives as reported with the weekly survey – multiple item average scores. Participants One through Five reported improvement in all four abilities. Participant Six reported no change with respect to managing stress and multiplying perspectives; she reported scores that were very high from the start with little room for improvement.

Participants reported a change in their ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and multiply perspectives with respect to the weekly survey – single item average scores. Participant One reported an increase in her ability to connect with others, manage stress, and leader abilities. Participant Two reported increases in all abilities. Participant Three did not report an increase in any of the abilities; scores were reported as very high from the beginning. Participant Four reported an increase in all five abilities. Participant Five reported an increase in four of the five abilities. Participant Six did not report an increase in the abilities. Similar to Participant Three, many of the scores reported at the beginning of the study were very high.

Participants perceived an increase in their leader abilities. The most frequently cited change included (1) perspective taking and thinking more strategically (and less reactively) , (2) dealing with ambiguity, managing change and transition, and being adaptable, (3) listening and patience, and (4) composure, including not becoming defensive, handling stress well, and working through frustration.

More specifically, seven distinct themes resulted from the research question. These findings are summarized as the following:

1. All six participants engaged in the practices every day between 13 to 15 times daily.
2. All six participants reported an improved relationship with their breath.
3. Participants reported improvements across multiple categories of the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, with all participants reporting an increase in observing and nonreacting to the inner experience.
4. All six participants reported increases in breath awareness, breath coordination, and observing on the Mindfulness Survey.
5. Five of the six participants reported that they no longer held stress or tension in the body by week eight, with the sixth person reporting no stress by week ten.
6. All six participants reported an increase in their ability to pay attention and connect with others; five of the six participants reported improvements in their ability to manage stress and multiply perspectives.
7. Participants perceived an increase in their leader abilities.

Next, building on the evidence and the major findings, Chapter V presents a discussion and summary of the findings, conclusions based on the research question, its significance with respect to leading as a way of being, and within the broader leadership context.

Chapter V: Leading as a Way of Being:

Discussion of the Results

Introduction

The purpose of the study is an inquiry into the effectiveness of contemplative practices on organizational leaders. This study suggests that being a leader, and by extension, leadership, is not merely a series of actions, but rather, a way of thinking and being. By leadership, I mean a way of being that is reflective and thoughtful about self, that values relationships and the present, that is connected to others, that is not narrowly striving or ego-driven, and that is liberating in its effects (Sinclair, 2007). This perspective facilitates the ability to be calm and resilient in the midst of uncertainty. This definition contrasts with the idea of leaders only as doers where a specific outcome is expected. Contemplative practice and mindfulness, in contrast, is what leadership and being human is all about.

This study is guided by the research question: What is the effect of contemplative practice on organizational leaders? The goal for the study is to:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of how informal contemplative practices effect leader capability;
2. Expand the knowledge base of leadership through the lens of informal contemplative practice;
3. Reveal how a set of distinct informal contemplative practices can be applied to conditions of uncertainty.

The research question, study goals, and findings presented in Chapter IV, are the basis for the ensuing discussion and conclusions. First, I discuss the major areas in which the literature presents the effect of contemplative practices on leaders in light of the findings. Next, I consider

the implications of the Leading as a Way of Being model in respect to what I found to be consistent and what surprised me. Then, I discuss what all of this means and what I learned. Seven distinct contributions are presented drawing inference and insight based on the findings. Last, study limitations and concluding thoughts are presented.

Literature Themes, Gaps and Study Findings

In reviewing the literature, peer and practitioner reviews were conducted. Peer reviewed themes from the mind body literature were researched in the context of stress, anxiety, change, and organizational leaders. Three themes have been identified as a result of the research: stillness, movement, and relational practices. These themes are consistent with three of the seven contemplative practices that the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society puts forth (see tree of contemplative practices in the Appendix B). Each of these three areas is presented next.

Stillness practices for individuals are found to have implications for the research. Research focuses on finding effective approaches that impact state and trait changes, and promote well-being. The research conducted was largely quantitative (Carmody, Baer, Lykins, & Olendzki, 2009; Hollis-Walker & Colosimo, 2010; Shapiro, Oman, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008), with many studies focusing on psychopathologies that are not included in the study (Harrison, Manocha & Rubia, 2004; Miller, Rathus & Linehan, 2007). This study focuses on state changes, meaning that the survey instruments are designed to uncover transitory emotional responses involving feelings and experiences, as opposed to trait changes that seek to identify permanent behavioral changes. For example, participants experienced varying degrees of improvement on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire. Of the 32 scores for the six participants on the questionnaire (five possible scores per participant), only four scores were reported as not improving. This finding suggests a high degree of change occurred across the

categories (observing, describing, acting with awareness, nonjudging of the inner experience, and nonreacting to the inner experience). These improvements remained elevated one-month after the study as was revealed in the follow-up meeting. However, it is not clear if these changes could be characterized as trait changes due to length of the study (14 to 16 weeks for each participant). In a study comparing short-term and long-term meditators (Taylor & Mireault, 2008), there was not a significant difference reported. It is difficult to make parallel connections between these studies and this because they are based on formal-meditation programs. On the other hand, this study introduces informal mindful practices that are engaged in moment by moment. This study makes clear that positive transitory emotional responses occurred. Participants reported changes almost immediately (within several weeks) as a result of engaging in the mindful practices.

Studies relating to stillness practices in organization-based roles hold promise. Stillness practices include formal meditation, practices to quiet the mind such as contemplative activities or centering prayer. Transcendental Meditation is an example of a long-standing meditative approach due to its simple technique that requires no lifestyle change aside from two 20-minute daily sittings. TM findings suggest (Alexander et al., 1993; Alexander, Langer, Newman, Chandler, & Davies, 1989; Broome, Orme-Johnson, Schmidt-Wilk, 2005; Schmidt-Wilk, 2003) that there is an increase in the ability to manage stress and conflict as a result of the effort. This study found that all six participants reported a positive effect in their ability to feel calm and relaxed and to manage stress as a result of the breathing practice. This finding was in contrast to the beginning of the study when participants struggled to notice their breath and to focus for more than one to two minutes at a time. This was consistent with what Alexander et al. (1989) found among a TM group that reported experiencing restful alertness that included 73 volunteers

over a 12-week period. Again, while the nature of the group was different than in this study, the similarity in response, including coping (managing stress), and patience, is consistent with the findings of this research.

A second area focusing on the peer-reviewed literature includes movement practices. These types of practices include yoga, labyrinth walking, tai chi, and walking meditation. Research in these domains largely focus on state vs. trait changes in short-term and long-term meditators, similar to what was found in the stillness practices. The findings suggest (Davidson, 2003; Kjellgren & Taylor, 2008; Lazar et al., 2005; Taylor & Mireault, 2008) that there is an immediate increase in concentration abilities with shorter-term meditation practice. Movement studies focus on formal meditation practices; effects of informal practices were not found. The Kjellgren & Taylor (2008) study reveals that inexperienced meditators perceive a greater difference between meditation and a normal walking state than did experienced meditators. This makes sense because someone who is learning a new habit or skill is more likely to notice its effect. Experienced meditators, on the other hand, having already integrated the meditative state into their daily lives, perceive a new normal.

This is an interesting finding because deeper change among the six participants in this study occurred incrementally; the breathing exercise, on the other hand, was reported as having an immediate effect. This is the case with body stress in that four of the six participants said that it lessened significantly at the eight week mark - continual and daily practice is required for more systemic change to take hold. The consistency between the Kjellgren and Taylor study, and this one, is the point of entry. Inexperienced meditators struggle with concentration and have difficulty noticing simple breath awareness. This finding suggests that the initial weeks of practice are critical for developing habits to deal with future situations.

The final area of peer reviewed literature is in respect to relational practices. This area contained the fewest studies that intersected with this study. Consciousness studies focus on strengthening awareness (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Marques, 2010; McCollum, 1999; Schneider, Zollo, & Manocha, 2010), but are inconclusive in terms of results. In the McCollum study, 24 participants were instructed to practice TM twice a day for 15 to 20 minutes over eight months. The Leadership Practices Inventory was administered to measure if any change occurred. The findings showed greater effectiveness at work, increased energy for work and home activities, greater comfort in showing initiative, and increased evenness in stressful situations, when compared with the control group. In this study, five of the six participants report an improvement in their ability to manage stress, and qualitatively, they report clarity and increased focus on what is important, and greater effectiveness at work (in a variety of ways including perspective-taking and dealing with ambiguity), and home (better connections with others, increased patience and empathy). The McCollum study included monthly coaching similar to this study, but the coaching frequency in the McCollum research was a quarter of the time spent in my study.. I found the coaching to be instrumental in giving the participants an opportunity to make sense of the practices on a weekly basis. More broadly, the intersection of the McCollum study and this one suggests that with daily and ongoing meditative practice, changes in leader abilities occur.

In reflection, the peer reviewed literature focuses on quantitative, randomized, controlled samples which use self-report assessments. These studies report positive changes in a variety of ways, including the ability to manage stress, develop positive coping mechanisms, and work effectiveness. What I found consistent in these studies is that through the ongoing, daily application of meditation (and over a relatively short time-period), there is a positive effect in

respect to the abilities. Each of the studies reports different specific results, but generally, all point to consistent themes of improved well-being and functioning. The fact that this study shares similar results with many of the peer-reviewed, largely quantitative approaches, using a small sample size with the application of informal mindful practices, is surprising. Perhaps due to the nature of the quantitative studies, there is a lack of understanding of how individuals experience personal changes and how the process takes shape (for example, what struggles did the participants experience). The coaching meetings provided perspective into this dynamic with the insight being that the learning process is uneven, and often involves regression before habits stick. Moreover, these studies, including this one, suggest that with regular and sustained application of the mindful practices, change is possible.

Whereas quantitative studies focused on randomized, controlled samples that involved interventions, practitioner literature integrates specific practices such as breath and deep listening. The literature reveals (Carroll, 2008; Sinclair, 2007; Weiss, 2004) that breath is essential to a contemplative way of being. These findings suggest that with increased attention to the breath, the ability to connect with others and feel less attachment to ideas can result. Carroll (2004) points out that it is the balancing of *getting* somewhere with *being* somewhere that is difficult. In other words, we are accustomed to doing things with specific outcomes in mind. We focus on achieving something and, consequently, overlook the process that led up to the outcome. Participants in this study had varying degrees of struggle with not having an outcome in mind. Participant Five resisted performing some of the practices, especially when it was not tied to a goal. For example, taking deliberate walking steps between meetings, or taking a slow but intentional drink of water in order to bring attention to the breath, were foreign and unappealing for her and were not practiced. These types of practices were embraced by the other

participants who supplied the contexts so that they could make the practices their own. Carroll speaks of “letting go” as a way to achieve balance and allow ourselves to be available to what we experience, whether one finds it easy or not. In contrast, Participant Three was open to meeting challenges head on and using simple contemplative practices as a way to direct attention. She was a model participant in this regard and the positive results reinforced her practice.

Traditional leadership programs typically include measures such as a 360-degree survey to increase self-awareness. These approaches provide insight into behaviors and reveal performance gaps and development opportunities. They assume that sufficient change in the person will result by focusing on the cognitive processes. What these programs lack is a connection to the mind body relationship and the power offered by a holistic approach to leader development. The benefit of recognizing somatic experiences can alert the leader to emotional triggers; for example tension that manifests with tight shoulders and quickened breathing could serve as a warning sign for the leader that they are about to lose composure. Mindful leadership, in contrast, begins with the breath as a way to build personal awareness, rather than focusing primarily on actions and outcomes. At first blush, this may seem easy, almost quizzical. But this is hard work requiring commitment and a high-degree of awareness. This study reveals how six bright, highly educated managers from diverse backgrounds and organizations, struggle with a simple breathing exercise. Growing in breath and relationship to self requires daily commitment. In the case of Participant One, she slowly but continually pushed herself to explore new areas of personal importance and applied the practices with greater frequency. Participant Six increased her length of a sitting meditation from three to 15 or 20 minutes when she experienced emotional tension. Participant Two added a second daily meditation to stretch out the initial success experienced. As a result, he reported that he was better able to manage

stress and his confidence grew. Mindful leadership requires that you stay attuned to your emotions; this means that as awareness improves it becomes easier to meet personal needs and be an advocate for your own well-being.

Sinclair (2007) sees a link between breath and leadership, and is pushing boundaries in respect to challenging traditional leadership thinking. She sees the benefit of breath for the leader in several ways, including: changing one's relationship to oneself; changing how we are with others and; bringing us into the present. Building on this premise, all six participants in this study said that their breath awareness increased (on the Mindfulness Survey); all reported that the ability to connect with others improved (on the weekly survey-multiple item score), and all participants reported increases in paying attention (on the weekly survey-multiple item score).

Closely related to paying attention is the ability to observe. Observing is about perceiving behaviors when under stress such as seeing the tendency to want to avoid a difficult situation or becoming silent in the face of a disagreement. Through these simple acts, increased focus facilitates feeling grounded and can result in a cognitive flexibility and ability to deal with uncertainties. In other words, it is not that any one of these acts is revolutionary, but rather, they become the means by which perpetual self-awareness of circumstances can be heightened and enable life to be lived in a centered calm way.

Other literature findings that intersect with this study include Weiss (2004) who emphasizes an inward focus to find new meaning in suffering, Palmer (2000) who views looking inward as significant step toward self-actualizing, and Carson and Langer (2006) who emphasize self-acceptance and living daily life without pretense or concern of the judgment of others.

Attention to breath enables one to take an interior orientation. This is difficult for the beginner because the typical experience is a flood of thoughts coming and going, and the struggle of knowing what to do with them. As practice deepens, thoughts do not necessarily decrease, but the ability to notice and let them go does.

One of the most difficult practices the participants reported was self-judging and judging others. The ability to suspend judgment took longer to show improvement, as reported in the coaching meeting, than the other practices. Participants were less likely to share that they judged themselves or others until they felt comfortable with the coach-participant relationship, which typically occurred around the three or four-week time frame. By the end of the study, four of the six participants reported success in this regard, saying that their nonjudgment of the inner experience increased (on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire). In another respect, all participants reported increases in nonreacting to the inner experience (on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire). In other words, a judgment may have been made, but participants were able to recognize this and reported being better equipped to perceive and notice feelings, step back, and refrain from judging. This does not mean that one disregards the importance or value of what another person is saying, but it does suggest that one is in tune with their feelings and that they are able to keep things in perspective.

Another key aspect of the practices is suspending judgment. Senge et al. (2004) speak about *suspending* as a key tool in breaking habitual thinking. This skill is about being able to reflect and taking a step back to enhance awareness. The mindful practices in this study are designed to engage others in ways that create opportunities to reflect so that a wider lens might be gained. The observing practice on the Mindfulness Survey, as well as the observe category on the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, relate to this and in both of these surveys all six

participants reported an increase in this ability. When participants were asked at the end of the study how their leader abilities improved, four of the six reported the ability to increase perspective-taking and two said that they became less reactive. Developing reflective habits provide moments to see things in new ways and the opportunity to re-frame assumptions. The idea of suspending judgment has parallels with Mezirow (2000) who states that learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind.

Last, Wheatley (2006) expands our thinking by stating what is painfully obvious, but difficult to internalize: we refuse to see ambiguity and surprise as part of life because we hold onto the myth that prediction and control are possible. Many of the participants struggled with the idea that it is okay to sit or accept that uncertainty exists and do not have to act. This revealed itself during coaching meetings, often in respect to interactions with people whom they found difficult. As people, we seem to have a control program that requires constant check and balance. This is true especially in circumstances where little control is possible and we tend to hold on to the illusion that a different outcome should be achieved. Wheatley reminds us that, particularly in Western cultures, an old but familiar story of dominion and control continues to play itself out – this can be seen in our relationship with nature in that it is only within the last several decades that we have had more of a collective conscious and will to address the ramifications that our actions have had on the environment. We are slowly learning how real decisions effect our environment and the fragility of life. Contemplative practice has a role in taking a wider lens of the collective decisions we make.

The paradox of employing a mindful practice is that by slowing down and increasing attention on the breath, we begin to see circumstances in new ways and with multiple

perspectives. This approach facilitates responses to circumstances in open and less controlled ways, or as Wheatley (2005) suggests, a willingness to be surprised. The act of slowing down can be a difficult proposition because mindless behavior feeds on itself. The result is stress and a lack of attention to the breath. In this study, there seems to be a relationship between managing stress and the breathing exercise. As stress is reduced and self-care increases, reports of body tension are reduced, and by week eight, four of the six participants said that they no longer held stress. This result extended itself to five of the six participants at week ten. Focusing on the breath makes it easier to respond in ways that allows for moment-by-moment attention. It is very difficult to focus on the past, or anticipate the future, regardless of the thoughts going in and out of the mind, as long as attention is brought back to the breath. This is the power of the practices and what makes them potentially transformative: by slowing down and returning to the breath, worry and hope diminish.

In reflection, the study builds on the work of others and sharpens the focus of the research question. I am surprised by the degree to which the participants reported many of the same results found in the quantitative, controlled, randomized, and self-reporting studies. I am affirmed with the practitioner literature in that the breath was foundational from which the other practices evolved. I am confounded at how little the literature, peer or practitioner-based, speaks directly to the role of coaching as an intermediary force to increase effectiveness. The literature is scant in this regard and largely overlooked coaching as a force for change. I am also surprised that the literature lacked focus on the importance of participants' readiness for change (i.e., willing to try new things, open to feedback). In this study, all but one of the participants was curious, open, and development oriented. Those who exhibited these characteristics were

flexible and adaptable in applying the practices and were better equipped to experience change through the mindful practices.

Implications for Leading as a Way of Being

In Chapter II, the conceptual model for Leading as a Way of Being was introduced (Figure 5.1). The model is an outgrowth of the literature, particularly with practitioner reviews that present nuanced ideas of leadership in a mind body context. Breath in relationship to self-

Leadership as a Way of Being:

A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Source: Influenced by the work of Bhikkhu (1997); Carroll (2006, 2008); Hahn (1976); Kabat-Zinn (1994); Langer (1989); Rock and Page (2009); Silsbee (2010); Sinclair (2008); Vaill (1996); Weiss (2004); Wheatley (2005); Wilbur et. al (2008)

Figure 5.1. Leadership as a way of being: A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence, Part A.

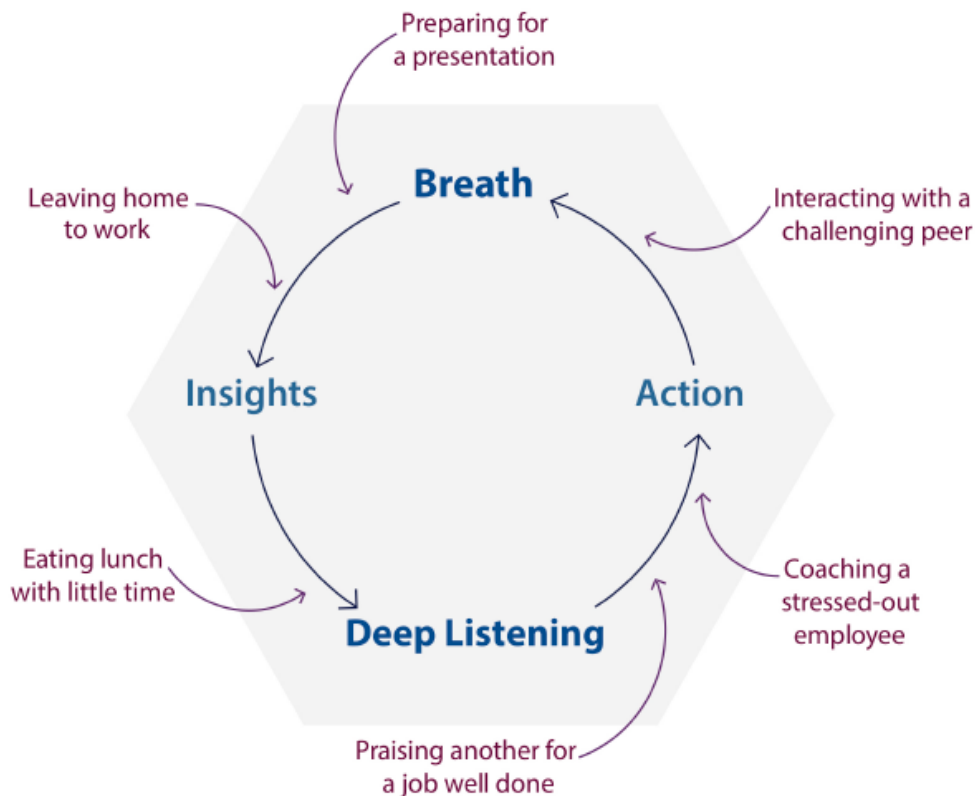
awareness was a prevalent theme. This includes noticing the distinct elements of the breath such as inhalation and exhalation, or how short or long it is as key indicators relating to attention. Another salient theme in the practitioner literature is deep listening. Deep listening is about being able to observe others in a mind body context by drawing on dynamic forces such as noticing quality of breath and how it manifests. Breath is the foundational element for creating self-awareness and perceiving emotion; knowing this informs an inward orientation whereby change begins within. Breath relates to listening because to listen in a deep manner requires attunement to the quality of breath. In other words, deep listening is a holistic experience and draws on multiple dimensions (i.e., emotional, relational, somatic). Listening only from the point of view of cognitive processes of perception and reasoning lacks alignment with the whole person and has limiting effects and can result in rigidity.

In this study, participants began with a general sense that focusing on the breath would be a part of the process; but five of the six did not have a specific sense of what this meant (the outlier was Participant Two who had previous meditation experience). The feedback provided early on attested to a lack of awareness of breath. The initial reaction was cognitive in that participants understood what I was communicating, but did not yet have the experience to make sense of it, let alone feel that they could apply it to their lives. A willingness to try, and give the experiment time, was needed. Deep listening was understood more easily in comparison to the breath; to do this effectively requires a high level of attunement to the self; a keen observer's mind is needed. This is akin to watching yourself in a movie and at the same time being in the movie, and the ability to objectively describe what is happening.

Figure 5.2 reintroduces and expands on the basic model, Leading as a Way of Being, and illustrates how breath and deep listening interact with outside forces, such as preparing for a

Leadership as a Way of Being:

A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Figure 5.2. Leadership as a way of being: A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence, Part B.

contentious meeting or coaching someone in distress. The connection between breath and deep listening remain at the center of this process. An example might include noticing how breath quickens in anticipation of a meeting with a direct report who has had recent challenges.

Another symptom of stress might be a diminished ability to listen or becoming short (i.e., cutting

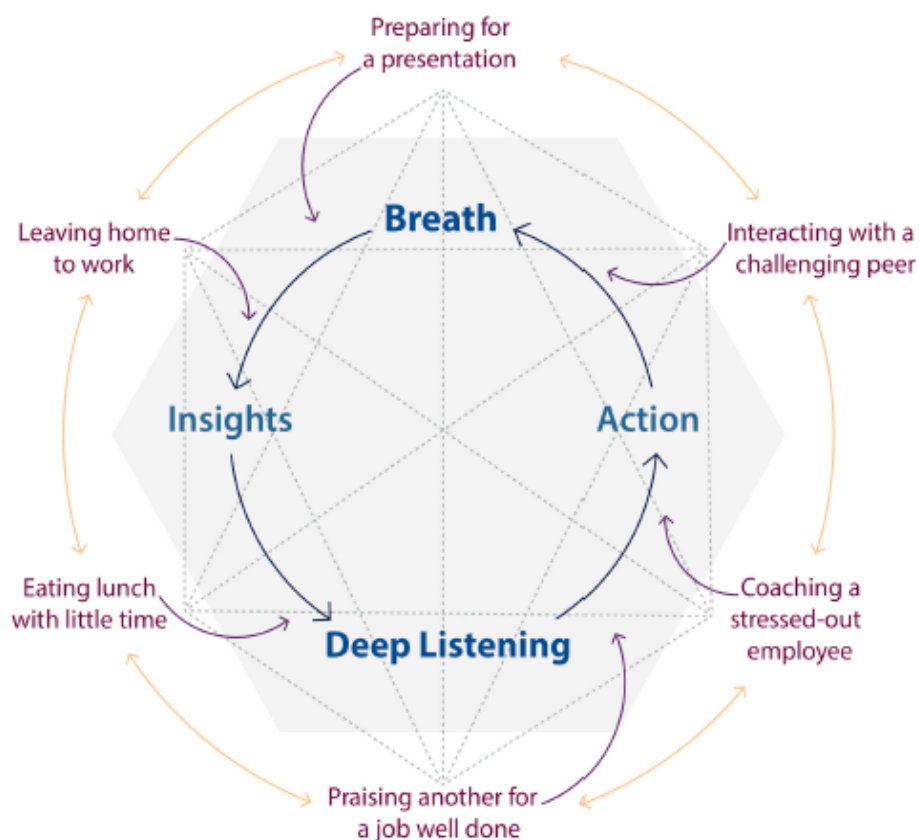
off discussion before it finishes or appearing trite) to others even before the meeting begins. If the person is able to notice these triggers within themselves, they will be able to adapt accordingly. A simple act could be to sit down for a minute before the meeting and regain composure and pay attention to the breath. Another strategy could be to take a brief walk in the building and get a drink of water, all the while noticing the breath, its rhythm and flow, and trying to center so that the person is ready to listen. These practical tips can be adapted to each person's unique situation in ways that speak to them. While the result is unknown, leading from a calm and centered place reaps benefits for the person and anyone with whom they interact. This dynamic highlights the model's essence—a natural and creative tension between breath, deep listening, and the outside world. This second stage representation is powerful because it integrates multiple contexts (i.e., work, home, family and friends, etc.) so that the practices can be tailored to any circumstance. The first coaching meeting was an opportunity to describe this dynamic and to identify several situations relevant to the individual. Most participants were able to select several scenarios, but it required talking it through to make sense of how the practices were actually engaged. I recall Participant Three wanting to improve how she experienced transitions (i.e., work to home) with greater ease. We discussed how she currently approaches them, giving her a chance to explain her body experience during these moments of change (i.e., hurried, rushed, short of breath), and what expectations she was holding. This process was helpful because it revealed habits that were automatic and engrained and needed to be untangled. As participants unpeeled the details, the application of the practices made more sense (at least cognitively). Thereafter, the coaching meetings supported the participants by developing a refined lens of observing, recalling, and detailing their behavior. This process is similar to many other practices (i.e., fine art, martial art, or sport performance) that require astute noticing, and an

emotional connection between subject and object. This process of making the practices one's "own" was similar for all of the participants and became easier with time.

A final conceptual framework is reintroduced in Figure 5.3. This illustration highlights when a variety of circumstances occur simultaneously, at multiple levels, and with varying

Leadership as a Way of Being:

A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Source: Influenced by the work of Bhikkhu (1997); Carroll (2006, 2008); Hahn (1976); Kabat-Zinn (1994); Langer (1989); Rock and Page (2009); Silsbee (2010); Sinclair (2008); Vaill (1996); Weiss (2004); Wheatley (2005); Wilbur et. al (2008)

Figure 5.3. Leadership as a way of being: A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence, Part C.

degrees of complexity. In these situations, the individual is immersed within and among different contexts. These interactions are characterized by an ongoing interplay between the interior and exterior worlds (i.e., breath—internal—and dealing with a challenging colleague—external). These situations may present themselves successively and with little or no time between scenarios. It is truly a “live” event that requires one to be fully present to the emerging moment. A certain level of proficiency and confidence is required at this stage. For example, one may feel rushed in the morning getting ready for an early meeting. This might result in hurrying, drinking extra coffee, and not listening to others while at home. Recalling the morning events may be a blur and an early indication that mindless tendencies are already afoot. An advanced practitioner still has struggles like this one, but the difference is that their ability to observe their behaviors, identify early warning signs, and adjust, stand out. One way of responding to this situation is to focus in on triggers such as a looming performance conversation with a struggling direct report. Building in a three-minute breathing exercise before the meeting may be a good way to ground oneself and to keep alert to somatic stress should it appear. If the discussion was not going well, as was feared, paying attention to rapid breathing, getting up to get a drink of water, or noticing judgments are all strategies to help maintain calm while in the moment.

The mindful leader is able to continually draw on the practices with ease at this stage, despite life’s on-going turbulence. This awareness of the mind and body experience helps the person to move fluidly throughout the day. These experiences translate into agility in dealing with people and change because attachments to outcomes or emotions lessen. This also supports critical thinking and dealing with complexity because the person is able to meet these situations

with greater resilience. As a result, the person is able to draw on their contemplative toolkit (i.e., breath and deep listening) in sustaining and self-correcting ways.

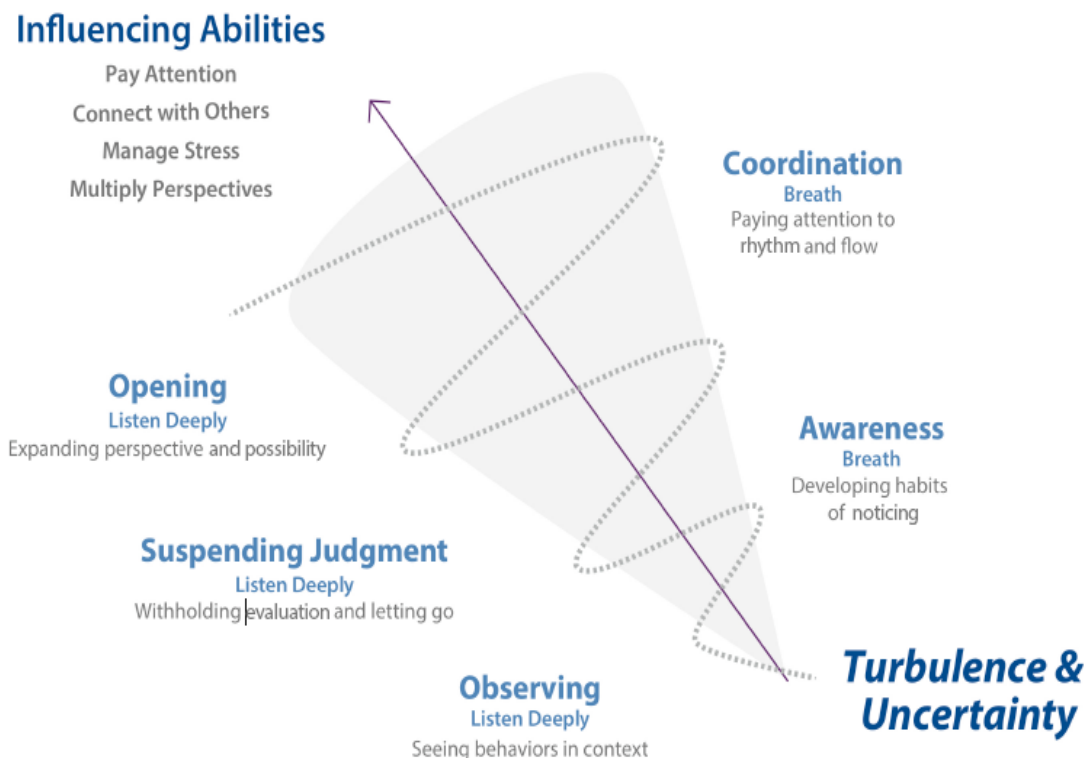
My observation is that all participants were able to engage at this level. In some cases, there were positive signs that the practices were germinating within a couple of weeks, and in other situations, it was about the mid-way point before the mindful practices took hold. Participant One and Four, for example, were exclusively focused on the breath for the first two weeks. They were hesitant, if not resistant, to attempt the practices in the context of others until they had a basic comfort level with developing an elementary level of breath awareness. Thereafter, the participants typically began seeing how the lack of the mindful behaviors manifested in others. With each successive week, improvements in all cases (with a leveling off with Participant Five around week six) was reported, and in varying degrees. It is difficult to report if any of the participants reached a level of proficiency. My observation is that some of the participants experienced proficiency in spurts or in short successive fashion, but I do not believe any of them were able to sustain a perpetual state of mindfulness during the study.

The conceptual framework is extended and re-introduced with the five practices in the context of turbulence and uncertainty (Figure 5.4). The illustration highlights the dynamic nature of the model, with any one practice not any more important than another. One can begin with one practice (i.e., observing) depending on what makes sense to them and adjust depending on the circumstance. The model is flexible so that it can be tailored to a participant's situation. Moreover, the influencing abilities (including paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, and multiplying perspectives) are the intermediary forces by which the practices are measured. In this sense, the study seeks to see whether, and to what degree, these abilities were affected, rather than a specific outcome, such as leadership.

In reflection, I take the position that leadership is not merely a title, role, or position. Nor is leadership simply a process even though some level of coordinating and orchestrating may be

Leadership as a Way of Being:

A dynamic approach for organizational leaders experiencing turbulence



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Source: Influenced by the work of Bhikkhu (1997); Carroll (2006, 2008); Hahn (1976); Kabat-Zinn (1994); Langer (1989); Rock and Page (2009); Silsbee (2010); Sinclair (2008); Vaill (1996); Weiss (2004); Wheatley (2005); Wilbur et. al (2008)

Figure 5.4. Leadership as a way of being: Interplay between breath and deep listening.

needed to get things done. An additional challenge that I see is the idea that leadership is about establishing a vision and motivating others to achieve certain goals. This definition puts the individual at the center of the change process—it defaults to the “I” instead of the “we.” An underlying assumption with these understandings is that that a leader’s job is first about changing

attitudes and behaviors. I find leading in this fashion specific, and, in many respects, inflexible. My thinking is that uncompromising ways of leading result in controlling behavior, which undercuts motivation and produces fear-based thinking.

Rather, I believe that leadership is better understood as a relationship that aspires to create meaning and shared successes, and focuses on reclaiming a spirit that engenders openness and emancipation. In revisiting Sinclair's (2007) definition of leadership, it is reflective and thoughtful about the self; it values relationships and the present; it is connected to others and embodied; it is not narrowly striving or ego-driven; and that is liberating in its effect. Sinclair states, "Leadership is not a job or a position but a way of influencing others toward ends recognized as valuable and fulfilling. This may make leadership sound like a benign and uncontroversial activity but it is far from that" (p. 66).

This perspective suggests that the emotional connection between what one does, and who they are, matters. Participant Three shared that she had been operating her entire career with the assumption that she could change the behaviors of others if "only she could inspire and motivate them." She said this might require multiple attempts, but in time they would come around. By the end of the study her viewpoint had shifted, and she no longer saw inspiring others as her main focus. Instead, she realized that her value was in being present in the moment, and less attached to the emotional needs of others. She said that she found this approach "freeing." I found her response consistent with Sinclair's definition that leading in a liberated fashion begins with a look inward. This, in turn, can result in clarity of thought (meaning) which enables the creation of a relationship to others based on shared meaning (with non-ego striving)—this is what produces a good deal of influence.

Mindfulness is marked by thousands of years of lineage and practice; it is not a fad or flavor of the month program and its potential has only, in the last several decades, garnered a second glance by Western culture. Western interest has occurred largely because of scientific studies and neuroimaging breakthroughs, which has catapulted intense interest into the potential ramifications relating to well-being and personal effectiveness. My desire to understand its implications for organizational leaders, and in life in general, is one reason that the topic has been of personal interest to me.

I conclude this section by reflecting on what have I really learned from this study. What is its significance and what might it hold for the future? The research suggests that the conceptual model works—it has utility and it is grounded in deceptively simple practices. More directly, what has been the effect, if any, of the contemplative practices on leaders? In all cases, to varying degrees, the effect has been a positive one. The research provides substantial support in five of the cases, and to a lesser extent, in a sixth. Further, feedback from Participants Three, Four, and Six, suggest that the study has been no less than a “life changer” and holds promise for others. These changes are not limited to work, but are reported to have application in the personal domain as well.

What It All Means and What I Learned

The findings in Chapter IV, the literature, the coaching process, and personal reflection all set the stage for uncovering its implications. Distilling the research to seven conclusions is not easy given the time I have spent with the data, and wrestling with the process. Yet, there is clarity and power in revealing its essence, both from a research perspective and for practical implications going forward, which will be discussed in Chapter VI. The following section

presents each of the seven conclusions, any surprises that were experienced in light of the study, and the significance, if any.

Conclusion #1: The relationship to breath is foundational for Leading as a Way of Being and Personal Change and Transformation. Participants were unsure what it meant to experience a quality of breath at the beginning of the study. Participant Two, because he had previously practiced meditation, was able to re-establish his practice. Participant Three and Six practiced yoga and had a good general sense of how the breathing exercise could be beneficial. Breath awareness was new to Participant One and Four. Participant Five related to breath in terms of exercising, and running in particular, and getting in a “zone” of concentration. All participants began at a starting place relative to their situation. The initial three-minute breathing exercise helped establish a baseline for each of them. In general, the breathing experience at the beginning was difficult, with typical responses including feeling distracted, lack of focus, and an inability to concentrate.

I was surprised at how quickly most of the participants were open to trying the breathing exercise, and frankly, pleased that they were willing to be vulnerable. Several participants tried to practice the breathing exercise at home and found it difficult. Two of the participants underwent a home remodel during the same time of the study, and were unable to experience peace in their living space. Others tried to practice in the car, often before work. Still others tried at work, with several finding varying degrees of success. My observation was that practicing in the car before work was the most common, followed by work and home. Participant Three said that she was able to experience her work in new ways and was initially unsure that the workplace could be experienced in contemplative ways. She said that she related to work only in a hectic and rushed way. Over the course of the study, her relationship with her

work environment developed. These comments are consistent with Sinclair (2007) who says that one of the chief benefits of breath for the leader includes changing one's relationship to self and how we interact with others. In a similar perspective, Weiss (2004) says that as we get in tune with the breath, the opportunity to inquire as to the quality can rise. For example, is the breath shallow because of feeling hurried, or perhaps fearful, because of a difficult conversation? My observation is that in order to lead from a place of being, that is, one's essence or individuality, breath needs be experienced as an anchor so that response is grounded in substance rather than reaction.

Observing the success of the participants in respect to the breath was personally renewing. I was able to see and experience its effect in new ways. I was struck by how important it is to experience the process rather than to see it as a cognitive exercise. My personal daily practice helped keep me grounded in what others were sharing. My practice also helped sustain my energy, and strengthen my ability to ask critical questions during the data collection process based on personal insight. I was struck by how the simple act of paying attention to breath can be profoundly healing and transformative. I was able to see this process in the participants as they experienced these changes for the first time. I found it fascinating that the quality of relationship to breath and the change one underwent was incremental; it required on-going and daily commitment for them to see slow but steady returns related to well-being. Around week eight, it became almost predictable that body stress lessened significantly. Most of the participants stated that this was tied to the breath practice. They said that when they experienced tension, they had confidence that turning to contemplation would be a successful antidote. Moreover, an overarching conclusion I take away is that the relationship to one's breath is proportional to one's well-being and quality of life.

Conclusion #2: There is a relationship between how often one engages in the practices and the abilities. At the beginning of the study, I was unsure how often the participants would engage in the practices. As participants in this study, they were asked to practice the breathing exercise a minimum of three minutes per day, at a time and place of choice. The five practices relating to breath and deep listening were directed by the participant, and at a frequency that they controlled. All participants reported using each of the five practices two to four times daily. While engaging in each practice requires moments of time, the fact that it was consciously integrated into one's day resulted in a steady stream of repetition and led to progress. Participant Six, who reported the highest practice frequency, at a combined average of 15 times per day, also reported the highest scores in the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire and the second highest in the Mindfulness Survey. Participants Three, Two, and Four, who reported the second, third, and fourth highest frequency, respectively, all posted noteworthy gains in these same surveys. Participant One, who exhibited a moderate level of practice, made steady progress. Last, Participant Five, who struggled with the practices, with the exception of the daily breathing exercise and observing, reported the least gains qualitatively, and slight to moderate gains, quantitatively.

The daily application of the practices is an intentional strategy to form new habits. A habit is simply a behavioral pattern that is repeated until it becomes unnoticed, or a part of one's way of thinking that no longer requires conscious thought. Habits become automatic and sometimes can result in compulsive behaviors. Not all habits are good ones, for example, as the health benefits of smoking are zero. The question of how long it takes to form a habit varies. Twenty-one days is commonly cited. However, to make a lasting and substantial change, 45-days, or about six weeks, appears to be more accurate. Practices like the ones introduced in this

study, conducted daily over a 10 to 12-week period, or between 70 to 84 days, is a reasonable time period to form a habit, and allow for the practices to become a part of a daily routine. At the end of the study, I asked each participant if they thought that the breathing exercise had become a habit. All responded affirmatively. The degree to which each of the other practices was habitual varied, and my observation was that some of the practices, like suspending judgment, were more difficult than others. At the time of the one-month follow-up meeting, four of the six participants said that they continued to practice the breathing exercise, reporting that it became a normal part of the day. Moreover, affirmations such as the participants' results and testimonies attest to the habit forming nature of the breathing exercise, in particular, and the relationship between how often one engages in the mindful practices and the abilities, more generally.

Conclusion #3: Coaching is a powerful methodology that enables people to self-reflect, make sense of experiences, and accelerate growth. An assumption I held was that coaching in combination with participant motivation would accelerate personal change. My thinking was largely based on personal experience in coaching leaders from a variety of backgrounds and around a multitude of issues. What I have experienced is that individuals who desire to grow, are curious and open to feedback, and follow-through on commitments, are poised to experience positive change. I found being curious to be highly valued in this study because the mindful practices were new to five of the six participants. In one of the cases, an unwillingness to experiment with the practices was evident. As a result, the change that occurred was modest and the coaching experience was hindered. On the other hand, participants who exhibited curiosity were willing to be surprised and were more observant. A curious orientation carried over to being more open to feedback. Often, I relied on open-ended questions that

stimulated introspection, and, in a way, that modeled my own curiosity. Participants who were self-motivated directed their own learning. I was a guide, but did not lead them to conclusions. This was powerful because learning was self-directed and fostered self-reflection. If participants felt that the topic had been discussed sufficiently, on their own volition they switched to another area of interest. Meanwhile, my role relied on deep listening and remaining alert to any tendencies where attachment, judgment, or emotional triggers occurred. Coaching was experienced as a dynamic process whereby my coaching and the participant's world intersected in a space of mutual learning.

Coaching is potent because it facilitates a conversation based on creative tension. I found that sufficient discomfort was needed to bring out a deeper level of conversation. Establishing a safe space of nonjudging where prudent risk-taking was encouraged helped to deepen trust. These conditions supported self-disclosure and in many instances, led to new and expansive thinking. Participants typically needed three to four meetings so that the relationship could form and grow. As confidence grew, I found that I was less conscious of my own tendencies and better able to listen with focus and presence. Maintaining my own self-awareness (and mindfulness) was required, but my energy shifted from building a zone of safety to one of exploration. The participants were also going through the same process coupled with learning and applying the mindful practices. As these two worlds gradually intertwined, I experienced flow as a guide and teacher and this supported the participants' investigation for the mindful practices. The relationship was akin to a dance where we both relied on degrees of tension to propel the learning. Overall, the coaching process was personally transformational because it took me out of my comfort zone and required that I integrate my coach-practitioner-scholar role in fluid circumstances so that participants might experience personal growth.

Moreover, coaching played a critical role in enabling the participants to experience the mindful practices. If the participants were asked to conduct the practices without coaching support, my intuition suggested that the effect would have been lessened. Many of the comments I received from the participants regarding the coaching process were related to how the process was motivational, helped them stay consistent with the practices, and provided a sounding board so that learning could result. The opportunity to serve as a mirror was generative and helped create focus and clarity for the participant. I anticipated that for some, frustration would have been prevalent without the support structure. More broadly, coaching served as an influential strategy in catalyzing conversations that supported self-awareness and establishing habits so that longer-term development could take hold.

Conclusion #4: Mindful practices are accessible to people of different backgrounds and leader styles. Participants were selected for the study using specific criteria. These requirements included that each person was expected to hold a managerial role leading a team or department; have at least one direct report (all had two or more); work in an organizational setting (public, private or non-profit); and have limited mindfulness and mind body training. The criteria facilitated a consistent way to evaluate the data and have some controls in place. Coaching individuals, who work in organizational settings with similar role responsibilities, was helpful because many faced similar issues.

While the background and criteria were consistent, the leader style and approaches to managing self and others differed. Each person had a distinct way of communicating and integrating the practices into their lives: Participant One is relationship-oriented, experienced, and service and team-focused; Participant Two is scientific, driven, customer-centric, and values simplicity and efficiency; Participant Three is collaborative, ambitious, mission and results-

oriented; Participant Four is operationally oriented, high energy, assertive, and optimistic; Participant Five is strategic, customer-focused, serious in disposition, and ambitious; and Participant Six is creative, seasoned, mission-driven, collaborative, and a problem solver. These styles and approaches to work and life factored into how they experienced the mindful practices.

However, regardless of each individual's approach, the practices were accessible. In other words, each of the participants understood cognitively what the practices embodied and how to conduct them after instruction was given. The nuances of the practices lend themselves to simple acts of awareness, such as taking slow and deliberate steps to slow down or consciously taking a breath and noticing the somatic experience before starting on the computer in order to make connections with emotional states. These experiences were met with resistance in one case, but this was the exception. For the majority of the participants, the practices were not only accessible, but overwhelmingly embraced.

My observation is that there was a high orientation toward personal development and learning. Participants were typically eager and excited to meet during coaching meetings, asked thoughtful questions and wanted to grow. They were curious, and often times analytical, wanting to understand themselves in new ways. I would also characterize the level of coachability in five of the six participants as high. This was an attribute I attempted to screen at the onset of the study. Participants were open to feedback and I felt that we were able to engage in transparent discussions, sometimes veering off into personal circumstances as well. For example, Participant Three was in her third trimester of pregnancy when she began the process. I was surprised to learn how valuable the practices were for her, especially in terms of managing stress and alleviating body tension.

I found that integrating the two life spheres (personal and professional) was highly beneficial for the individual because it reinforced the learning and application of the practices. In this way, the practices facilitated different levels of understanding because each person was able to see the practices in new contexts and in ways that they might have not otherwise imagined. Moreover, the practices proved accessible to people of different backgrounds and styles and hold promise for extending them to different populations.

Conclusion #5: Body stress and tension can significantly lessen or dissolve as a result of mindful practices. Stress reduction is a foundational component of many mindfulness programs. One of the first programs to address ways to decrease physical and psychological symptoms is the Center for Mindfulness Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts, Department of Medicine. The success of this program is now replicated throughout the United States and beyond, in hospitals, clinics, schools, and private practices. The techniques of this program have influenced this study by making breath a major focus area.

This study is consistent with the literature (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Kimura et al., 2005) in that body stress is reduced as a result of mindful practices. Five of the six participants reported that they no longer held stress or tension in their body by week eight, with the sixth reporting no stress by week ten. The changes did not happen immediately; in most cases, the development was incremental. Positive feedback from the participants was reported at about the six week mark, and quickly accelerated at week eight and ten. Most of the lack of stress that was reported at week eight continued through week ten, and when asked if body stress was present at the one-month post period, five of the participants said no or only minimally. The feedback reveals a relationship between attention to breath and a decrease in body stress. As the participants increased their ability to notice and direct their breath, they reported noticing how this stress

manifested in the body. Participant Two said that as he paid more attention to shoulder stress in relation to the quality of his breathing, he was able to feel his body more. He stated that this led to positive effects on his overall ability to reduce body tensions. Participant Three said, “I feel free of stress, and attribute this to my use of mindfulness practices over the last nine weeks.” Participant Four said that she typically experiences tension in her neck while driving, but that it went away soon after she began engaging in the breathing practices. She said that the simple act of paying attention to her breath, noticing when she was feeling tense, and being willing to let go, were contributing factors.

Participants consistently shared that the three-minute breathing practice, coupled with the informal practices, was the foundation for change. The process of focusing attention on what is happening (i.e., internally and in the context of others) facilitates a lessening of emotional attachments. The process is paradoxical in that by slowing down and focusing on the breath, the participants were able to better regulate their emotions. Breath awareness works because it is like a “jump start” in bringing attention to the nonstop mental chatter and somatic stresses. For example, participants reported that they could notice judgment (i.e., of self and others) because they were able to observe their thoughts more easily. The process is simply about paying attention when a judgment is made and revealing the circumstance. A first step is to identify what is going on in respect to the breath (i.e., was it tight or fluid) and the interaction (i.e., was it a contentious issue)? Was there a trigger? If so, what was it? Prior to the study, participants had some, but in most cases, little awareness of the quality of their breath. Throughout the study, they were adding new tools to their well-being toolkit. In turn, the ability to lessen attachments that were tied to expectations, outcomes, and emotions became cumulative and self-correcting.

Body stresses decreased over time because participants had greater emotional awareness of their experiences and new confidence.

Numerous studies (Astin, 1997; Carmody & Baer, 2008; Birnie, Speca, & Carlson, 2010; Grossman, et al., 2004) support decreases in stress and related symptoms through the application of mindful practices. These studies are typically modeled after the University of Massachusetts' eight-week program. Based on the participants' feedback, I conclude that there is also a relationship between the informal practices and reduction in body stress. On one hand, it seems common sense would dictate that if you are experiencing stress in your body that you make a change (i.e., leaving the environment, letting go of expectations, etc.). On the other hand, an association between awareness of the practices and one's emotional state is not easy to identify; an observant mind is needed to make this connection. An observant mind can identify and deconstruct experiences in self-generative ways. For example, prior to the study, Participant One was unaware that when people entered her office she continued to work on the computer or do whatever she was doing; she was oblivious of her behaviors and the effect that this had on others. The mindful practice of observing and bringing attention to her person (i.e., being distracted) was a practical strategy that forced her to slow down and focus on what was happening internally. She also paid attention to the quality of her breath when people entered her space and said that she was able to make a connection between her mental and emotional state, her breath, and the person with whom she was interacting. The participant did not make this link early on in the process; in fact, it took six to seven weeks of practice before she reported that was able to observe her patterns with clarity. The awareness process occurs incrementally, in fact, it often uneven and involves regression. As Participant One increased her awareness, she also began to question the layout of her office design and re-arranged her desk so that when people came into

her office, others saw her face, rather than her back. At the beginning of the process, she was unaware of these dynamics and would most likely have resisted the change. She needed to own the outcomes and make these behavior realizations of her behaviors.

In another example, Participant Four's feedback on reducing stress was interesting because she was pregnant at the time of the study. Early on, she reported numerous stresses relating to interpersonal challenges, computer overuse, and body tensions. She said that she felt overwhelmed and strain manifested in her body, particularly in her hips and lower back, which she attributed to her changing body. Again, the process of bringing attention when stress occurred (i.e., during a difficult interaction) was instrumental. When a connection between one's state of mind, emotions, and circumstance intersect, all kinds of new information can be revealed. The coaching meetings were instrumental in this regard because the experiences could be untangled and the participant could identify triggers and begin to understand why the stress accumulated in the first place. Amazingly, by week eight, she no longer reported physical stress. I learned that in order for body stresses to significantly lessen, 50 to 60 days of daily practice, plus daily meditation of at least three-minutes in length, is required. If this improvement occurred, there was a strong possibility of positive change. The quantitative surveys did not pick up these nuances—it was during the weekly coaching meetings that I was able to uncover the subtle changes in body tension. Part of this process was helping the participant see links between their emotional state and physical experience. If the coaching had not occurred, the participant may have reached a similar point of alleviating stress, may have not been able to connect the emotional aspect, a key determinant that support self-correcting behavior.

Conclusion #6: Practicing mindfulness increases leader effectiveness. The study sought to understand if the practices had any effect on the abilities (paying attention, connecting

with others, managing stress, multiplying perspectives); it did not directly suggest that one's leader abilities would increase. These abilities or intermediary forces were the instrument through which any change was measured. A conclusion that I drew was that there is a relationship between the practices, coaching process and leader effectiveness.

The peer reviewed literature (Broome, Orme-Johnson, & Schmidt-Wilk, 2005; Krasner et al., 2009; Shapiro, et al., 2008) focused on similar abilities as this study, including stress symptoms, suspending judgment, and evaluating if any change occurred through formal meditation. In her research, Sinclair (2007) suggests that leading is about being with ourselves and others, a notion similar to Wheatley (2006) who talks about dealing with ambiguity in the sense of being open to uncertainty. Carroll (2008) in his research offers specific strategies to increase habits of no achievement, letting go, and composure. He says that developing this mental muscle can be difficult for people who are highly goal oriented and may see mindfulness as a waste of time. He suggests that growing the capacity to work from the inside out is the essential work of a leader. This idea is akin to Drucker's (2006) notion that leading is first about managing self, before managing others.

This study reveals distinct themes in respect to an increase in leader abilities. This includes perspective-taking (four participants); being more strategic (two participants) and less reactive; dealing with ambiguity and being adaptable (four participants); listening (three participants) and practice patience (two participants). Keeping composure (three participants) was referenced and is associated with not becoming defensive and coping with stress. In one sense, these attributes are not surprising. They are consistent with what the literature reveals and what a mindful leader embodies. What surprised me was the consistency of themes through the introduction of five mindful practices and coaching. Throughout the coaching meetings,

participants presented issues that mattered most to them. My aim was to support them and to meet these issues through the application of the practices. As a result of the process, the identified leader abilities carried personal meaning; this was important because participants arrived at these conclusions rather than me providing a check-list of attributes to identify. The one exception was Participant Five. She may have seen the practices as trivial because she is highly goal and outcome orientated, a profile suggested by Carroll. In either case, Participant Five was an outlier as the overwhelming majority of feedback suggests that practicing mindfulness increases leader abilities.

Conclusion #7: Listening is power. Participants came to the study with a notion of listening as a skill rather than a practice. A traditional understanding of a good listener is being able to pay attention to things like gestures that show you are listening and non-verbal communication. These attributes are important, especially since upwards of 90 percent of communication is nonverbal. However, to engage in a mind body listening context suggests a deeper kind of listening. By deep listening, I mean being fully aware and conscious of experiencing what is happening inside, as well as between and among others. This approach starts with breath as the basic building block for being an effective listener and facilitates an experience that has potential for transforming a relationship. For example, imagine a brainstorming meeting where all ideas offered were one-sided. One felt rushed to get across an idea because it was thought to be the best one. The breath may have been tight which may have come as a consequence of being closed-minded. The person may have been completely unaware of the somatic indicators that provided clues to one's state of mind. Personal adjustments to these realizations did not happen; consequently, there was little or no space for new thinking and the relationship did not grow. In short, deep listening was short circuited, and an inability to

counteract triggers was not possible due to a lack of self-awareness and mindful skills that could have facilitated a different outcome.

All six participants in this study shared feedback suggesting that their ability to listen increased. Participant One said that she was able to notice her self-talk which usually involved being self-critical. She said that this got in the way of listening to others. A breakthrough she reported was being able to have more quality connections, especially with direct reports, because she was able to uncover patterns that kept her from being approachable. She also said that she was able to reduce feelings of hierarchy she may have been unknowingly harboring. Developing listening habits as a way of being occurs incrementally because it is a process of awareness building. A switch cannot simply be turned on making you a deep listener; rather, attention to observing listening tendencies is a good place to start. This allows one to begin seeing habits and what this means in terms of connecting with others.

The process of mindful awareness is paying attention to divisions created within ourselves and noticing how this manifests in relationships. Participant Two became more cognizant that a barrier he put up was becoming overly directive in leading others. He said that this included telling, rather than enrolling others, in what needed to be accomplished. This hindered his ability to connect and to listen. He said that through the breathing practice he was better able to notice his tendencies and let go of things he would normally hold. As a result, he said that because of this awareness, he was able to withhold quick reactions to comments of others. This feeling facilitates a personal freedom of being, rather than competing to be the smartest in the room, for example. The power of listening is about noticing these tendencies and the habitual mental programs that play inside us, and being able to respond in a more enlightened way.

Shafir (2003) states, "the goal of listening is to find the balance between focusing our attention and remaining open-minded and tolerant of different views" (p. 44). The amount of clutter and noise that comes at us daily, whether with expectations we set for ourselves or simply the verbal triage that occurs in the workplace, makes holding attention a difficult endeavor. Many of these situations can be chalked up to the obstacles we place on ourselves. This is why paying attention to the breath is so important, it works to declutter the noise accumulating in our heads and forges new space for seeing and personal growth.

In summary, revealing the conclusions was an arduous and emotional task; the process drew from the literature, the coaching process, personal reflection, and the findings. The developments help lay the building blocks for what all of this means and its practical implications. There was a clarity gained in this process from a research perspective, but also in respect to developing as a mindful leader. Ultimately, distilling the conclusions was freeing and helped to indicate what else we need to know.

Study Limitations

The study design is not meant to be exhaustive. It draws from a limited, but targeted, sample size. The study attempts to advance understanding of informal contemplative practices with leaders in organizational settings and more generally, mindfulness and leader development, and the meta-conversation of leader effectiveness. Therefore, the study findings are limited to the six participants and are not generalizable.

The backgrounds of the participants are limited in scope and included white-collar workers holding managerial responsibilities in organizational settings. The transferability of the results to others outside of this scope poses limitations. The conclusions of the results are confined to these individuals and their participant context.

The measures and surveys hold limitations as well. Each survey is designed to reveal indicators or facets of mindfulness. The Five Facets of the Mindfulness Questionnaire is a validated instrument. The Mindfulness Survey and the weekly surveys are self-constructed and therefore have not been tested outside of this study. Nonetheless, the surveys, in combination with weekly coaching meetings, attempt to make sense of the participant experience and add texture and insight into the findings.

The study is experimental whereby mindful practices were introduced and evaluated against whether or not there was an effect on the abilities (i.e., paying attention, connecting with others, managing stress, and multiplying perspectives). These practices were applied in the context of the participants' circumstance and situation. In this way, the experiment is not representative, but builds on existing literature to reveal and expand thinking.

Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data. This includes each participant's assessments of themselves, as well as the feedback they provided. In some cases, as identified in Chapter IV, there was a discrepancy between the weekly surveys and what I observed. In other words, I took the participants at face value in respect to the surveys or during the coaching meetings. The content of the self-reported data could not be independently verified.

Last, there is a lack of research involving informal mindful practices with leaders in organizational settings. The literature centers largely on randomized, controlled samples, involving individuals. These studies are typically organized over an eight-week period with daily formal meditative practice as a core component. This study asked participants to practice, at minimum, three-minutes of sitting meditation, and was coupled with five distinct informal mindful practices incorporating breath and deep listening. Many of the findings were consistent

with those found in studies involving formal meditation. More studies on the effect of informal mindful practices and organizational leaders with larger sample sizes are needed.

Chapter Summary

This Chapter presents a discussion of the study findings in context of the literature. I am surprised at the degree to which the participants reported similar findings found in largely controlled, randomized, and self-reporting studies. Breath as a foundational element for well-being that was presented in the practitioner-based literature is affirming. At the same time, I am astonished at how little the literature, peer or practitioner-based, spoke directly to the role of coaching as an intermediary force as a way to grow and develop holistic ways of leading. I am also surprised at how little the literature considered the importance of the participant's readiness for change and how this factors into a selection process.

This chapter addresses the implications of leading as a way of being in light of the study's finding, and built on the conceptual presentation offered in Chapter II. The research suggests that the conceptual model works—it has utility in supporting a process for personal change as reported by the participants. In all cases and to varying degrees, the effects are positive, and, in some cases, life changing. The research provides considerable support in five of the cases, and to a lesser extent, in a sixth.

These findings and implications of Leading as a Way of Being revealed seven contributions in respect to what the research means and what I learned and include:

1. The relationship to breath is foundational for leading as a way of being and personal change and transformation;
2. There is a relationship between how often one engages in the practices and the abilities;

3. Coaching is a powerful methodology that enables people to self-reflect, make sense of experiences, and accelerate growth;
4. Mindful practices are accessible to people of different backgrounds and leader styles;
5. Body stress and tension can significantly lessen or dissolve as a result of mindful practices;
6. Practicing mindfulness increases leader effectiveness;
7. Listening is power.

These contributions reveal that a relationship between consistent application of the practices and change in the ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and expanding one's perspective. The findings hold promise for future studies relating to informal mindful practices in organizational settings. The final chapter presents practical applications for developing as a mindful leader.

Chapter VI: Leading as a Way of Being: Practical Applications

Introduction

Chapter VI presents practical applications for developing as a mindful leader. A discussion of what it means to be a mindful leader, in light of the study is discussed, including salient themes relating to leadership in general. In contrast, the qualities of a mindless leader are explored and placed in the context of personal and organizational liabilities. This contributes to a discussion of three practical suggestions for mindful leadership, and how one might go about developing a holistic approach to leading and living. I also reflect on my personal learning as a coach and as a practitioner-scholar. Next, I offer thoughts for future research. Last, I recommend suggestions for reclaiming ourselves and our communities from a contemplative perspective and offer a word of caution for idealizing and commercializing its potential.

What Is a Mindful Leader?

The question of what is a mindful leader is precipitated by the question of what is leadership. This question has been before me for some time. On one hand, it would seem that I have a clear and concise answer given that I have been beating the corporate leadership development drum for many years. In another respect, and in light of leading, participating in, and being a part of many discussions on the topic, my understanding has developed nuanced layers that go beyond conventional thinking. One of the reasons that I think this has taken time to resolve is because I have struggled to integrate my personal values with what I see around me. Why is this? In many ways, leadership is a hard business; it requires that you are comfortable with who you are and doing things well. I have encountered many leaders who have risen through the ranks because of their technical expertise rather than their interpersonal or persuasive

abilities. A missing link that I have found among these leaders is a lack of self-awareness. They climbed the organizational ladder because they deliver results, but sometimes do not know how to build a team or fully understand the ramifications of their behaviors. The opportunity to integrate new or different ways of leading can be difficult because they have an established formula for success. This prescription has most likely served the leader well, but can take one only so far before its effectiveness plateaus. I believe we know that leaders who reflect critically and adapt to circumstances increase their emotional competence and cognitive flexibility because they are more aware of themselves and those around them. Unfortunately, changing a leader's strategy is not common and begs the question, how can leaders cultivate broader and adaptable mindsets and become more likely to eschew narrow and self-serving interests?

What I have realized in my search for an understanding of leadership, is that holistic approaches have greater potential because they integrate the multiple dimensions of the person. Training that favors cognitive or behavioral-based approaches, at the expense of the whole person, is limiting, and can result in a one-dimensional modus operandi and fixed ways of approaching a situation or task. This can be self-limiting, and reinforce the notion that leading is primarily about setting goals and achieving objectives. The pursuit of goals is important and necessary for any viable business or organization; however, what I find missing are aspects that speak to the humanity of leaders. By humanity, I mean work that embodies compassion and empathy, resulting in a deeper connection to oneself and others. These facets of leadership expand our palate of how we show up at work, bring into question definitions that limit rather than embody our potential, and embolden us toward courageous ends. Leading as a way of being is at the center of this journey.

What I now realize is that sometimes doing nothing is required. This statement may seem heretical, especially in our age of immediate gratification. What I mean by doing nothing is seeing things for what they are, not as they should be or even what they could be in future. In fact, living in the present may uncover just how messy things are, or conversely, how wonderful something is because space was made to experience it. A mindful leader recognizes that there are many different expressions of *being*, including the cognitive, somatic, emotional, relational, and spiritual. However, most leaders rely overwhelmingly on the cognitive, and to different extents, on the relational and emotional. Some leaders incorporate the spiritual and lead with purpose and meaning, and fewer lead with the somatic and notice how the physical intersects with these other aspects. The opportunity for mindful leaders is that they can integrate these domains in ways that lessen the ego so they can experience the present with greater alignment.

In summary, mindful leaders are open to the realities of the workplace by accepting things for what they are. They draw on the breath as the core-organizing unit, and use reflection to allow for integrating different perspectives and ways of being. They are able to connect with others in meaningful ways through deep listening and somatic awareness. Mindful leadership is an invitation to become fully human because it involves the whole person and carries the potential to transform the self and those around.

What Is a Mindless Leader?

The overwhelming amount of literature that exists on leadership discusses how to use certain behaviors do things better and more efficiently. These behaviors and perspectives can reinforce institutional thinking that look at experts and authority as people who can make things happen. Contemporary organizations are often characterized by the need to operate in complex and networked environments. The top down approach to leadership often followed in these

settings has little relevance for most employees on a day to day basis, short of an emergency or crisis situation. Employees need to know that they are empowered to execute decisions within their purview. Leaders know that they need to exhibit organizational savvy, deal with ambiguity, and influence to get things accomplished. When top-down leadership is prominent in situations that do not call for it, actions from the top are often formulaic and rigid and create feelings of anxiety among employees. These dispositions create fixed thinking, and, by extension, a restricted person, because mindlessness and inattention are exacerbated.

Langer (1989) says that mindlessness comes about in two ways, either through repetition or single exposure to information. Repetition includes doing the same thing over and over again to the point of not paying attention to the unintended consequences. An example of this is following the same decision-making approach to solving problems time and time again. The second part of mindlessness entails a lack of critical thinking or accepting something without questioning it. An example could include listening to a current event and not paying attention to the underlying story. Rigidity results because a one-sided understanding of the issue is taken. This thinking is cyclical because as new information is introduced, the response is met with the same mindset and lack of careful thinking.

Rigid mindsets are all too common in the workplace. Many people have stories of difficult bosses or colleagues. This is a part of life and serves as a learning opportunity. These leaders are challenging because they rarely are able to see things from different perspectives and their listening is ineffectual. These qualities can appear to be ego driven and experienced as self-serving. The common denominator is circular thinking and being stuck in certain points of view. I recall working with a leader whose fear of his boss and not meeting expectations locked him into a way of doing things. At times, his thinking manifested in paralysis and affected

everything from a lack of openness to an unwillingness to take risks. He was challenged to see multiple perspectives. He was afraid that if he said the wrong thing to the wrong person that his career would derail. As a result, he was constantly looking over his shoulder, and all the while anxiety and stress manifested. The effect lowered his self-confidence and belief in himself and had negative ramifications for those with whom he worked. He was stuck in a mindset and lacked a contemplative toolkit that could have helped him to transcend the situation.

Observing this situation taught me the ramifications of reactive thinking. The more cognizant I became of these situations, the better able I was to notice them and respond in positive ways. For example, I noticed how stress manifested in his body during these times. The breath was usually short and movement quickened. There were telltale signs of anxiousness. In respect to this study, I recall when Participant Four contacted me after a particularly difficult week asking for support so that she could regain a sense of balance in her day. She said that she was conscious of feeling flustered, but she was unsure of how to reclaim her center. One strategy she worked on was increasing attention to her thoughts, especially when they were overwhelming, so that she could notice them and slow down the mental chatter. This included noticing her breathing as she began computer work and doing a brief body scan. She said that talking through her experiences with me as coach helped her to regain a sense of control. My observation was that she was learning to self-correct and it was paying off. Another strategy we came up with was physically removing herself from the situation so that she could gain a broader understanding of what was happening. This meant getting up to get a drink of water or taking a short walk. A key take-away from these situations is the importance of developing habits and skills of noticing so that one can learn to make adjustments before triggers manifest.

Participants in this study said that when they were inconsistent with the daily breathing exercise, they regressed. Commonly cited examples of going backward to a previous state were inattention to others and a lack of listening, loss of focus, curtailing the input of others, rushing to judgment, and reacting with emotion. My observation was that participants who were able to return to the breath, either through noticing its quality during challenging times or by taking time for a several minute breathing exercise, were more effective in getting their emotional center back. Regaining a calm place through breath facilitated the ability to listen and relate with others. Further, this study revealed that as listening improved, so too did the proficiency to respond to others in ways that were thoughtful and a placed higher value on relationships.

Process and Three Practical Suggestions for Becoming a Mindful Leader

The findings of this study, coupled with my personal observations and experience, set the stage for revealing a process for Leading as a Way of Being and three practical suggestions to develop as a mindful leader. Figure 6.1 illustrates six distinct steps resulting from the coaching process that facilitate leading, and living, in ways that foster liberation and transformation. Each of the steps builds on one another beginning with an understanding of what it means to lead as a way of being (step 1) and the introduction of the informal mindful practices. The participant role is to try these practices (step 2) and to apply them to different contexts so as to make them their own. Next, the surveys and journaling (step 3) provides a way to reflect on experiences and frequent coaching (ideally weekly) encourages learning and self-accountability. New habits slowly form (step 4) as a result of the mindful practices. The participant may begin to experience immediate benefits, while other gains may be uneven or regress at times. Confidence (step 5) manifests as the practices become a natural part of the everyday and facilitates deeper insights into the self. As the process deepens (step 6), the participant is able to self-correct; self-

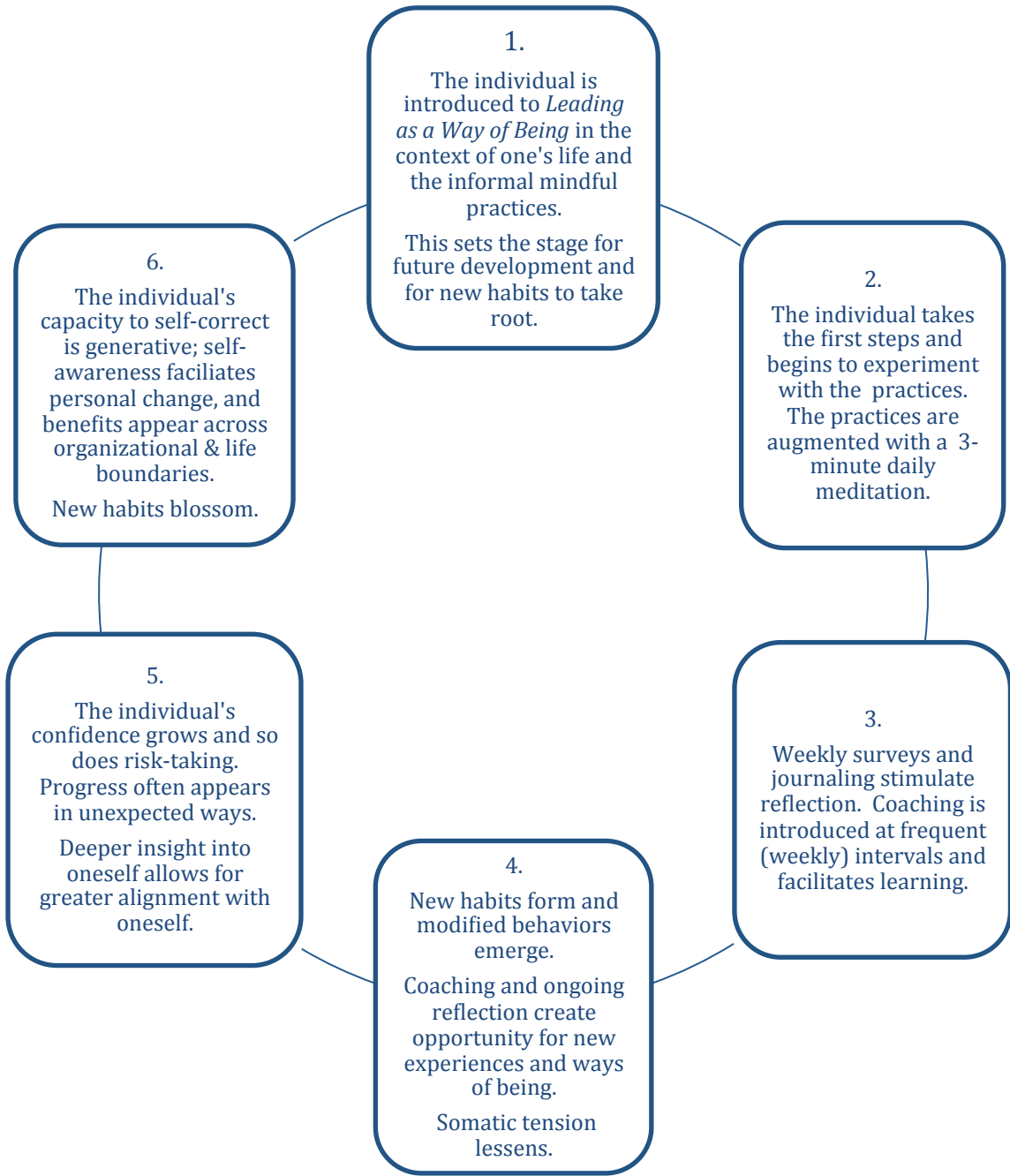


Figure 6.1. Process for leading as a way of being.

awareness facilitates personal change and transformation. The participant may find that the benefits are not limited to the workplace, but cross boundaries in different facets of life creating greater alignment with the values one holds, and manifest in well-being.

Three specific suggestions within the process emerged as a starting place for anyone wanting to develop as a mindful leader. The first idea is *conscious breathing*. The findings highlight that breath awareness is a key factor in improving the ability to pay attention, connect with others, manage stress, and multiply perspectives. A second idea is listening in ways that build on the strengths of others so that a deeper level of inquiry can result; namely, *asking powerful questions*, particularly when new points of views can benefit a situation. The third idea is *uncovering everyday moments* so that life can be experienced as an opportunity to learn and grow. By reflecting on daily interactions with others, one has the opportunity to become an astute observer and self-aware. Together, these three ideas are building blocks so that leading and living as a way of being are cultivated.

Suggestion #1: Conscious breathing. Conscious breathing is a way of referring to breath awareness. I was surprised by the limited connection that the participants had with their breath (at the beginning of the study). The lack of awareness revealed immediate ways that the participants could benefit, and a starting place for the coaching process. These opportunities also enabled discussions on ways that a leader can use breath in a leadership context. Weiss (2004) suggests that once we notice the quality of our breathing, we can ask what the connection is between the breath and what is happening within. Breath awareness cultivates stillness, and can be a simple, yet powerful, tool for making positive life-changes.

Conscious breathing is a good starting place for becoming a mindful leader. The practice lends itself to virtually all other types of contemplative practices. The activity for conscious

breathing is to simply notice your breath in an intentional way. A first step is to sit down on a chair or other supportive position and pay attention to your breath; notice the in and out breaths and try to follow the rhythm. Most likely one will notice thoughts rushing in and out. The aim is just to notice ideas as they come and go without judgment. After you get comfortable with this, try noticing your breath the next time you interact with someone. The exercise is the same since you are simply noticing your breath. Ask yourself to describe the breath. Is the breath short or long, quick or slow? Can you feel your breath as it comes in and out of the nostrils? Would you describe the breath temperature as cool or warm? Are you able to follow the rhythm of the breath, or was it lost? As you become more proficient, you can begin to notice different states of the breath. Do you feel agitated or irritated? Are you calm and focused? These clues support the mind body experience and can be revisited at any time. A few moments, even 10 to 20 seconds of this practice several times a day offer benefits. Figure 6.2 summarizes the two contexts and three supporting exercises.

Suggestion #2: Asking powerful questions. The feedback from the participants revealed the power of listening. Most participants entered the study with the notion that listening is about hearing what the other person is saying. This definition of listening has merit, but it doesn't go far enough in growing as a deep listener. A deep listener engages both the mind and body so that awareness of breath, and its relationship to self and others, is considered. Asking powerful questions goes to the heart of this process because observational skills are needed. A mindful leader asks questions from a place of curiosity and is willing to be surprised. I observed in the study that participants who were eager to apply the practices were able to make them their own. This inquisitive orientation suggests a willingness to learn and to see conditions from new perspectives. The mindful leader knows that power is found in the question because if we listen

Contexts	Exercise
<p>Silent reflection</p> <p>1. Find a chair that is comfortable and that has a supportive back. Allow yourself 2 to 3 minutes of silence to practice.</p>	<p>1. Set up</p> <p>Breathe normally. Notice the in and out breaths. Notice the flow and rhythm of the breath. Allow your thoughts to come in and out as they normally do. If you find yourself judging thoughts, just notice this and gently return to your breath.</p> <p>2. Reflect</p> <p>This exercise can be conducted for a couple of minutes a day until you feel comfortable trying it while interacting with others. The aim is to get in touch with your breath so you have a sense of its normal state – notice your breath and its quality.</p> <p>3. Frequency</p> <p>You may find that you want to do this once or twice or a week before noticing your breath with others.</p>
<p>Informal interaction</p> <p>2. Find opportunities during the normal course of the day to notice the breath. Examples include during a meeting, interacting with a difficult colleague, while eating, or any other situation you choose.</p>	<p>1. Set up</p> <p>The exercise is the same as the above in that you are just noticing your breath. The difference now is that you are paying attention to yourself at the same time as listening.</p> <p>2. Reflect</p> <p>In these situations, just try to notice your breath without controlling it. If it is tight, ask yourself if the conversation is strained. If you notice the breath as fluid, does this reflect an interesting conversation? Ask yourself questions that you find curious or surprising.</p> <p>Paying attention to the breath is a way to feel anchored and it can result in deep listening (fully present to both the mind and body in the context of self and other).</p> <p>3. Frequency</p> <p>This exercise can be engaged in as many times as you choose throughout the day.</p>

Figure 6.2. Conscious breathing strategies.

for what is said, new space for meaning is created. The act of listening is not to message, but to engage; this type of listening expands thinking because it requires full awareness of a situation

without controlling it. This creates vibrancy and shapes thinking in ways that reduces reactivity. This, in turn, promotes greater self-discipline and reduces tendencies to experience problems in self-serving ways.

Deep listening is challenging because it requires one's full attention. For example, recall the last time that you really felt heard? What made you feel this way? What listening qualities did the other person exhibit? Most likely the person was engaging deep listening habits whether this was done consciously or not. Interestingly, the average person can listen and process between 600-1000 words per minute (wpm), but can listen with full comprehension at 300 wpm. And speak between 150-200 wpm. The point is that full engagement requires discernment and knowing what is important and what is not. At the same time, the listener may only be able to fully integrate half of what is being said. Therefore, keeping alert is important because it reveals when emotional adjustment is needed. This self-awareness is particularly important in our 24/7 society that constantly streams information regardless of its redundancy; in turn, the better equipped we are at listening, the better we are able to connect with others.

Prior to the start of the study, I had a chance to introduce a mindful listening model to about 100 managers from a variety of backgrounds and professional disciplines as part of a coaching training program. The tool, the triple loop listening model (Figure 6.3), is a name that I provided since its content integrates the same practices that the participants used in this study namely noticing, suspending judgment, and generating new possibilities (or opening as referred to with the participants).

The first element of the triple loop listening is noticing. Noticing is about paying attention to one's mind and body in the context of self and others. If listening is happening, how does this quality manifest? Is there flow in the discussion? Are the thoughts focused and

centered or scattered and distracted? What is the effect? The first step of noticing complements the strategy of conscious breathing introduced earlier.

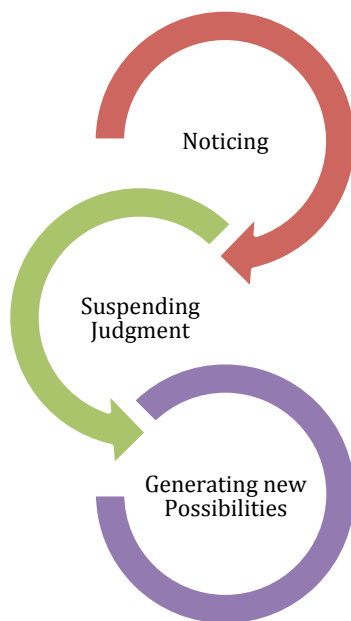


Figure. 6.3. Triple loop listening.

The second part of the model is suspending judgment. This step focuses on the person, and the meaning behind what is said, rather than judging either the idea or the person. If you find yourself judging in conversation, come back to the present and use your breath as an anchor. The likelihood of judging, or discounting others, lessens when one is fully present.

The third part of the model is generating new possibilities. This process encourages asking questions from a place of curiosity and lends itself to exploring unforeseen possibilities. Below is a sample list of questions for possibility (Figure 6.4). The questions help place one in a mode of listening through affirmation and ways that build on what is working well rather than on what needs improved or what went wrong.

Sample questions for possibility
Looking back on the project, what made it such a success? Are there behaviors or thinking that you found helpful that would benefit the team?
I like the idea, how can we build on it? What would it involve and how do you suggest getting started?
That's an interesting idea, I haven't thought of that before. Are there other ideas like this we can consider?
If you were to take your suggestion to the next level, what would it be and what possibilities might it bring?
I love your conviction! Clearly you have a lot of energy around this idea. What one to two ideas could we consider in the future to keep the momentum going?

Figure 6.4. Sample questions for possibility.

Suggestion #3: Uncovering everyday moments. The third idea is using everyday moments as teaching lessons. A key strategy for this idea is to keep the curiosity of a child at heart. Sometimes this is referred to as a beginner's mind. Often, the child loves to ask the question why. Children are great reminders of how things are experienced without judgment and labeling. The beginner's mind is akin to this thinking, and provides opportunities to experience things in new ways. This means staying alert to new or different perspectives so that you can encourage thinking as if it was a first experience.

Initially, participants reported difficulty envisioning how the practices would achieve a desired goal. A common question was in regard to how the practices will help them achieve something specific. The challenge with thinking in this way is that focusing on the end state is counter to a mindful way of being; it is a paradox because being mindful suggests that the only moment that is available is the present one. If one is striving only for an end state, future

thinking dominates. Living with what is expected causes unnecessary anxiety because thinking is about how things can or should be, rather than appreciating what is at present. The focus on breath is a constant reminder that helps one to be fully be present, thereby reducing suffering and the futile attempt to grasp for control of things that have not yet come to pass.

Unfortunately, cynicism is commonplace in organizations. I have experienced the downward spiral of leaders who no longer consider the points of view of others because they feel they know precisely the right way of doing something. The issue is not a technical one; in fact, team members and direct reports may be just as, or more, competent than the leader. The sticking point is often personality or style driven whereby deep listening is non-existent. Consequently, communication is one-sided. If the leader is willing to open in ways that are nonjudging, a genuine connection may result. The two individuals may still have a difference of opinion, but a deep listening experience engages, rather than reinforces, a reactive cycle that leads to escalation. As a result, respect for differing views foster insights, increases compassion for difference, and reduces stress from on-going interpersonal angst.

Another way of recognizing everyday moments is paying attention to the environment. The next time you walk into your workplace, take a look around. What do you see? What does the architecture communicate? Does it connect with the organization's mission? If so, how does it connect? If not, why not? Other ways of uncovering everyday moments could include pretending that you are talking to a colleague for the first time. Try to drop assumptions and engage with them as if it was your first conversation. This can be difficult because opinions become fixed. Assuming that getting over this hump is achievable, how would you describe the encounter? Did you learn something new about the person, or take away a new idea? This approach may not be as beneficial with people where a strong connection exists because rapport

is already high; therefore, finding someone who is moderately challenging may be a good stretch.

In conclusion, opportunities to open up to everyday moments are limitless. They start with arbitrary contexts and a willingness to see things like a child. Often, the preconceptions and expectations that one holds are the biggest hurdles to overcome. Taking a first step might include walking around your neighborhood or going to the market and allowing yourself to be open to new experiences. Ask yourself what you saw and what you found surprising. Continually come back to the breath and see if you notice its quality. Everyday moments are opportunities because they are spontaneous and ideal for preparing for more difficult encounters.

Personal Learning and Renewal

The personal learning that this study presented was considerable. I experienced the chance to develop in three ways: as a coach, practitioner, and scholar. Each role was fluid and at times I engaged all three, while in other situations only one. Regardless of the current role, it was important to keep each part in mind so that the participant experience was a positive one. Figure 6.5 highlights the three roles.

In my role as a mindful coach, I focused on the development of the participant in safe and engaging ways. My aim was to help the individual identify habitual thinking and to untangle attachments. This required that I emulate behaviors I presented, to listen deeply, to facilitate alternative ways of seeing, and to challenge thinking in self-reflecting ways. I wanted to encourage others so that their thinking expanded and they could be open to new possibilities. From this vantage point I can see that I learned, too. Asking powerful questions was a key strategy in helping others with the practices. My role as practitioner and scholar supported this end. For example, my experience as an internal leadership and organizational consultant gives

me first-hand knowledge of the daily demands required of these leaders. I understand the relentless pressures for delivering a product, enrolling others, and the uncertainty that coincides with high expectations.

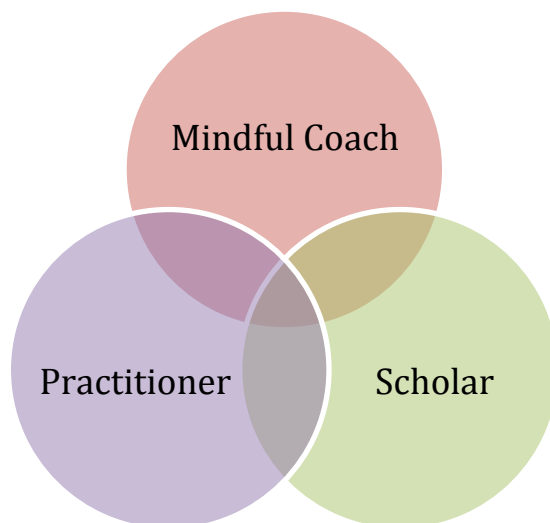


Figure 6.5. Roles of learning for personal transformation.

The questions I asked came from a place of knowing organizational realities. These insights drew on my understanding of how a mindful leader experiences the workplace. For example, individuals who work for organizations that value hard-charging behaviors may struggle with mindful qualities such as pausing before acting or observing at the expense of doing. Therefore, it is important that mindful leaders be their own advocates, and when the opportunity arises, share why certain behaviors are favored over others and the significance. This happened with Participant Three in that he shifted from a posture of directing others to facilitating ideas. This was uncomfortable for some of his peers and direct reports because they wanted him to revert to his former managing style. Meanwhile, the participant said that he was at greater ease and was accomplishing the same if not more than what he had previously. He shared with his team why he was engaging with listening more than messaging and why this modification was important. I realized that as change was happening with Participant Three that

I needed to keep alert and acknowledge the discomfort that he was experiencing with his new thinking. I continually came back to the mindful practices and asked questions that supported the participant's understanding of his own transformation in ways that stimulated reflection. This inquiry allowed him to develop confidence because he was able to take a step back. Moreover, a breaking up of the old is needed so that new space is opened for change to take hold.

A challenge that I experienced was with respect to Participant Five. The participant didn't fully participate in the practices; she only dabbled in the process. She was most interested in the daily breathing exercise and observing others. My hope was that she was willing to try the other practices with the same enthusiasm. The practices were hers to own, not mine, and it was up to her to do what she found of value. I found that continuing and deepening my meditation practice during the coaching process was beneficial because it allowed me to keep perspective and pay attention to what may have been blocking her willingness to fully engage.

Self-awareness is a core construct for the mindful coach. Daily awareness of the quality of one's breath is a primary way that the mindful coach remains committed to his or her own practice. Another important aspect is keeping alert, and guarding against acting with an expert mindset. The expert mindset trap reinforces the fallacy that because one retains knowledge that other's do not that you know what is best. This is a slippery slope for anyone who has more knowledge or access to information. Practicing humility, and listening without judgment, helps keep the expert mindset at bay and allows for feeling grounded. This process is never complete because the coach always requires personal development, but the experience is rewarding because it keeps one fresh and feeling connected to others.

We all grow up being molded by emotional and social programming. Some of these mindsets have served us well, while others have limited our outlook. The challenge with these programs is that they are subconscious and not easily identifiable. The mindful coach has a special role in these circumstances because they can help others recognize habitual ways of being, and help replace automatic thinking with conscious thinking. The path toward greater awareness is incremental and is supported by the coaching process; small successes become cumulative and greater confidence often results.

Mindfulness is compelling because it helps deconstruct programming in a way that does not feel forced or contrived. The study provided an opportunity for me to observe the challenges that participants encountered. Sometimes habitual thinking was a result of socialization over a certain period of time or expectations that were absorbed without questioning. As a result of being part of a system, such as a family or organization, thinking is shaped simply by association. As a result, some degree of automatic thinking creeps into our being. The task before us is to stay cognizant of these mindsets and assumptions despite the challenge that this may pose; it requires attention to notice when thoughts drift to autopilot. One of the unspoken expectations of modern organizations is that people are viewed one-dimensionally. In other words, people are expected to perform a role that manifests in the cognitive at the exclusion of other parts of our make-up, notably the emotional and somatic. I heard this theme of one-dimensionality repeated from the participants. The mindful practices are an ideal way to deconstruct these experiences because they integrate the multiple facets of being human. The thinking that we show up only in an organizational role is unrealistic; humans are complex and have more to offer than any one aspect of self. Because I was steeped in the organizational experience, I was able to empathize and connect with participants in ways that were based on

mutual understanding. I found this process both rewarding and re-assuring that who we are does not need to be left behind.

I found myself enjoying the complexity of the individual's situation and their unique experiences. I was surprised at the similar challenges that many of the participants' encountered, such as exhibiting adaptability in working with others and interacting effectively with others who have different working styles. The simple act of talking through an experience proved valuable because it helped to untangle emotions and provide clarity to an otherwise messy circumstance. I experienced the coaching process as analogous to learning to use a high-resolution camera in that I viewed challenges from multiple angles and in greater detail. These instances supported my growth as a practitioner because it affirmed struggles I encountered in my own organizational role. The process of helping others recognize growth opportunities supported my own development because I encountered my own circumstances through the lens of the participant.

The affirming experience as an external coach and practitioner-scholar also revealed limitations, namely, that as I returned to my organizational role, I realized just how difficult it can be to trust others. The proposition to open up to a confidant may be too risky. There is a distinct advantage as a neutral player with organizational experience. My external role facilitated an ability to connect with participants because the person I coached was my sole interest. I held no ties to any particular outcome outside of my researcher role. Of course, this situation presents its own challenges in that the person's view is the primary one and self-reporting bias can result; but overall, the coach and practitioner experience revealed distinct advantages in partnering with others.

The role of scholar was an exciting one. I felt immersed in the research and trusted that it would play out satisfactorily. The experience in working with my committee to ensure the best

possible research design produced confidence. I felt that I grew in two distinct ways as a scholar. The first was in respect to practicing scholarship and understanding if the surveys were measuring what they were intended to uncover. I was affirmed by the positive response of the participants in terms of their experience with the surveys. The participants said that the weekly surveys helped keep the daily practices top of mind. The surveys were a barometer, a reminder when one practice was not keeping pace with another. The journal was reported to be particularly helpful for some because it gave them an opportunity to make sense of what they were learning. I grew as a scholar because I was able to see how the research process was experienced from the participant perspective, and how the different design elements (i.e., surveys, questions, coaching, and the practices), all came together.

The second aspect of scholarship was in regard to building creative tension. Silsbee (2010) describes this tension as a combination of observing, the contribution of the participant, and underlying assumptions and interpretations. This played out in the questions I asked, noticing when it was time to move the conversation along to a deeper level of development, uncovering underlying beliefs that were hindering growth. The perspective was relevant because it highlighted differences between self-assessments and what was communicated in the coaching meetings. This was evident with three of the participants whose quantitative scores were elevated in comparison with what was shared anecdotally. The interplay of knowing what was self-reported and my personal observations alerted me to these differences. I felt that I was able to ask questions that stimulated discussion. Often, awareness and self-perception played into these situations. I was also paying attention to my own tendencies in terms of my line of questioning and the hunches I was pursuing in light of the data. The awakening as a scholar in a fluid research context was enlivening and enhanced my critical thinking.

In conclusion, the study afforded me the chance to grow as a mindful coach, and practitioner-scholar. During the data collection process, the role of mindful coach was dominant, but not at the exclusion of the other two. An overarching aim of this role was in service to the participants' development and their growth as a leader and person. This included listening deeply to their circumstances and stimulating reflection. I found myself attaching to expectations at times, and I tried to mitigate these tendencies by noticing my reactions. I was able to build upon my practitioner role as an internal leadership and organizational consultant, and apply the skills that I have refined over the years. Last, the creative tension that I experienced as a scholar, was a fascinating one in terms of understanding and implementing a research strategy. I felt that I was able to grow in my critical thinking and as a coach and interviewer; moreover, the diverse roles afforded me the opportunity to grow as a practitioner-scholar in expansive and rewarding ways.

What More Do We Need to Know?

The practices reveal a number of benefits for the participants. These improvements included increases in self-awareness, improved concentration and focus, less stress, including reduced body tension, better relations with others, and development as a leader. Participants reported that improvements due to the practices extended beyond the workplace, including better relations with spouses, significant others, children, and friends, as well as an overall improvement in their quality of life. The power of listening jumped to the fore in terms of being able to connect with others. Based on the evidence of the study, the Leading as a Way of Being model works, and the findings suggest that it may have promise beyond the targeted audience.

A key premise of this research is that habits, rather than behaviors, drive underlying changes in attitudes and mindsets. The mindful practices were designed to address specific

abilities in order to enhance attention through daily practice. Each of the practices was developed with this singular focus in mind. Underlying this approach is the premise that mental models (Senge, 1990) are moldable, albeit difficult to change, and that the practices are effective ways to rewire habits. The practices revealed that habits of the mind can change, and result in multiple benefits that go deeper than leader development that focus primarily on behaviors.

Based on the reported findings of the study, three additional questions have arisen which can guide future research. The first area relates to the efficacy of contemplative practice in conjunction with traditional leadership approaches. Most leadership programs do not include *Being* as a core component of the development process. The focus of those programs is about the *Knowing* and *Doing* and it misses the foundational aspect that this study revealed. The focus on *Being* represents the inward look for leader development. We need to better understand how *Being* balances with *Knowing and Doing*.

A second area that we need to know more about is the effect of informal breath practice on stress and well-being. Stress was a major theme presented from the participants, and its consequences were not limited to the organizational context, but often extended to relations beyond the workplace. The study revealed a relationship between the quality of breath and its effect on stress and tension. The body mapping exercise illustrated the positive effect of the practices on the body, and how this occurred at similar intervals around the eight-week mark. We need to better understand the efficacy of informal mindful practices on the whole person.

The third area that we can benefit from understanding more about is the effect of informal mindful practice and biology. The research (Rock & Schwartz, 2010; Stein et. al., 2003) reveals the positive effects of mindful practice on the frontal lobe (reasoning, planning, emotional awareness), parietal lobe (sensory information), and the thalamus (gatekeeper for the

senses). Research shows that through formal eight-week mindfulness-based programs, typically twice a day for 20-minutes, that brain-wave activity decreases and helps to reduce the amount of mental chatter that fills our minds. We do not yet know if there is an effect as a result of informal practices. Does a relationship exist? If so, is the relationship transitory or does it hold greater promise for lasting change? A better understanding of these effects could provide scientific evidence for the benefits of informal practice, and how we go about developing leaders.

Reclaiming Ourselves and Our Communities

The selection strategy included individuals with sufficient, but not overwhelming, amounts of stress in their lives. Each participant was different in respect to their background, and came to the experience with unique aspirations and challenges. The participants also held different views and assumptions of what being a leader entailed. Most of the participants wanted to improve some aspect of their leadership, but they were not necessarily sure what they wanted to improve. Many participants equated being a leader with influencing others and managing behaviors to get things done. The challenge with managing behaviors is that, at its root, is an underlying presumption of control, either explicit or implicit. This thinking is not new; in fact, conventional thinking equates being a leader with controlling others, not in malicious ways, but because this is what people are familiar with and have been taught. This presumption suggests that leaders in formal positions have the discretion to keep behaviors in check.

Mindful leadership, in contrast, is life affirming because it looks within and loosens the habits and perspectives we hold onto; mindful leadership is empowering, and not tied to a prescribed way of behaving. This begs the question about how leaders in organizations promote workplaces that engage employees so they feel that they can give a best effort every day. The

Gallup organization collects workplace engagement data and finds that two-thirds of all employees are either disengaged or actively disengaged in their organizations. This means that an overwhelming number of employees lack satisfaction in their jobs and may be mentally checked-out. Based on this finding, and the estimated \$60 billion dollars that is invested in leadership development annually, there appears to be disconnects between how leaders are prepared and the expected results. Therefore, how can mindful leadership support employees to feel engaged in who they are and what they do? I suggest, as does Sinclair (2007), that a freer and liberated form of leading draws on opportunities to connect with others in genuine ways, values relationships, is thoughtful and reflective in orientation, and relinquishes notions of ego-driven behaviors. The assumption that leadership is mostly about the self is prescriptive and based on a false assumption of control. Reclaiming ground, so that being a leader is about opening up to what is happening around us, is afforded through the simple act of paying attention and listening deeply; this can lead to an approach that transforms rather than pigeon-holds.

Mindfulness embodies this form of leading because it inherently focuses inward; it is not self-oriented but relies on others in inclusive and collaborating ways. This form of leading instigates personal change because it draws on the talents of others and creates flexible and agile thinking. The mindful practices introduced in this study set the stage for leadership that liberates, and suggest that it begins with the most essential and elemental aspect of our being, the breath. As the individual enhances clarity of being, it extends outwardly in novel ways of doing with enhanced clarity. The job of the mindful leader is to continue to open up to workplace realities through reflective habits so that their perspective expands. The ability to reach a sufficient level of proficiency with the practices has the potential to become a potent tool for working in uncertain environments because situations can be dealt with in a present-minded way,

neither regretting the past nor worrying about the future. This type of leadership supports a composed and calm persona and is less reactive.

Leading based on fulfilling ego-driven needs is a one way track and leads to worry, anxiety, and suffering. This approach depletes emotional energy and fails to nourish qualities of gratitude. The separation between an ego-driven form of leading and a liberating one is the divide between what should be and the present moment. The ego loves to feed off the division of what is and disrupts peace of mind. A liberated leader that embraces a mindful way of being is in a better position to let go of false notions of the self. This supports the leader who can then move toward an expansive way of being, and sustains virtues like compassion and mercy, not traditional leader notions that often rely on prescribed behaviors and set expectations.

There is no question that as the topic of mindfulness gains attention there is a danger of idealizing and commercializing contemplative practices. Mindfulness is not a cure, nor will it alleviate all problems. In fact, if a mindful way of leading does anything, it brings to the surface personal struggles. A colleague who worked for the Los Angeles Times as a religion reporter recalled a time that she was covering a story that she felt exploited the commodification of the Virgin Mary. She said that the Virgin Mary was showing up on handbags, on the backs of surfboards, on restaurant menus, and t-shirts on the Venice boardwalk. On one hand, the intent may have been to raise spiritual consciousness. On the other, if the items were meant to create a popular image so that sales increase, then the purpose is exploitive. In the United States, our culture is laced with materialistic ideals; enticing marketing campaigns are seducing and compete with our best intentions. Contemplative practice is not an easy fix, nor is it a lightweight way of leading, it requires daily discipline and cultivation; simply stated, there are no short cuts, but there is hope in leading in ways that reclaim ourselves and our communities.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

The practical applications of the Leading as a Way of Being model were outlined in this chapter. The implications for mindless leadership were also presented, namely the liabilities of automatic thinking and accepting the status quo. Three ideas for developing as a mindful leader were introduced including conscious breathing, asking powerful questions, and uncovering everyday moments to practice mindfulness. I reflected on my personal learning as a coach, practitioner, and scholar. I noted the importance of deepening self-awareness as a coach and the dangers of an expert mind, holding onto attachments as a practitioner, and building creative tension and critical thinking as a scholar. I offered consideration for future direction including: the efficacy of contemplative practice in conjunction with traditional leadership approaches; the effect of informal breath practice on stress and well-being; and understanding more about the effect of informal mindful practice and biology. Last, I shared caution in respect to the dangers of the idealization and commercialization of contemplative practices. The chapter offered an overall reflection of salient themes from the study in the context of practical applications.

More broadly, the purpose of the study was to investigate how organizational leaders cultivate calm and focus in moments of uncertainty and turbulence. The research examined, at the individual level, how specific mind body practices affect one's ability to pay attention, manage stress, connect with others, and multiply perspectives. In one sense, these practices are abilities, but in another they are intermediary forces that may increase one's effectiveness. This study suggests that being a leader, and by extension, leadership, is not merely a series of actions; rather, it is a way of thinking and a way of being. The capacity to notice breath and listen deeply is understood as a pathway for increasing the mind body connection and serve as the instruments for the practices. Six participants were selected and introduced to five distinct practices. All six

leaders improved their relationship to breath, and as a result, their overall well-being and effectiveness. This included the ability to think strategically (and less reactively), enhance perspective taking, maintain composure, deal with ambiguity, adapt to circumstances and effectively cope during times of change. Further, all participants reported that they no longer held stress in the body. The findings suggest meaningful change can occur in a relatively short period of time over the course of several months, when consistent and daily engagement of the practices is undertaken. The study may hold promise in developing innovative and holistic approaches to leader development and personal change, and specifically, how informal contemplative practices enhance effectiveness during times of uncertainty and turbulence.

Appendix

Appendix A:

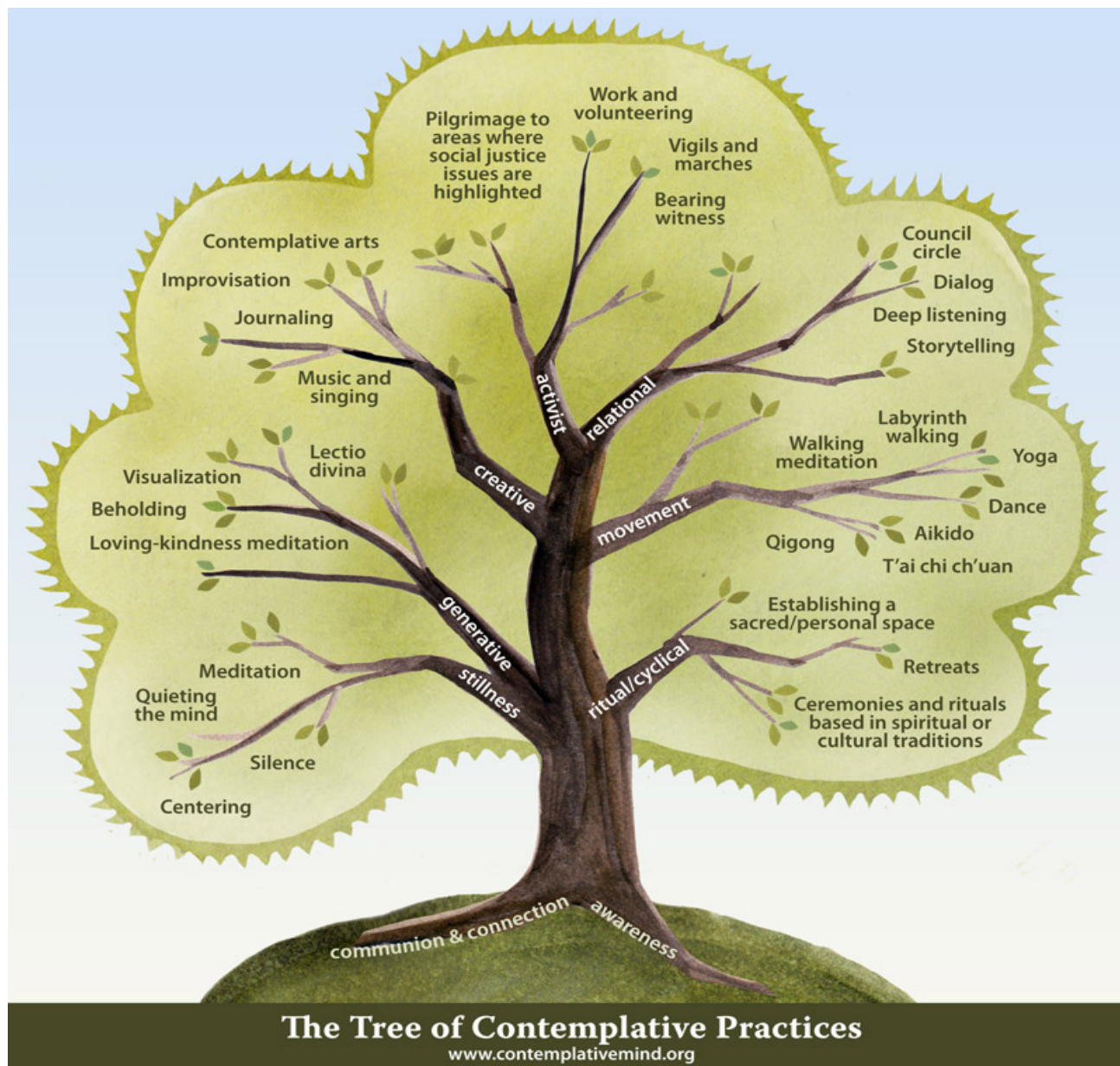
Peer-reviewed Contemplative Practice Focus Area and Researchers

Focus Area	Researcher(s)	Assessments
<p>Stillness Practices (16); (9)</p> <p>Silence, centering prayer, insight meditation, sitting meditation, quieting and cleaning the mind, transcendental meditation, zazen meditation, mindfulness-based stress reduction, stress reduction/burn-out, brain and immune functioning</p>	<p><i>Individual Based</i></p> <p>Alexander, Changler, Langer, Newman & Davies (1989); Astin (1997), Baer, Smith & Allen (2004); Birnie, Speca & Carlson (2010); Bishop, Brown & Ryan (2003); Carmody & Baer (2007); Carmody, Baer, Lykins & Olendzki (2009); Chang, Palesh, Caldwell, Glasgow, Abramson, Luskin Gill, Burke & Koopman (2004); Cohen-Katz, Folkman (1997), Ferguson, Willemsen & Castaneto (2009); Davidson, Kabat-Zinn, Schumacher, Rosenkranz, Muller, Santorelli, Urbanowski, Harrington, Bonus & Sheridan (2003); Folkman (1997); Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt & Walach (2004); Hollis-Walker & Colosimo (2011); Holzel, Carmody, Vangel, Congleton, Yerramsetti, Gard & Lazar (2011); Kjellgren & Taylor (2008); Krasner, Langer, Monti, Shapiro, Styhre, Vempatti; Taylor & Mireault (2008); Lazar, Kerr, Wasserman, Gray, Greve, Treadway, McGarvey, Quinn, Dusek, Benson, Rauch, Moore & Fischl (2005); Lutz, Greischar, Rawlings, Ricard, Davidson & Singer (2004); Slagter, Lutz, Greischar, Francis, Nieuwenhuis, Davis & Davidson (2007); Shapiro, Oman, Thoresen, Plante & Flinders (2008)</p> <p><i>Role-Based/Workplace</i></p> <p>Broome, Orme-Johnson & Schmidt-Wilk (2005); Alexander, Swanson, Rainforth, Carlisle, Todd & Oates (1993); Cohen-Katz, Wiley, Capuano, Baker, Deitrick & Shapiro (2005); Galantino, Baime, Maguire, Szapary & Farrar (2005); Krasner, Epstein, Beckman, Suchman, Chapman, Mooney & Quill (2009); Marques (2009); Schmidt-Wilk (2003); Schneider, Zoll & Manocha (2010); Shapiro, Astin, Bishop & Cordova (2005)</p>	<p>Benchmarks 360-degree Assessment</p> <p>Stait-Trait Anxiety Inventory</p> <p>Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire</p> <p>Global Severity Index</p> <p>Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills</p> <p>Leadership Practices Inventory</p> <p>Maslach Burnout Inventory</p> <p>Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale</p> <p>Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire</p> <p>Perceived Stress Scale</p> <p>Positive States of Mind</p> <p>Satisfactory with Life Inventory</p> <p>Self-Compassion Scale</p> <p>Self-Regulation Questionnaire</p> <p>Social Desirability Response Set-5</p> <p>Scales of Psychological Well-Being</p>
<p>Movement Practices (4)</p> <p>Nishino breathing method, tai chi, ChunDoSunBupQi-training, yoga, creation/art-based practices</p>	<p>Kimura, Nagao, Tanaka, Sakai, Ohnishi & Okumura (2005); Lee, Ryu & Chung (2000); Monti, Peterson, Kunkel, Hauck, Pequignot, Rhodes, Brainard (2005); Telles, Gaur & Balkrishna (2009); Vempati & Telles (2000)</p>	<p>Symptom Checklist-90</p> <p><i>Bold = frequently cited</i></p>
<p>Relational Practices: (4)</p>	<p>Harung, Heaton & Alexander (1995); McCollum (1999); Trahan</p>	

Cultivating Leadership in Organizations Leadership & self- development, leadership and consciousness, cultivating organizational leadership	(2010); Rakoff (2010)	
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Appendix B:

The Tree of Contemplative Practices



<http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree>

Downloading Reprinting the Tree: You may use the tree for **personal and non-commercial** purposes. For example, please feel free to use it to illustrate an academic paper, post it on your blog, or display it in your organization's meditation room. The Tree of Contemplative Practices is a copyrighted image.

Appendix C:

Publisher Re-Print Permission Theory U

Subject:	Fwd: {SoL Publisher} reprinting permission
From:	MIT.edu
To:	Steve Romano
Date:	Wednesday, January 29, 2016:04 AM

Dear Steve,

I work with Otto Scharmer and am responding on his behalf. Yes you are able to reference and use the figure in your dissertation. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Regards,

From: SNL Romano

Subject: {SoL Publisher} reprinting permission

Date: January 28, 2014 5:13:01 PM EST

To: SoL Publisher

Dear SOL,

I would like to ask permission to use Figure 1.2, Five Moments of the U Process, found on page. 19, in Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges, for my dissertation in open access archive.

Can you tell me if this is the correct address to inquire about this permission? If so, can I please have permission to include the image in my dissertation?

Thank you,
Steve Romano

Appendix D

Participant Invitation for Study

Hello,

Thanks for the opportunity to follow up regarding a leader effectiveness study. This study offers a unique opportunity for self-development. I am pleased that you are interested in discussing your possible participation.

In the study, you will have an opportunity to increase focus, connect better with others and manage stress, and broaden perspective-taking. I will guide you through self-directed exercises to support your learning. An example would include a breathing exercise to relieve tension. Another exercise involves withholding judgment of others so that you can listen deeply.

The study would take place over 10 to 12 weeks, with a follow-on meeting one month after the initial period. We would meet weekly throughout the study to develop habits that support your growth and so that you feel supported. There are a few short surveys that should take a minimal amount of time to complete.

I have extensive experience in coaching and leader development and I hope that you can take advantage of this knowledge while we work together.

Please let me know a good time to discuss this opportunity. I can be reached at sromano@antioch.edu.

Thanks for your consideration.

Best regards,
Steve Romano
Ph.D. student in Leadership & Change
Antioch University

Appendix E
Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire

Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire	Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
1. When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving					
2. I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings					
3. I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions					
4. I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them					
5. When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted					
6. When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body					
7. I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words					
8. I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted					
9. I watch my feelings without getting lost in them					
10. I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling					
11. I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions					
12. It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking					
13. I am easily distracted					
14. I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way					

Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire, cont. Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Check the box in the blank that best describes your own opinion of what is generally true for you.	Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
15. I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face					
16. I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things					
17. I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad					
18. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present					
19. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it					
20. I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing					
21. In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting					
22. When I have a sensation in my body, it's difficult for me to describe it because I can't find the right words					
23. It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing					
24. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after					
25. I tell myself that I shouldn't be thinking the way I'm thinking					
26. I notice the smells and aromas of things					
27. Even when I'm feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words					
28. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them					
29. When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting					
30. I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them					
31. I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colors, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow					

Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire, cont. Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Check the box in the blank that best describes you own opinion of what is generally true for you.	Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
32. My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words					
33. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go					
34. I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing					
35. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad, depending what the thought/image is about					
36. I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behavior					
37. I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail					
38. I find myself doing things without paying attention					
39. I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas					

Appendix E (cont.):

Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire

Scoring Information

Observe items:

1, 6, 11, 15, 20, 26, 31, 36

Describe items:

2, 7, 12R, 16R, 22R, 27, 32, 37

Act with Awareness items:

5R, 8R, 13R, 18R, 23R, 28R, 34R, 38R

Nonjudge items:

3R, 10R, 14R, 17R, 25R, 30R, 35R, 39R

Nonreact items:

4, 9, 19, 21, 24, 29, 33

Reference:

Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment, 13*, 27-45.

Appendix F:

Mindfulness Survey

Mindfulness Survey Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Check the box in the blank that best describes you own opinion of what is generally true for you.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I pay attention to the other person when listening (OB)							
2. I judge my thoughts when I listen (SJ-LG)							
3. I consciously take deep breaths when I listen (BC)							
4. I can explain my listening tendencies to others (SJ-N)							
5. I feel relaxed when I listen (O)							
6. I accept others positions when I disagree (SJ-A)							
7. I let go of ideas I disagree with when listening (SJ-LG)							
8. I slow my breath down when I listen to others ((BA)							
9. I accept what others say without judgment (SJ-A)							
10. I am able to build on others ideas when listening (O)							
11. I notice my breath when I listen (BA)							
12. I listen well under pressure (OB)							
13. I am able to modify my breath when listening to others (BC)							
14. I try not to allow my thoughts to randomly shift to topics when listening to others (SJ-N)							

Ob = observing; SJ-N = suspending judgment-noticing; SJ-A= suspending judgment-accepting;
SJ-LG= suspending judgment-letting go; O=opening; BA=breath awareness; BC=breath
coordinating.

Appendix G:

Weekly Reflection Report

Weekly Reflection Report Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Check the box in the blank that best describes your level of agreement.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I maintain my focus in challenging situations (PA)							
I am comfortable when making presentations (PA)							
I easily find ways to relax (MS)							
My breath is fluid in tense circumstances (MS)							
I judge my own thoughts (PA)							
I make decisions with appropriate input from others (MP)							
I am slow to judge the ideas of others (CO)							
I act genuinely during conflict (CO)							
I feel in control of my circumstances (MS)							
I pay attention to what is said beyond the words (CO)							
I listen deeply to others even if I think I know the answer (CO)							
I consider the organization as a whole when making decisions (MP)							
I usually feel relaxed even when I am not sure what is next (MS)							
I listen to others when I disagree (CO)							
I reflect on how I interact in meetings (PA)							
I notice my breath when sitting at the computer (PA)							
I accept the ideas of others when I am stressed (MS)							
I challenge team members to build cross-functional views(MP)							
I build on the ideas of others (MP)							
I seek input from others when making decisions (MP)							

PA = paying attention; CO = connecting with others; MS = managing stress; MP = multiplying perspective.

Appendix H:

Weekly Practice Report

Weekly Practice Report Please rate each of the following questions using the scale below. Check the box in the blank that best describes your level of agreement during the past week.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
6. During the past week, rate your ability to pay attention?							
7. During the past week, rate your ability to connect with others?							
8. During the past week, rate your ability to manage stress?							
9. During the past week, rate your ability to generate new perspectives?							
10. During the past week, rate your capacity to demonstrate new leader abilities?							

Appendix I:

Weekly Frequency Report

Weekly Frequency Report					
Based on the past week, how frequently did you apply the practice over the course of the day? Please check one response per each category below.					
	Not at all	1-2 times daily	3-4 times daily	5 times daily	>5 times daily
<i>Breath awareness</i> (Noticing inhale and exhale breath)					
<i>Breath coordination</i> (Attention to rhythm and flow)					
<i>Observing</i> (Seeing behaviors in context)					
<i>Suspending judgment</i> (Withholding evaluation)					
<i>Opening</i> (Expanding perspective)					

Appendix J:

Informed Consent and Release

Antioch University

Ph.D. in Leadership & Change

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Informed Consent Statement and

Agreement to Participant in Research Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study on leader development conducted by Stephen Romano, a doctoral candidate in the Leadership & Change program at Antioch University.

Description

The twelve-week study is being conducted to evaluate the effect of contemplative practices to individual leader development. The study will include the administration of mindfulness and listening surveys, training in particular practices, and weekly one-hour practice review sessions with the researcher.

Disclosure and Voluntary Consent

Please read the statements below regarding the study and indicate your understanding and acceptance by signing on the following page.

For this study, I agree to participant in an initial 90-minute learning session and weekly one-hour discussions with the researcher during the study period (anticipated to be 10 to 12 weeks in length). I will also be asked to meet for one-hour, one-month after the initial study period, for a final interview. Additionally, I will be asked to participate in a focus group meeting at the end of the research that includes other participants from the study. During this focus group, I will have an opportunity to share experiences from the study within a small group format.

I understand that I will be asked to perform a simple breathing exercise on a daily basis. The exercise will consist of taking in and out breaths using your natural rhythm and flow.

Instructions and guidance of the exercise will be provided by the researcher. I will have an opportunity to journal about these experiences as well as to respond based from the surveys.

The coaching meetings will occur weekly and be one-hour in length. They will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time. I understand that I will be asked to keep a journal to reflect on the learning and the practices. These materials will be collected both on-line and during the meetings, and if necessary for times not meeting face-to-face, a self-addressed and stamped envelope will be provided.

I understand that I will have access to the final report of the study. The results of the study may be included in future scholarly presentations and publications.

All responses and information provided for the study are confidential. Surveys collected and information gathered will bear no references to you, the people with whom you interact, or the organization that you are associated with.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may discontinue participation at any time. I have the right to express any concern or complaint to the University Committee on Research Involving Human Participants at Antioch University (Dr. Carolyn Kenny, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Ph.D. in Leadership & Change, Antioch University, ckenny@antioch.edu, 805-618-1903).

If you have any questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, please contact:

Carolyn Kenny, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Ph.D. in Leadership & Change
900 Dayton Street
Yellow Springs, OH 45387
805-618-1903
ckenny@antioch.edu

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the information provided on the study, and that I am participating voluntarily.

Participant Name (Print)

Participant Signature

Date

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