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Walking Their Talk: The Role of the Body in Effective, Positive Leadership

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Abstract

The way we do anything is the way we do everything. Be it giving a presentation in the boardroom or running a marathon, we must take action using our physical bodies. Yet, despite this fact, the body has been largely overlooked in research on leadership and organizational wellbeing. The present paper aims to dispel the myth that the body is simply a tool, arguing that body-mind connection may be a critical missing piece in the formula for effective, positive leadership. I propose that important aspects of positive leadership like character strengths and practical wisdom may be trainable via mindfulness practices that involve coordinated movement of, or attention on, the physical body. Ten teachers of body-based wisdom and ten corporate leaders were interviewed to explore these hypotheses. The interviews examined positive leadership qualities, the role of physical health and the role of body awareness and body language in effective, positive leadership. Based on the literature review and interview results, I propose two pathways by which the wisdom of the body can enhance leadership. First, leaders may be able to develop and cultivate latent leadership strengths through body-based mindfulness practice. Second, leaders with greater body-awareness may display greater *practical wisdom*, using information obtained from bodily sensations to engage their key strengths in the right situations, at the right times, in the right ways.

Walking Their Talk: The Role of the Body in Effective, Positive Leadership

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Of

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

Advisor: Barry Schwartz

August 1, 2015

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Keywords

Positive Psychology, Positive Organizational Scholarship, Character Strengths, Practical Wisdom, Health, Wellbeing, Embodied Cognition, Embodiment, Body, Habit, Leadership, Business, Leadership Development, Somatics, MAPP

Disciplines

Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Health, Management, Business, Leadership

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Walking Their Talk: The Role of the Body in Effective, Positive Leadership

Introduction

"By definition, most of what I have to say is not directly attested in written sources, since it deals with emotions that were not expressed verbally by those who felt them, though their actions were nonetheless altered by what they felt." - William H. McNeil

For centuries, human beings have used the power, strength and presence of their physical bodies to accomplish the complex physical and social tasks that are unique to our species. Yet despite our inability to take any action *without* the engagement of the physical body, the body it self has remained a relatively silent player in scientific dialogs about human psychology and organizational leadership. Given the intimate nature of our relationship with our bodies, it is not surprising. In popular culture, the body is often seen as a domain of sex, of lust, of untamed impulses, and of shame (McNeill,1995; Shusterman, 2006). But it is also a domain of learning that aids in the development of skill, supports deep listening and promotes the transmission of effective communication (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). Could it be that body-awareness is a long-lost missing ingredient in effective, authentic, moral leadership - and ultimately, in human flourishing? I would argue yes.

In fact, some scholars of body-based wisdom suggest that leadership *without* awareness of the physical body is at best incomplete, and at worst, a recipe for short-sightedness, reactivity and too-much-of-a-good-thing actions, which lead to mistakes that are costly for us and for the planet. Meanwhile, recent approaches that connect leaders more deeply with the people they lead - through mindful engagement with emotion and sensation - seem to increase energy, breed heightened social awareness and support the creation of upward spirals that are both good for us, and good for others (Dutton, 2003).

In this paper, I explore the role of the body in the context of organizational leadership that strives toward human flourishing. Specifically, I argue that developing body-awareness and body-mastery through physical movement practices may help leaders unlock their latent character strengths. It may also help build the capacity for *practical wisdom*: a leader's ability to draw upon the right virtues in the right moment, while avoiding the downfalls of underuse or overuse. In this paper, I describe character strengths and practical wisdom in detail. Then, through literature review and qualitative research, I bring together evidence from positive psychology, positive organizational scholarship, business, somatics and the humanities to make a case for a re-uniting of the modern leader with his (or her) physical body.

To be sure, there are many kinds of leadership. These kinds of leadership serve a wide variety of ends. In this exploration, I am primarily concerned with what has recently been coined *positive leadership* by researchers in the field of positive organizational scholarship (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014). Positive leaders are committed to bringing out the best in others, and take their own daily actions as a starting point. In other words, I am interested in the kind of leadership that takes as its mission the ultimate goal of human flourishing. In this context, *business* is seen as a potential force for good on the planet, and *leaders* are those who steer the ship in that direction by modeling the way (Quinn & Thackor, 2014). In order to provide some context for positive leadership, and why it matters, I begin with a brief discussion of the fields of positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship. I will then discuss some characteristics of positive leaders, and present evidence that supports the benefit of including the body in their development. Finally, I will share the preliminary results of a qualitative study that examined the role of the body in the context of positive leadership, concluding with study limitations and

recommendations for future research. In the appendix, I also include the description of a simple body-based positive psychology intervention for coaches and leadership trainers.

What is Positive Psychology?

In the last 20 years, scholars of human psychology have begun to turn their attention toward a topic that was surprisingly missing before then - human flourishing. Scholars like Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmilhalyi noticed an almost exclusive attention to pathology in the field of prior to this turn (Seligman & Csikszentmilhalyi, 2000). Their research gave birth to positive psychology, a discipline whose aim is to articulate the nature of the best things in life, and shed light on how to cultivate them. Rather than fixing psychological problems, their interest was in developing human strengths. The emerging field of positive psychology now aims to synthesize theories of human flourishing, back them with scientific evidence, and propose practical approaches – not merely for those with "problems" or clinical diagnoses – but for anyone who has a desire to lead a flourishing life (Peterson, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmilhalyi, 2000). In a bold departure from psychology's thirty-year focus on mental disorders, positive psychologists are now hard at work creating positive interventions designed to help healthy people thrive.

Strikingly, positive psychology's practitioners span disciplines like the social and behavioral sciences, business, medicine and the humanities. Drawing from diverse sources dating back as early as the philosophy of Aristotle, researchers of positive psychology have diligently crossed intellectual boarders in an effort to produce a complete map of the road to The Good Life (Melchert, 2002; Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008). Today, positive psychology research addresses topics like strengths of character, positive emotions, resilience, optimism and hope (Brunwasser, Gillham, & Kim, 2009; Fredrickson, 2009; Feudtner, 2005; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004;

Reivich & Shatte, 2002; Schneider, 2001). A common thread in this research is its focus on the development of inner resources that help people flourish.

At its roots, positive psychology begins with the assumption that well-being is not simply the absence of mental disorder, but also includes the presence of positive psychological resources. In contrast to traditional psychology, which focuses on ameliorating psychological dysfunction, positive psychology consists of research and interventions that focus on increasing well-being above and beyond a theoretical baseline (Pawelski, n.d.; Schuller, 2014; Sin & Lyubomirski, 2009). The field also makes a distinction between *hedonic well-being*, simply experiencing happiness or pleasure, and *eudaimonic well-being*, a focus on the complex process of living well (Ryan et al., 2008). While the pursuit of happiness alone is a worthwhile cause, positive psychology takes interest in the wide range of emotional and psychological resources that make up well-being. One model of such resources is the PERMA model, which posits that five key components of a flourishing life are positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and achievement (Seligman, 2011). In this model, well-being is a function of both individual and social factors, pointing to the importance of other people, when it comes to the Good Life.

In addition to research, the field of positive psychology has shown much success in developing practical interventions that cultivate human flourishing. For example, in a meta-analysis of forty-nine studies, Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) found that positive psychology interventions (positive interventions) significantly enhance well-being. These results give hope for the general effectiveness of current positive interventions. Positive interventions are particularly effective at addressing the positive end of the Good Life spectrum (i.e. going from ok to good to great), versus the negative end (i.e. going from awful to bad to ok). Importantly,

positive interventions improve well-being in non-clinical populations (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). While they have been shown in some cases to be effective at decreasing clinical symptoms like depression, the primary focus on non-clinical populations is one characteristic that makes positive interventions unique.

Positive interventions also increase well-being by directly cultivating positive psychological resources like pleasant affect, effective use of strengths, positive relationships, a sense of meaning or accomplishment (Bao & Lyubomirski, 2014; Pawelski, n.d; Sin & Lyubomirski, 2009). For example, positive interventions may include activities aimed at cultivating positive cognition by practicing optimistic thinking, or cultivating positive emotions by a writing gratitude letter. In contrast to traditional psychological interventions, which frequently aim to shore up a person's weaknesses, positive interventions target the augmentation of feelings, cognitions and behaviors that constitute human flourishing. In practice, the term positive intervention may refer to activities and exercises that meet one or the other (or both) of the two criteria above, and are also evidence based.

Despite the success of positive psychology interventions to increase well-being in practice, somewhat less is known about the process by which these interventions work. Recent studies suggest that positive interventions are most effective at improving well-being when practiced over an extended period of time, by motivated individuals for whom the activity is a particularly good fit (Bao & Lyubomirski, 2014; Schueller 2014). This suggests that internal motivation, practice and goal alignment may be important ingredients in the conscious cultivation of human flourishing. I will suggest other ingredients later as I explore the forgotten role of the body in well-being and leadership.

Positive Organizational Scholarship: Flourishing in the Workplace

Taking its lead from the field of positive psychology, the field of positive organizational scholarship (POS) is also interested in human potential, and human flourishing. Through rigorous, scientific investigation, it focuses on organizational practices that foster resilience and lead to extraordinary performance (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). Positive organizational scholarship places an emphasis on seeking out examples of *positive devianc*e - the remarkably good stuff that happens in business - and learning what enables it, so that it can be replicated in a wider array of organizations.

For example, according to David Cooperrider, the developer of the Appreciative Inquiry technique, talking about an organization's positive strengths gets people at work excited, infusing the organization with a sense of hope (Cooperrider, 2012). When the right kinds of questions are asked by business leaders, that excitement can lead to conversations that open new possibilities for the organization. It can also lead to game changing business results (Cooperrider, 2012). What's more, Cooperrider argues that institutions, when infused the broadening of perspective that comes with positive emotions, and when focused on the elevation and extension of human strengths, can channel their positive results outward into society, making business a *force for good* in the world (Cooperrider & Goodwin, 2012). This topic is of great interest to scholars of leadership in the 21st Century. One recent, collaborative review of leadership and culture change identified *social responsibility* as a critically important endeavor for further research (Houmanfar & Mattaini, 2015).

While there are some misconceptions about the use of the term "positive" in positive organizational scholarship, leading to critiques that the field may be biased or overly optimistic, practitioners generally agree that their work is about shedding light on the processes, states and

conditions that explain individual and collective flourishing at work (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). Excellence, thriving, abundance, resilience and virtuousness are terms frequently used to describe the end goal of research in the field. Based on the assumption that all living systems move toward positive energy (or that which is life giving), research in positive organizational scholarship has demonstrated that positive conditions produce a natural "heliotropic effect." In other words, *life moves toward life*. Indeed, examples like Jane Dutton's work on interpersonal connections demonstrate that leaders who build High Quality Connections infuse those around them with a sense of vitality, positive regard and mutuality and foster greater team effectiveness in a number of domains (Dutton, 2003; Stephens, Heaphy, & Dutton, 2012).

Ultimately, positive organizational scholarship is moving the conversation about organizations and organizational leadership away from strategies that focus *solely* on profitability, problem solving and efficiency, toward strategies that *also* take outcomes like wellbeing, social integration, social contribution and human sustainability into account (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). The following four approaches serve as the foundation for this research: offering an alternative perspective by reinterpreting challenges and obstacles as opportunities, learning from extraordinary positive outcomes and positively deviant performance, placing attention on positive emotions and elevation that unlock resources and strengthen existing capacities, and examining the effects of virtuousness both *in* and *through* organizations (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012).

As yet, the field of positive organizational scholarship has not systematically tackled the physical body as an avenue through which these positive outcomes may be cultivated. Nonetheless, I would argue that the themes addressed by research in POS are similar to those addressed in body-based mindfulness training programs (Strozzi-Heckler, 2003). Furthermore, I

believe that the absence of the physical body in past research on leadership may be in part

responsible for the absence of the *positive* in traditional organizational scholarship. When the

body's senses are involved, the heliotropic effect is harder to ignore. *Life moves toward life*

(Halprin, 1995; Strozzi-Heckler, 2014)*.* Therefore, I will draw upon findings in POS to help

summarize emergent data about important leadership qualities to be honed in the 21st Century,

and then draw parallels between those qualities and the expected outcomes of teaching body-

based mindfulness to leaders.

Positive Leadership: Shepherding the Good Stuff

According to a 2001 Gallup study of over 30,000 leaders and followers on the

characteristics of great leadership, the most effective leaders do three things: invest in strengths,

surround themselves with the right people and maximize their team, and understand their

follower's needs (Rath, 2008). In order to increase the impact of their team, effective leaders

work to cultivate a balance of skill in diverse talent areas like executing, influencing, relationship

building and strategic thinking (Rath, 2008). How do they do it? Research shows that leaders

who bring out the best in their organizations have an eye for seeing the greatness in people, and

expect that capacities for excellence can be expanded (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2013). Through small

daily actions - their own and others' - these leaders are invested in going beyond the status quo to

expand what is possible their organizations.

Leaders also play a key role in imparting organizational culture. Formally or informally,

leaders are responsible for teaching the company values, communicating why they are important,

and demonstrating how they can be put into action (Clampitt, 2010). Thus, leaders serve as the

shepherds of organizational culture and culture change (Barrett, 2006). For example, the

emotional well-being of leaders has been shown to elevate team members' moods, while also

increasing teamwork, coordination, and decreasing effort expended on collective tasks (Parker, Gerbasi, & Porath, 2013; Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005).

One way of thinking about positive leadership is through the lens of the PERMA model of overall well-being (Seligman, 2011). Again, the acronym PERMA stands for positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and achievement (Seligman, 2011). An organization high in PERMA might, for example, have the following characteristics in place: enthusiasm on the part of CEO and core leadership team to pursue wellbeing for themselves and promote it among their staff (positive emotions), placing a value on interpersonal connection in day to day meetings, and through a schedule of internal social events (positive relationships), insisting on top-notch performance (achievement), and encouraging employees to identify aspects of their jobs that align with their deeper values and make an impact on the wellbeing of fellow employees and community members (meaning). An organization whose leadership focused on increasing PERMA would be invested in building a culture of flourishing at all levels.

The field of positive organizational scholarship also offers a variety of reflections on the characteristics of positive leaders. Whether leading from the top, or acting as an emergent leader in critical work-day moments, positive leaders implement practices that help organizations achieve their highest potential. According to Kim Cameron (2013), the approach of positive leaders produces results that exceed normal performance in both organizational productivity *and* individual well-being. Cameron highlights four strategies of positive leadership: positive communication, positive meaning, positive climate and positive relationships. He also describes four practices that help positive leaders to implement those strategies: establishing Everest goals, creating a culture of abundance, developing positive energy networks and delivering negative

feedback positively (Cameron, 2013). These approaches have produced a wide variety positive results in organizations, including a striking boost in major airline stock price recovery during periods of downsizing (Cameron et. al, 2011).

The Qualities of Positive Leaders

In line with these two models, research shows that positive leaders who deliver extra-ordinary results display some common qualities that reflect their concern for other people's well-being. For example, they know how to create High Quality Connections that build energy and trust, enabling team members to do their jobs well (Dutton, 2003; Stephens et al., 2012). They are *otherish*, rather than selfish, focusing on how they can make a difference, rather than on how much success they can win for themselves (Grant, 2013). They are able to take the perspective of others, which generates compassion and produces a sense of trustworthiness (Williams, 2012). They may even engage in *proactive trustworthiness* - taking actions that will inspire trustworthiness even when those actions seem unnecessary from one's personal point of view (Williams, 2012). They are also high in *pro-social motivation*, the desire to promote the well-being of other people or groups, which, when intrinsic, can predict persistence, performance and productivity and can fuel collective accomplishments at work (Berg & Grant, 2012; Grant, 2007). In other words, these leaders believe that other people matter, and they take actions that reflect that belief.

Positive leaders may also have strong sense of meaning at work, seeing their job as a *calling*. Those with a calling orientation see their work as an end in itself, to be pursued irrespective of financial gain or advancement potential (Wrzesniewski, 2003). They may also believe that their work is contributing to the greater good in some way. In order to connect with a sense of meaning, some of these "leaders" (who may exist at any level of an organization)

choose to consciously craft their perceptions of daily tasks, relating those tasks to higher level

goals that align with their personal strengths and values (Wrzesniewski, 2010). This can lead

them to go above and beyond what is required, when the going gets tough. Indeed, research

shows that a sense of meaning and purpose allows people to be more resilient in the face of

obstacles and stress (Kashdan & McKnight, 2009). Leaders who connect with a sense of

meaning seem to access these deeper reserves as a way of fueling their day to day work. What's

more, leaders who infuse their organizations with a collective sense of higher purpose reap the

benefit of upward spirals in their organization, outperforming market competitors with ratios as

high as 8 to 1 (Quinn & Thakor, 2014).

Another topic relevant to positive leadership is *authenticity*. Authenticity has been

defined as operating as one's true self, in absence of deception or obstruction, in the context of

one's daily enterprise (Avolio & Mhatre, 2012). According to research, authenticity consists of

four components, including *awareness*, knowing one's own motives; *unbiased processing*,

objectively processing information relevant to the self; *action*, behaving in alignment with one's

true self; and *relational orientation*, achieving openness and truthfulness in close relationships

(Kernis, 2003; Walumbwa et. al., 2008). Authenticity correlates with higher life satisfaction and

subjective well-being (Mengers, 2014).

Authentic leadership has been construed as a "root" construct - in other words, a leader

can be assessed as authentic while also acting in a traditional leadership style (Avolio & Mhatre,

2012). Authenticity thus seems to denote alignment with one's self and one's true values,

irrespective of general style or the situational context. Authentic leadership has been shown to

predict organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, follower satisfaction

(Walumbwa et. al., 2008). Positive, authentic leaders are proposed to have high *situational*

awareness, looking at moral dilemmas from multiple angles and making moral decisions in

accord with the level of intensity that each situation involves (May, Chan, Hodges & Avolio,

2003). This may lead them to be seen as balanced, fair individuals who know how to "do the

right thing."

      While this is not an exhaustive list of positive leadership characteristics, these examples

underscore the importance of accounting for other people, of connection to purpose, and of being

oneself. They go above and beyond to traditional leadership models that focus solely on

performance, efficiency and increasing the financial bottom line. These aspects represent a

frequently untapped vein of important leadership criterion that, while not new to great leaders,

are relatively new in the literature on excellence in leadership.

Leadership and Character Strengths

      While the specific qualities of positive leaders may vary, most research on positive

leadership points to the development, use and recognition of one's *character strengths* as an

important focus. Leaders who are able to activate virtuousness - the active use of character

strengths - in their organizations unlock benefits like increased profitably, productivity, quality,

innovation, engagement and well-being (Cameron, 2014). Leaders who recognize and use their

own strengths report higher job satisfaction, higher self-confidence and ultimately higher rate of

salary increase compared to those who don't (Rath, 2008). A variety of strengths-based

assessments are now available to help leaders identify their strengths, including the Clifton

Strengthsfinder and the VIA Survey of Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Rath,

2008). These tools have been used in organizations and education over the past 20 years to

improve leadership and stimulate extraordinary results.

The field of positive psychology began its exploration of character strengths in the early 2000s when Chris Peterson and Martin Seligman looked at virtues in action, through a classification project that identified the most common human virtues embedded in stories and literature (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This research was conducted partially in reaction to the growing number of psychological disorders classified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Peterson and Seligman urged the field of psychology to consider: *why not also classify important aspects of human flourishing?* To be classified as a strength, the quality was required to meet ten criteria, including: it contributes to human fulfillment, it can be displayed through behavior, but is morally valued in tis own right whether or not that behavior is present, and, when displayed, it does not diminish other people in the vicinity. Character strengths are typically embodied by *paragons* (exemplars) in a given society, and society typically provides *institutions and rituals* that support their cultivation (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

This research on virtue produced a list of 24 VIA Character Strengths, which can be organized into six themes: wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). They include strengths like bravery, curiosity, perspective, kindness, fairness, prudence and humor. These strengths are currently used in business, education, therapy and personal development to identify the best in individuals and build positive organizations (Cooperrider, 2012; Park et al., 2006). According to a study of 54 nations and the 50 United States, they also appear to hold as universal across cultures (Park et al., 2006).

Using one's strengths has been associated with higher levels of well-being and life satisfaction, as well as personal achievement (Niemeic, 2013). Some strengths (e.g. hope, zest)

are also directly associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression, apparently building

resilience. What's more, *using a character strength in a new way* has been demonstrated as

effective a means of increasing well-being and decreasing depression in adults (Park et al.,

2006). And, a brief review of character strengths in the work context showed that the use of

strengths is associated with increased engagement, performance, goal achievement and work

satisfaction (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, & Minhas, 2011).

These findings suggest that the development and use of Character Strengths would be a

worthwhile pursue for those who aspire to become positive leaders. But how can they be trained?

Thus far, approaches to training Character Strengths in the field of education often begin with

building a common language and lens (Linkins, 2014). Students, for example, are encouraged to

identify a person they admire and use their own words to describe them. Then they compare their

own words to the list of 24 VIA Strengths, building associations with local paragons and the

strengths vocabulary. These programs then typically move to strengths spotting (identifying the

strengths in action) and choosing a personal strength to practice using more often. (Linkins,

2014). This simple approach enables youth to begin embodying the character strengths at an

early age.

Other models take a deeper dive through either targeted individual coaching or personal

practice. Ryan Niemeic at the VIA Institute for Character Strengths proposes a three step process

to aid in the cultivation of strengths: *aware*, *explore*, *apply* (Niemeic, 2013). This process takes a

mindfulness approach to the strengths cultivation process (Niemeic, 2014). It begins by building

awareness of the existing strengths and how they are being used (aware). Then the focus shifts to

explore areas where those strengths are not currently being used and/or to identifying a latent

strength on which to focus (explore). Finally an action plan is designed that targets the

improvement of that strength (apply) (Niemeic, 2013; Niemeic, 2014). Another creative example

of strengths training utilizes character development techniques from the field of theater to help

individuals 'act as if' they already embody the new quality, by reading strength-related monologs

in character (Polly & Britton, 2015).

These deeper dive approaches offer some important benefits for leaders, including the

awareness they place on use of strengths in action. One criticism of the early strength building

practices is that trainers and coaches have not yet adopted a standard, deeper process by which

character strengths can be cultivated in their clients (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011). While models

like Niemeic's do take a more systematic approach, they are still used somewhat haphazardly by

practitioners and coaches. Thus a solid and consistent method for developing character strengths

has yet to be established.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge another critique of the character strengths

model, which also has implications for effective, positive leadership. The standard 'identify and

use' approach to strength deployment rests on the implicit assumption that *more is always better*,

missing important nuances like the potential for *overuse* or *underuse* of strengths in a given

situation (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011; Grant & Schwartz, 2011). Grant and Schwartz (2011)

discuss the nonmonotonic effects of character strengths, highlighting ways in which very high

levels of a strength can lead to negative results. Biswas-Diener and colleagues call for a shift

from 'identify and use' to a 'strengths development' approach that explicitly accounts for these

scenarios where the overuse of strengths could mean *too much of a good thing (*Biswas-Diener et

al., 2011). Addressing this issue, some scholars have brought the Aristotilian concept of

practical wisdom back on the scenes. I describe this construct in greater detail in the following

section.

Practical Wisdom: The Master Virtue?

According to Aristotle's early writing on virtue, "it is the nature of things to be destroyed by excess and deficiency" (cited in Melchert, 2002, p. 192). This philosopher's writing on well-being (*eudaimonia*) and character strength informed the foundations of modern day positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship. Yet less attention has been placed on the role of what Aristotle calls *reason* and its exalted form, *practical wisdom.* Like Biswas-Diener and his colleague's recent critique, Aristotle makes the case that it is possible to have too much, or too little, of a strength (Melchert, 2002). A balanced individual, therefore, should use situation-dependent moral reasoning to seek what he calls "the golden mean." However, the appropriate amount of a virtue is not definable by a single rule. Rather, depends on the individual (e.g. the right amount of bravery for a school teacher may differ from that of a fireman), and also the situation (e.g. the right amount of love in the relationship with one's spouse should differ from the right amount of love between a student and teacher) (Melchert, 2002; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). If one has the capacity to distinguish and apply the right amount of a strength in a given situation, one is said to possess *practical wisdom.*

Given that, practical wisdom has been deemed by some as the master virtue - a critical virtue that enables all other characters strengths to produce effective action (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). Barry Schwartz & Kenneth Sharpe, authors of the book *Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing,* argue that practical wisdom is both missing, and much needed, in modern institutions. They describe practical wisdom as our capacity to "perceive the situation, to have the appropriate feelings or desires about it, to deliberate about what was appropriate in these circumstances, and to act" (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010, p. 3). According to these scholars, strengths should be considered in relation to one another, rather than exercised independently

(e.g. honesty *plus* kindness) (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010). They also suggest that more is not always better, and that the cultivation of Character Strengths should include exercising practical wisdom to assess the right amount of strength to use in any given moment.

Because practical wisdom cannot be developed easily through strict rule-based curricula, Schwartz and Sharpe (2010) recommend de-emphasizing rule-based instruction ("wisdom substitutes") in favor of real-life training that builds skill in practical reasoning, intuition and situation-dependent action. In other words, people should learn to play *moral jazz*. They cite examples of highly skilled wildland firefighters and excellent courtroom judges who keep in mind a few basic guiding principles, while taking action based on what's most needed in the moment (Schwartz and Sharpe, 2010). Another line of research on wisdom defines it as an expert knowledge system in the fundamental pragmatics of life permitting exceptional insight, judgment, and advice involving complex and uncertain matters of the human condition (Baltes & Staudinger, 1993). This research highlights the role of age and experience, noting that wisdom - as compared to memory - seems to increase with age, with more than half of their subjects wise responses coming from people over 60 years of age, and over 60% of wise responses coming from people with a high degree of domain-specific experience (Baltes & Staudinger, 1993). This research also points to the personality dimension *openness to experience* as a factor that may enable the development of wisdom.

These recommendations align with a recent trend in education, where classrooms are moving toward non-linear curricula that emphasizes *generativity* (Johnson, 2015). Because educators cannot teach all skills needed in adulthood, students must develop enough mastery to produce novel, untaught blends of previously behavior in response to their post-education

contexts. Thus educational researchers and practitioners have invested in developing activities that teach children how to fish, rather than giving them the fish. These programs, like the Thinking Aloud Problem Solving (TAPS) method improve learning and produce effects that are generalize able to other learning contexts (Johnson, 2015). Similar programs have been developed to teach *prosociality*, another skill related to practical wisdom that is also important for positive leaders.

While the exact formula for increasing practical wisdom in individuals is unclear, it does seem to call for a more complex and nuanced approach than the provision of a long list of rules or to-dos (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010). Training appears to require cultivation over time, through activities that 1) aid in the identification of relevant core examples (prototypes), and 2) build cognitive networks that represent appropriate action situated in context. Awareness of emotion and empathy (thinking with feeling) also appear to aid in its development. Furthermore, in order to exercise practical wisdom well, one must have cultivated *all* of the virtues to some extent, so that they can be called upon in a given situation (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). Finally, beyond simply developing the *skill* to engage one's virtues in this way, one must also have the *will* to do so. In the context of organizations that are in a hurry to produce clear, bottom line results, a strong *intention to do the 'right' thing* may be required to actually exercise practical wisdom in any given moment (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010).

Cultivating character strengths among leaders is a good thing. Yet, as these scholars suggest, strengths alone may not be enough to attain Cooperrider's goal of *business as a force for good* (Cooperrider & Goodwin, 2012). In order for leaders to make good use of character strengths, they must also develop practical wisdom. Unfortunately, as described above, our modern society is not well-built to train it by default. I hypothesize that both virtuousness and

practical wisdom may be trainable using body-based mindfulness practices that heighten attention, increase sensitivity to situational cues, and build self awareness in action.

Developing Positive Leaders: How to Teach Virtuousness

As described above, research on the cultivation of character strengths and the practice of practical wisdom suggests that these two capacities could be a good place for aspiring positive leaders to begin their development. Yet how does one cultivate a new, or under-employed, character strength when one's role, goal or situational context call deems it critical? And how does one learn to exercise practical wisdom in one's leadership? While a wide range of studies have looked at the benefits of these constructs, fewer studies have attempted to solve for their effective, sustainable cultivation in real world contexts. Those studies that exist focus primarily on identifying and deploying one's top strengths, placing far less focus on questions like: *how much is too much,* and *what role does the context play,* (Grant & Schwartz, 2011). Thus, some scholars have called for a new approach that *builds strengths competency*, and encourages the consideration of social context, rather than simply encouraging the employment of strengths in goal pursuit across the board (Biswas-Diener, et al., 2011).

There is no doubt that creating changes in one's character or behavior is a challenge - ask any leader who has ever received a 360 feedback report that pointed to a specific area for growth. Nonetheless, I believe that a modified version of Niemeic's (2013) aware, explore, apply process could serve this function, if used consciously by trainers and practitioners to build strengths competence. My hypothesis is that new leadership strengths could be cultivated through body-based mindfulness practices (e.g. Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). These approaches, by definition, inspire greater consciousness and raise situational awareness, while also building a deeper level of embodiment. Furthermore, I agree that taking into account social context and social impact

will be important for the effective use of character strengths among leaders. I believe that body-awareness and body-based mindfulness practices could also help build awareness around the overuse and underuse of strengths - hence my hypothesis that body-based mindfulness practices could, additionally, help leaders to develop *Practical Wisdom.*

This approach is akin to the approach utilized for self-cultivation in the Asian philosophical traditions (like yoga, breathing techniques, and martial arts). Individuals who engage in these contemplative practices view the body as a domain of learning. Physical actions executed in the context of these practices are thought to instill body-mind harmony, and to develop the skill require to take appropriate action in life (Shusterman, 2006; Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). They capitalize on the fact that, from a very young age, our social and cognitive development is informed, in part, by our physical interaction with the world around us. Each micro movement has implications for one's behavioral style - where qualities like expansiveness, hesitation, drive, slowness, organization, vision and even good listening are made visible through one's actions, and intentionally honed through practice. In essence, *the way we do anything is the way we do everything.* What's more, as in athletics, proprioceptive attention (body-awareness) can help the practitioner to notice when he or she has fallen into an old habit that is not aligned with their current self-cultivation goals (Shusterman, 2006).

Providing a parallel example in the domain of organizational culture change, Karen Golden-Biddle uses the metaphor of "micro moves" to describe the way organizations can create positive change in a step-by-step fashion (Golden-Biddle, 2014). She argues that small actions and interactions make up the change process. When focused on, these actions help leaders make sense of the "how," rather than simply the "what" of organizational change. Micro-moves engage people meaningfully in the change process, giving them courage to take new and needed

action. Golden-Biddle outlines a series of three moves, where change-makers begin by approaching the unfamiliar with curiosity, then take an action that allows them to experience what they do not know, and finally convene people to explore new possibilities (Golden-Biddle, 2014). These steps, like the steps of a martial artist in practice, establish a systematic method for moving from an old, ingrained habit toward the embodiment of a newly desired behavior.

In order to demonstrate the plausibility of a body-based mindfulness approach to the cultivation of positive leadership, I next review literature on the body's role in a number of relevant domains including health and wellness, well-being, social psychology, cognition and leadership. While *embodiment* is a relatively new addition to the scientific literature on leadership, recent discussions on the embodied, embedded view of knowledge address the impact of perceptual and motor processes on our current understanding of leadership. This view has been shown to explain some aspects of leadership behavior (e.g. sense making, emotional intelligence, 'gut feeling' decision making and trust), and the perception of leadership on behalf of the follower (e.g. body-based visual cues, mimicking a leader's affect) (Lord & Shondrick, 2011).

The Forgotten Body and Its Unexpected Role

In recent years, spurred in part by Amy Cuddy and her team's research on high power posing, an heightened surge of work on the mind-body connection has taken place in the fields of psychology, business and medicine (Cuddy, 2012; Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2010). These studies, though not the first of their kind, aim to establish a solid connection between body movement and subsequent emotion or cognition, where the direction of causality begins with the body. They complement earlier applied work in fields like dance therapy and somatics, where movement has been used to heal emotional trauma and build psychological resilience (e.g.

Halprin, 1995; Rothschild, 2000; Strassel et. al., 2011; Strozzi-Heckler, 2014), align with recent

trends in embodied cognition (e.g. Semin & Smith, 2002) and further develop the long standing

lineage of research in social psychology that demonstrates how thoughts, feelings and behaviors

are linked with bodily states (Meier et. al., 2012; Schubert & Semin, 2009). In Cuddy's words, it

appears that our body language affects not only our communication with those around us, but

also our communication with ourselves (Cuddy, 2010).

My hypothesis that the body can be used to cultivate latent leadership strengths, and

develop leaders' capacity for Practical Wisdom, rests on this assumption. Beginning with

outcomes like health and well-being, and moving toward deeper functions emotional presence

and cognition, I review the literature that serves as a foundation for these hypotheses. I also

describe the ways in which I envision the body playing a role in well-being and leadership

development.

The Body, Health, and Physical Well-being

Its not surprising that physical health has been the first frontier for research on the body

and leadership. Despite the weight that modern leaders place on critical thinking and a healthy

mind, the health of the body provides fuel that is necessary for that thinking to take place.

Ultimately, leaders who are not physically well are unable to perform the critical functions of

their roles (Michel, 2011). In 2001 Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz published The Making of a

Corporate Athlete in the Harvard Business Review - a provocative piece calling for the business

world at large to place more attention on physical stamina and emotional well-being as

foundational aspects of leadership (Loehr & Schwartz, 2001). Through case stories and client

case studies, their work demonstrates the importance of recovering energy, rather than simply

spending it. They describe a high performance pyramid, consisting of four key capacities:

physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, some of which were previously addressed in the research on effective leadership. Using the metaphor of physical weight training, they point to the need for modern day leaders to see themselves as "corporate athletes" with a need to balance high exertion periods that lead to stress with low exertion periods of recovery (Loehr & Schwartz, 2001). While many of their clients had engaged in athletics in their youth, they had not made the jump to connect the body's physical need for recovery to their ongoing leadership practice.

For Loehr and Schwartz, this mindset shift is a critical key to leadership success. Their recommendations laid the foundation for modern corporate wellness program recommendations like working in spurts, and recommending eight hours of sleep per night. Unfortunately in the world of corporate wellness, statistics show that programs designed to change the health behaviors in organizations are not always as successful as one would hope, with recent estimation of the average adoption rate at only about 25% at most companies (Witters & Agrawal, 2014). These statistics have sparked renewed interest in the body, and wellness, as an important part of work and leadership. Nearly fifteen years later, well-being experts like Gallup's Tom Rath and high profile leaders like Arianna Huffington have dedicated chapters of their recent books to the importance of physical well-being and the cultivation of physical energy through the body (Huffington, 2014; Rath, 2015; Rath & Harter, 2010) making similar recommendations backed by a decade's worth of scientific and non-scientific research. These books aim, each in their own ways, to redefine the meaning of success in the modern workplace.

According to Huffington, employee's health is an important predictor of the company's health overall (Huffington, 2014). Making a case that burnout is both rampant and solvable in the corporate workplace, Huffington recommends meditation, sleep and regular exercise like yoga,

as well as innovative solutions like walking meetings to build energy and enhance performance

at work. Rath agrees, citing a variety of studies sponsored by Gallup that demonstrate that

making positive daily choices about food, exercise and sleep lead to greater well-being,

decreased healthcare costs, higher engagement and enhanced performance at work (Rath &

Harter, 2010). In his newest book Are you Fully Charged, he suggests short term thinking -

paying attention to the immediate benefit that enough rest or a healthy meal has on your energy

for the next few hours of your day - can help to develop habits that fuel our life and work (Rath,

2015).

Research on vitality shows the relationship between having a positive feeling of

"aliveness and energy" with a wide range of positive outcomes like self-actualization, self-

determination, mental health and self esteem (Ryan & Frederic, 1997). Vitality is depleted by

physical symptoms like chronic pain, and enhanced by empowering engagement with the

physical body in activities like exercise and successful weight loss. Relevant to the modern

workplace, research shows that lifestyles which focus on extrinsic goals (for example the

accumulation of wealth) engender less vitality (Ryan & Deci, 2008). This is particularly the case

when those goals do not align with basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness and

autonomy. These findings support Loehr's and Schwartz's proposal that energy depletion

associated with commonplace workday demands would call for awareness and regular

rejuvenation.

Scientific research on these themes continues to accumulate. A recent nine-year

longitudinal study of 136 bankers demonstrated an evolution in bankers relationships with their

bodies over their 6 year tenure in an knowledge-based industry where burnout is high (Michel,

2011). In the study, over 600 formal interviews with bankers and informal informant interviews

with their family and friends were conducted. At the start of their careers, the bankers were likely to see their body as an object that could be controlled, in order to achieve important work goals. By the fourth year, physical and health-related breakdowns lead many of them to increase their body awareness. At this stage, they saw the body as an antagonist who succeeded in thwarted their plans (Michel, 2011). While the bankers entered their roles "taking charge" of their bodies, by the end of the ninth year many found that their bodies could not be forced into submission in service of unsustainable, long term work goals. By year nine, about 40% of the sample shifted to see their body as a subject that could guide sustainable action, in serve of more sustainable goals, demonstrating both the power and utility of the body in successful work and leadership over the long term.

Physical Exercise and Cognition

The relationship between physical exercise and increased health benefits has been well established. Physical movement can lead to improved mood, increased energy, reduced stress, improved cardiovascular health, and other physiological benefits (Moreau & Conway, 2013; Ratey, 2008). Yet more recently, and importantly for leaders in heavily knowledge-based fields, a strong connection has been established between body movement and enhanced cognition (Dresler et. al., 2013; Hillman, Erikson & Kramer, 2008; Ratey & Loehr, 2011).

Thinking - indeed thinking *well* - is a highly valued attribute of leadership. Beginning with early findings that athletes outperform physically inactive people in cognitive functioning, the field of cognition has long looked to physical movement as one avenue that may help increase cognitive capacity (Dresler, et. al., 2013). A variety of studies demonstrating affects on attention, executive function, processing speed and working memory in older adults suggest that regular exercise may prevent cognitive decline (Dresler, et. al., 2013). While intense, short bouts

of physical exercise have been shown to improve functions like memory and learning speed in younger adults (Tomporowski, 2003; Winter et. al., 2007). Finally, higher levels of physical activity in middle adulthood have been shown to promote better cognition later in life (Ratey & Loehr, 2011). These converging findings across the lifespan point to the effectiveness of exercise as a cognitive enhancement tool, both long term and in the moment.

Some proponents of the "forgotten body" locate the reason for this in the evolutionary design of the human body. Beginning with the claim that we are built to move, the authors of Go Wild: Free Your Body and Mind from the Afflictions of Civilization cite the ways in which a lack of physical exercise adversely affects the mind (Ratey & Manning, 2014). In a world where technology and man-made solutions distract from our capacity to hear the demands of our own biology, they argue that a sedentary body not only makes human beings less fit but also less intelligent. Ratey & Manning propose a series of practical, actionable steps that we can take to get back on track, including engaging in a program of regular movement, nutrition, mindfulness and sleep inspired by the body's original design, as well as making choices that capitalize on our natural inclination toward social connection (Ratey & Manning, 2014). Similar recommendations include a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week for adults, plus at least 2 days per week of muscle strength training activity, and the development of exercise programs in the workplace (Haskell et. al., 2007; Ratey & Loehr, 2011).

Research on tangible programs that execute on these suggestions supports their proposed effectiveness. For example, at the Naperville Illinois School district 203, PE teachers turned the tables on traditional gym class approach by teaching students about how their bodies work (Ratey, 2008). Through practice, students at the Naperville school learn the practical relationships between heart rate and fitness, exercise and stress, movement and brain function.

They also build higher-level skills like communication, teamwork, focused attention and self-monitoring that engagement in the movement itself demands. This district has won acclaim in the Illinois School system for their unusually high math & science standardized test scores (Ratey, 2008).

More recently, scholars have looked for ways to integrate non-specific cardiovascular training with physical movement that directly targets other aspects of cognitive processing like spatial awareness, thus optimizing the benefits of exercise on cognition (Moreau & Conway, 2013; Moreau, Morrison & Conway, 2015). While it appears that physical activity increases the number of new neurons that are produced, mental training increases the number of neurons that survive, suggesting that a combination of both forms could be the most beneficial approach (Curlik & Shors, 2013). David Moreau and his colleagues have proposed "designed sport" as one form of intervention that will combine the benefits of physical and mental training (Moreau & Conway, 2013). Designed sport mirrors the cognitive demands of modern-day team sport, by placing an emphasis on cognitive uncertainty. They are unique in that they require participants to adjust their behavior to fit the cognitive demands of the specific activity in the moment.

In one study, participants engaged with a partner in 24 sessions of designed sport, resembling freestyle wrestling, that included unusual movements involving physical constraint and behavioral adaptation (Moreau, et al., 2015). The intervention was designed to increase in difficulty as participant's skill improved. Compared to aerobic training or mental training alone, the designed sport intervention produced greater gains in spatial ability. It also produced gains in working memory capacity equal to those produced by a dedicated working-memory training task. Finally, the designed sport produced additional, health-related benefits like heart rate and blood pressure (Moreau, et al., 2013).

In total, these findings suggest that engaging physical movement can enhance overall cognition. What's more, they suggest that uniquely designed physical movement interventions can produce specific cognitive gains that reflect the demands of the intervention task. Assuming that cognitive function plays an important role in effective leadership, this begs the question: what critical cognitive skills might a leadership-enhancing *designed sport* intervention target? And, what type of physical activity would most aptly produce results that are supportive for great leadership? Such a program, if envisioned, could provide a more ecologically valid (and more pleasurable) way to train leadership behavior. The field of embodied cognition may offer some ideas about how to make sense of such an "embodied training" program.

Embodied Cognition: Body Movement and Executive Functions

Beyond studies of physical movement and general cognitive enhancement lies a world of neural networks, metaphor, and learning now known as the field of embodied cognition (EC). *Embodied cognition* is a scientific approach to the study of the mind in which human cognition is seen as dependent upon perceptual and motor processes (Davis & Markman, 2012; Fernandino & Iacoboni, 2010). In contrast with the traditional cognitive science approach, in which thinking is *devoid* of the body, embodied cognition theories take an interest in their *interdependence*. Embodied cognition research addresses both the 'what' and the 'how' of these connections (e.g. Fernandino & Iacoboni, 2010; Lakoff, 2012), as well as the neurobiology that houses them (e.g. Aziz-Zadeh & Damasio, 2008; Fernandino & Iacoboni, 2010). While the results in the field are varied, a number of core assumptions are relatively consistent in EC theory and research, including: 1) intelligence is reflected in adaptive action rather than abstract thought, 2) cognition is situated in a social context which informs and/or contains it and 3) that cognition is carried out

by neural circuits that are connected to the body and characterized by experience (Semin &

Smith, 2002).

According to Fernandino and Iacoboni (2010), one theory called *embodied semantics*

suggests that "concepts acquire their meaning by virtue of their association with sensorimotor

representations." Research has shown this to be true for simple concepts with obvious body-

based links (e.g. run, warm) as well as more abstract directional concepts, known as cognitive

primitives (e.g. toward, over) and even highly abstract concepts, known as conceptual metaphors

(e.g. affection, linked to warmth; morality, linked with uprightness; or for anger, we say "his

blood was boiling") (Lakoff, 2012). These conceptual metaphors make up a large part of our

thinking. They are created through repeated simultaneous activation of related brain regions,

based on our daily experience (e.g. when my parents hold me and show affection, I feel warm).

Thus, action and physical experience build our thought. For example, studies have shown that

our understanding of a sentence depends in part on the "action-sentence compatibility," making

it more difficult for us to understand sentences that contradict with our concurrent movement in

the physical world (Fernandino & Iacoboni, 2010). Further more, when the conceptual

metaphors are reactivated in thinking, the parts of our brains associated with body and action

light up (Aziz-Zadeh & Damasio, 2008; Fernandino & Iacoboni, 2010).

While initial research pointed to the simple neurological mapping of an abstract concept

to its most strongly associated body part (e.g. kick lights up brain regions associated with the

foot), some evidence suggest the picture is a bit more complex. In non-human primates, three

factors seem to be represented in brain activity - body structure, hand location and common

behavior repertoire (Fernandino & Iacoboni, 2010). This suggests that the relationship between

cognition and motor processes may be represented in brain maps that also include practiced,

goal-directed actions, in addition to distinct body parts.

This research provides further evidence for both the body-mind connection, and the

utility of coordinated movement as a possible training ground to introduce, explore and develop

new concepts (for example those related to leadership) in action. While the explicit integration of

social psychology and embodied cognition theory is still in its infancy, social psychologists have

taken an interest in the body as it affects emotional states and social interactions (Semin &

Smith, 2002). In the next section, I review literature on embodiment in social psychology.

Embodiment in Social Psychology

Despite the primary focus of social psychology on the psychological nature of

interactions between individuals, experimental manipulations in social psychology have often

looked at the relationship between physical body movements, thoughts and emotions (e.g.

Strack, Martin & Stepper, 1988; Bargh, Chen & Burrows, 1996). Recently, attempts have been

made to unify these findings into a theory of embodiment that accounts for the relationship

between cognitive processes, social context and biological constraint (Meier et. al., 2008;

Schubert & Semin, 2009). Social psychology assumes that cognition serves the ultimate function

of taking appropriate action in a given social context. Though theories vary in terms of the exact

mechanism by which sensory experience and bodily state influence our mental processes, social

psychology is nonetheless receptive to *embodiment* as a concept (Meier et. al., 2008).

Early experimental research demonstrating the connection between body, thought and

emotion took the form of priming studies. For example, in one study, participants were instructed

to hold a pen in their mouths using either their lips (forcing their facial muscles to approximate a

frown) or their teeth (forcing their facial muscles to approximate a smile), and then rate the

funniness of cartoons (Strack et al., 1988). Aligned with their proposed "facial feedback hypothesis," the researchers found that the cartoons were viewed as funnier when rated by participants in the smile condition, as compared to the control condition or the frown condition (Strack et al., 1988). A second study demonstrated higher ratings of self-reported emotional amusement by participants in the smile condition versus the frown condition.

In a similar line of research, participants' posture affected their mood, and their perceptions of another person's mood, with those in slumped postures perceiving more negative affect (Riskind & Gotay, 1982). Another study placed participants in upright or slumped postures, and required them to complete an achievement task (Stepper & Strack, 1993). Those who completed the task in an upright posture reported feeling more pride upon task completion than those who completed the same task in a slumped posture. Similarly, participants who contracted their forehead muscles reported a greater experience effort than those who adopted a light smile (Stepper & Strack, 1993). And, those who maintained the forehead contraction during an autobiographical recall task rated themselves as lower in self-assurance. Thus, subjective experience of emotions and personal trait qualities can be influenced by proprioceptive cues.

More recently, research has also provided evidence for a "self validation" effect, in which making overt head movements (like nodding or shaking one's head 'no') influence the extent to which one has confidence in one's thoughts about a persuasive message (Briñol & Petty, 2003). Here, nodding enhanced attitude change in response to a persuasive message, when participants were thinking favorable thoughts. Head nodding paired with a persuasive message, was also shown to influence product choice and price perception in a study where participants listened to music to "test" a new pair of headphones (Tom et. al., 2006).

Self-concept can also be influenced by bodily cues. Schubert and Koole (2009) manipulated the sensory-motor representation of power by asking participants to clench their fists. Male participants in the clenched fist condition perceived themselves as more assertive and more esteemed (Schubert & Koole, 2009). They also reported stronger associations between their own self-concept and power. Interestingly, the effects were absent for female participants, suggesting that the embodiment of *physical force* may link more closely to the experience of power for men than for women.

It is only recently that social psychologists have begun seriously curating these studies as evidence to support the embodiment of social cognition as a broader theory (Meier et. al., 2008). Yet one recent review cites nearly forty studies demonstrating these types of effects (Meier et. al., 2008). Thus, the accumulated evidence seems to suggest 1) that the connection between body and mind is stronger than once imagined, and 2) that the two are difficult to separate when our interest is cognition in action.

Implications for Leadership

For social psychologists, adaptive action is indeed one of the most important functions of cognition, although this is often missed in closed-loop "mind only" models of cognition (Schubert & Semin, 2009). The same is true, I would argue, for business leaders. The capacity to take embodied, effective action that produces desired business results is at least one critical aspect of leadership. Fewer experimental studies have demonstrated a clear link between the body, mind and leadership behavior. Yet those that have undertaken this task in recent years have gained a lot of attention, opening exciting possibilities for the enhancement of leadership through body-based interventions.

One early study showed that persistence on a difficult task was influenced by participants posture in two different trials (Riskind & Gotay, 1982). Those participants who were placed in a slumped posture were less persistent on a difficult puzzle task than those who were placed in an upright posture. These participants did not report feeling more negative in their mood, or more tired from the posture. Rather, the experience of slumping itself seemed to influence them to spend less effort to solve the puzzles.

A more recent line of research by Amy Cuddy and her colleagues at Harvard Business School looked at the relationship between body language, self-perceptions of power and performance in a typical work related task (Cuddy, Wilmuth, & Carney, 2012). According to Cuddy, power is an important construct in business, where hierarchical relationships mean one party can often influence the future of another party, based on their evaluations. In their research feelings of power are induced through expansive, open physical postures that correlate with power in non-human primates. In humans, these postures both reflect power and also *produce* it, by increasing feelings of dominance, risk-taking behavior, action oriented behavior, pain tolerance and testosterone, while reducing stress, anxiety and cortisol (Carney et al., 2010).

Cuddy's research aimed to change the power dynamics in a job interview simulation by priming power on the part of the job candidate though these poses (Cuddy et al., 2012). Prior to the interview task, study participants either adopted two "high power poses" or two "low power poses." Those candidates who adopted high power poses were rated as more effective in terms of *overall performance* and *hireability* by four trained, hypothesis-blind, condition-blind coders, based on a video recording (Cuddy et al., 2012). In other words, had the job interview been real, those who adopted the high power poses prior to interviewing would have had a better chance of landing the job.

These findings have strong implications for the physiological training of desirable leadership qualities. Much of the appeal of the power pose method lies in its simplicity, and general accessibility as an effective self-development and performance enhancement technique. Amy Cuddy's 2012 TED talk Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are went viral with over 26 million views to date, bringing the conversation about the body and leadership into the mainstream (Cuddy, 2012). In the talk, she encourages businessmen and women to hold power poses for two minutes to shift their physiology before important meetings, describing body language as a way of influencing not only other people, but also oneself.

A similar line of research is now developing to explore the relationship between *physical movement patterns* and scores on a four-factor personality instrument called the Focused Energy Balance Indicator (FEBI), which addresses leadership style (Attan, Whitelaw, & Ferguson, 2014; Whitelaw & Wetzig, 2007). The four patterns assessed by the FEBI represent four easily recognizable leadership styles: driver, organizer, collaborator and visionary. FEBI styles correlate with dimensions on the five-factor model of personality (McCrae & Costa, 2004). Leaders who score high on these four styles tend to display behavior that is consistent with that style (e.g. those high on the driver dimension are sharply focused, competitive and bottom-line oriented, while those high on the organizer dimension prefer to take action in a step-by-step fashion) (Whitelaw & Wetzig, 2007).

Thus far, FEBI researchers have demonstrated a correlation between individuals' comfort with a given body-movement pattern and their subsequent FEBI personality test score (Attan et al., 2014). For example, a person who scores high on the driver dimension of the FEBI is more likely to report comfort with driver-consistent movement patterns. Though more exploration is needed to understand the conditions and limits of these techniques, this emerging research

directly supports my hypothesis that leadership strengths can be trained through body-based

mindfulness practice.

Voices From the Outside

In my effort to synthesize the scientific literature on the body in psychology, business and

medicine, it became clear to me that a vast body of *applied* literature had not been taken into

account by these theories and research. An attempt to fully review relevant disciplines like

somatics, somatic therapy, somatic coaching and embodied leadership would constitute another

paper entirely. Therefore, I've attempted to highlight a few lineages of teaching here that are

relevant to the hypothesis of my research. These teachers have been training leaders in body-

based mindfulness techniques over the past 30 plus years. Many of their programs have

demonstrated impressive, though not scientifically validated, results. Their anecdotal reports

describe leaders who employed their techniques to cultivate greater authenticity, presence,

compassion, communication savvy and power, while also reducing the impact of past trauma and

ongoing emotional stress on their leadership. The goal of this segment is to introduce their

philosophies into the scientific dialog, as a way of informing future avenues of scientific

research.

In his work on embodied leadership, Richard Strozzi-Heckler focuses on the cultivation

of self-presence, by teaching pragmatic wisdom, grounded compassion and the capacity to take

effective action (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). Richard is a Ph.D. psychologist and multiple black belt

level Aikido instructor, who has made it his life's work to teach leadership through the body. For

him, working *through* the body is about contacting the basic life energy that moves through and

individual, and interacting with the emotional character that is shaped by that energy (Strozzi-

Heckler, 1984). This differs from working with the body, or working on the body, in that the

focus is on the body as a manifestation of self, rather than the body as object to be manipulated or controlled. Over the past 30 years, Richard has supported his clients - who range from US army generals to executives at Fortune 500 companies - to access the wisdom stored in their bodies and cultivate a deeper relationship with themselves.

The somatic coaching method is comprised of three core elements: somatic awareness, somatic opening and somatic practices (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). The first step, awareness, involves paying attention to body sensations, making this method a mindfulness-practice at heart. Awareness is a critical foundation because it gives the practitioner access to greater choice. The second step, opening, is the point at which change occurs. While our embodied shape is highly engrained, a core assumption of this model is that it not fixed. Somatic opening is the disassembling of the historical self, so that another version of the self can come into form. The final step, practice, is about learning a new habit. According to Richard (and Aristotle), "we are what we repeatedly do" (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014, p. 76). Somatic practices enable the practitioner to embody new skills and build new competencies through the repetition of body-based practices. Much like the *aware*, *explore*, *apply* model of character strength development (Niemeic, 2009; Niemeic, 2013), these elements form a transformative process that works over time to deconstruct an old personality "shape" and simultaneously build a new one in the individuals who engage in the process.

Richard Strozzi-Heckler and his colleagues began developing these tools in reaction to the institutionalized rationalistic view that placed body and mind in separate compartments, beginning in the 1600s with work of French philosopher René Descartes. Although placing distance between our bodies and minds allows us to survive while minimizing pain, it also disconnects us from the wisdom of our human organism to perform critical functions like

processing trauma and exercise compassion for others (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). For Richard, this level of disconnection also produces a lack of awareness of the costs of our on actions on the world around us. Bringing attention our back to the physical body enables us to notice important aspects of the human experience like emotions, habitual reactions, the exchange of energy and natural rhythms (Strozzi-Heckler, 1984). In one example, he describes how a leader named Susan habitually contracted her upper body muscles, helping to "arm" herself for potential incoming attacks (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). As she brought her awareness to the tension, and learned to relax these muscles, she first felt vulnerable. Then, shortly thereafter, she discovered that her softer body lead to a new level openness and flexibility in her collaborative relationships. As social psychologists have recently pointed out, these bodily processes give us information that, ultimately, enables us to take effective action in the world (e.g. Meier. et. al. 2012; Schubert & Semin, 2009). In leadership, they lead to the capacity to "perform with mastery" - taking the appropriate action at the appropriate time (Strozzi-Heckler, 2003).

A variety of practitioners have taken similar approaches to body-based leadership development in the last three decades. While their work is not yet considered "mainstream," they have helped thousands of leaders in hundreds of companies, under the umbrella term *embodied leadership*. Embodiment in leadership is defined as "the place of learning where we can do something differently, consistently, and when under pressure" (Hammil, 2013, p. 47). This approach improves mastery in leadership through designed activities that improve performance, attention training, repeated practice, feedback on results and increased motivation (Hammil, 2013).

In some embodied leadership models, specific styles of leadership are examined, and trained through body-based practices. For example, Ginny Whitelaw, a former NASA scientist

and Zen priest, developed a personality measurement scale that captures four essential leadership

energies: driving, organizing, collaborating and visionary thinking (Attan et al., 2014; Whitelaw

& Wetzig, 2007). In her embodied leadership training protocols she introduces leaders to these

styles through simple physical practices that mirror the energy of each leadership style (e.g. lean

forward, press your palms together tightly and focus all of your attention on a point ahead of you

on the floor… do you feel more like a driver?). Her work teaches leaders to cultivate awareness

of the ordinary, moment-to-moment body sensations that inform our daily lives (Whitelaw,

1998).

In other methods, each leader is treated as a unique individual and supported to cultivate

him or herself through body-based observation (e.g. take notice... what are your habitual body

patterns, or styles of movement?) and somatic practice (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014). Like researchers

who study embodied cognition, these practitioners often make use of metaphor to support their

clients to feel, see and describe these habitual body patterns (e.g. she is so *rigid* in her leadership;

he is really *all over the place*). For example, Wendy Palmer, founder of the Leadership

Embodiment process, teaches a basic "centering" practice that helps leaders find reset their body

and mind to a naturally balanced, open and inclusive state (Palmer & Crawford, 2013). Using

closed body postures (like slumping, as seen the social psychology literature) and simple martial

arts moves that can throw one *off balance* (like a gentle push from a practice partner), she

teaches leaders to use the wisdom of their bodies to return to a centered state. According to

Wendy and her colleagues, this skill, when learned through simple, body-based practice, can

increase a leader's capacity to re-center in a difficult situation at work (Palmer & Crawford,

2013). By changing the shape and tension of their physical bodies in the moment from closed to

open, Palmer reports that her clients are better able to listen to another speaker without judgment, and to transmit their message with clarity and consistency (Palmer & Crawford, 2013).

These practitioners stand on the shoulders of even earlier giants in the fields of athletics and martial arts. In his book The Silent Pulse, George Leonard, Aikido master, human potential educator and President Emeritus of the Esalen Institute, wrote intuitively about themes that are currently being explored in neuroscience and positive psychology research (Leonard, 1978). Timmothy Gallwey, 1960s Harvard graduate and author of the Inner Game of Tennis, used mindfulness techniques and body-based metaphors situated in sport to teach self-cultivation. His early approach formed the foundations of the modern day business and coaching movement. In Inner Skiing, Gallwey wrote about quieting what he called "Self 1" and trusting "Self 2" - in essence, quieting the mind and trusting the wisdom of the body (Gallwey & Kriegel, 1977). While obviously useful as an endeavor when engaging in downhill skiing, Gallwey made the claim that this approach could be equally useful in life. Lacking hard science, these early thinkers may not have got every detail "right." Yet their early theoretical claims are similar to those now being researched empirically in the fields of neuroscience, embodied cognition and social psychology. The combination of this new scientific research, paired with a longer history of practical application, provides a strong foundation for my hypothesis that leadership strengths and practical wisdom could be trained through body-based mindfulness practice.

In another lineage, therapists who work with trauma have been incorporating movement practice into their healing approach for decades. Dance therapy, for example, is defined as the psychotherapeutic use of movement to further emotional, social, cognitive and physical integration of an individual (Hefferon, 2013). This type of intervention assumes the link between the body and emotions, and has been shown to decrease negative symptoms, support the

resolution of body-based trauma, and increase self esteem and coping ability in patients (Hefferon, 2013; Strassel, et. al., 2011).

One early pioneer, Anna Halprin, still teaches dance and dance therapy today at the age of ninety-four. Anna discovered the power of dance as a means of shifting her inner experience during her own battle with cancer in the 1970s (Halprin, 2002). In a practice session, she drew two contrasting visual images of herself - one in perfect health, and one black, angular and angry. When she decided to dance this self portrait, she found that her initially intense and violent movement eventually produced a cleansing effect in her body. She then danced the healthy image as a way of integrating the changes into her body. Anna was able to successfully supplement her cancer treatment program with this mind-body healing technique. Anna now trains trainers in therapies based in the creative arts at the Tamalpa Institute, where these types of improvisational movement exercises form the foundation of her therapeutic technique (Halprin, 1995).

Another master practitioner, who held herself as a teacher of dance and quiet revolutionary for woman's rights, was Isadorah Duncan. Throughout history, rhythmic movement like community dance served a number of important functions in society, including supporting religion, improving work collaboration and the consolidation of subgroups (in some cases revolutionary sub-groups) that came together to ignite a chance in the fabric of society (McNeill, 1995). Duncan saw American dancing, but in a way that was far different than the bound, contained, perfected, corsetted postures that women took on in the early twentieth century. She took off her shoes (and her brassiere) and encouraged the people of her time to try on a free spirited, lighter form of dance, in which the inner self could be more authentically expressed (Duncan, 1928). Through a simple but profound change in physical posture, she

shepherded a culture that served as fuel for the empowerment of American women during the women's rights movement.

If I call upon these voices from outside the field, it is to highlight the fact that the integration of body and mind in the context of leadership and self-cultivation is not a new endeavor. Rather it is an approach that is now making its way into the mainstream, only recently being subject to more rigorous scientific study. At least, I hope this paper can serve as a call to action for those on both sides - the side of science, and the side of practice - to engage in more direct, exploratory conversations with one another. At best, I hope to spark research on the two hypotheses I put forth, and further the development of innovative leadership training techniques that make use of modern science and ancient wisdom to cultivate the leaders of tomorrow.

Measuring Body Awareness

Many of the techniques described above either draw upon, or intend to teach, *body awareness.* Recently published research on body awareness as a construct described it as the ability to recognize one's subtle body cues (Mehling, et. al. 2012, p. 1). While early Western medicine literature used the term body awareness, or *somatic awareness*, to describe a patient's exaggerated focus on physical symptoms, an alternative view that such awareness could be beneficial to the therapeutic process is now coming to the fore (Mehling et. al., 2011; Mehling, et. al. 2012). In the 1980s Thomas Hanna, creator of Hanna Somatics, developed body-awareness techniques to overcome what he called *sensory-motor amnesia* - a habitual loss of recognition of how muscle groups in the body feel, that leads to stiffness and restricted range of motion (Hanna, 1988). These exercises reprogram the sensory-motor system and can reverse the summative muscular effects of daily stresses and traumas.

Today a wide variety of mind-body techniques exist that teach body awareness, including yoga, TaiChi, Body-Oriented Psychotherapy, Body Awareness Therapy, Feldenkrais and Alexander Technique (Mehling et. al., 2011). In an effort to review of the effectiveness of these techniques, Mehling and colleagues (2011) conducted focus groups with teachers of these techniques, as well as their clients. Teachers who participated in the focus groups saw the techniques as facilitating the integrity of self - the integration of body and mind - in their clients. Patients who participated in the focus groups saw the techniques as facilitating a shift in their awareness to included negative emotion and body sensation, which they framed as beneficial. They also reported experiencing improvement in self regulation and self care (Mehling et. al., 2011). As the therapy progressed, patients ultimately reported seeing the body as a source of learning and meaning, endowed with an innate intelligence. This finding mirrors the progression described by Michel (2011) in her nine-year longitudinal study of bankers, some of whom gained respect for their bodies as informative guides, after facing health challenges that required them to cultivate greater body awareness.

Based on the results of these focus groups, Mehling and colleagues developed the Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness (MAIA), a 32 item self-report measure of body awareness (Mehling, et. al. 2012). This measure includes 5 dimensions: awareness of body sensation, emotional reaction and attentional response to sensation, capacity to regulate attention, trusting body sensations and mind-body integration. Thus far, they have demonstrated correlations between body awareness as measured by the MAIA and attention regulation, self regulation, body listening and body trust, as measured by a battery of formerly validated scales, suggesting that the new scale may be a useful addition to research programs that seek to measure embodiment.

Relevant to my hypothesis, the ability to measure *body awareness* in a simple, self report scale could serve as a useful starting point when it comes to teaching new leadership strengths and Practical Wisdom through the body. One might first design a study that explores the question: do great leaders have higher levels of body awareness? Furthermore, as I make the case that awareness of body movement and sensation could inform leadership in these two ways, it would be interesting to look at the relationship between body awareness and the speed or efficiency with which leaders cultivate new strengths, as well as the relationship between body awareness and Practical Wisdom itself. In other words, are leaders with high levels of body awareness able embody new strengths more quickly, once electing to do so? And, are leaders with higher levels of body awareness more skilled at detecting the appropriate strength to deploy in a given situation in business?

Training Leadership Through the Body

The approaches summarized in the preceding sections highlight a variety of ways that *accounting for the physical body* may relate to one's leadership. From enhancing stamina, and cognitive function, to improving social relationships and increasing the effectiveness of desirable leadership behaviors like the demonstration of power, research shows that the body - while previously overlooked - offers a missing piece of the puzzle when it comes to human psychology and, ultimately, effective action. While the body has formerly remained absent in conversations about leadership and leadership development, researchers have begun to take an interest in the embodiment of leadership knowledge in recent years (Lord & Shondrick, 2011). These newer theories demonstrate links between leadership relevant constructs and embodied cognitions (e.g. the linking of power to vertical space) (Lord & Shondrick, 2011). They suggest that the development of leadership skills and knowledge do rely on embodied processes like emotion

regulation. They also suggest that leadership development moves through embodied stages, from novice to mastery (Lord & Hall, 2005).

Taking these theories one step further, my hypothesis is that leadership - specifically effective, positive leadership - may be trainable through the body. Drawing upon the use of physical metaphors (as in embodied semantics), body postures (as in Cuddy's research on power poses) and coordinated body movements (as in Moreau's "designed sport" and Whitelaw's movements that represent leadership traits like "driver"), I propose the following hypothesis: *latent leadership qualities like character strengths can be developed and enhanced through body-based mindfulness practices*. While the exact mechanism is still unclear, my review of the literature suggests that physical posture and body movement can unconsciously inform both cognition and behavior. By bringing this process into conscious awareness, leaders may be able to accelerate their development by aiming to "embody" their untapped strengths.

Furthermore I argue that body awareness may be a component of *practical wisdom*, helping leaders seek calibration in their use of strengths to find the golden mean. I hypothesize that *the body-awareness cultivated through body-based mindfulness practices can support a leader in his or her development of, and access to, the "master virtue" practical wisdom*. In practice, the execution of practical wisdom would require a leader to do some or all of the following: read a situation, make a timely decision about the right virtue to call upon, quickly embody that virtue, and take appropriate action. Based on my literature review, I envision body awareness as helping the leader to pick up physiological and emotional cues that facilitate the reading of the situation, and consciously calibrate his or her own action for the over or underuse of a needed strength. I also envision embodied cognitions playing a role in the reading of the situation, the accessing of previously embodied strengths, and the timely, coherent execution of

strength-related actions, whether conscious or unconscious. Finally, well-practiced body

movement associated with a given strength may also facilitate the re-creation of the associated

actions in the moment, as well as the appropriate level of calibration.

In order to begin exploring these hypotheses, I conducted a pilot study using semi-

structured interviews with two groups: body-based mindfulness teachers and leaders in

corporations. As the literature review revealed, little scientific evidence currently exists that

establishes a direct link between body awareness, or body-based mindfulness, and leadership.

Therefore, the primary goal of the interview protocol was to begin establishing that link. We

asked our participants to share their opinions and personal examples related to the broad

question: *does the body, or body awareness, play a role in positive leadership?*

Interview Method and Results

Method

In order to conduct an initial test of these hypotheses, I conducted semi-structured

interviews with 10 teachers of body-based mindfulness and 10 corporate leaders on the role of

the body in leadership. The body-based mindfulness teachers in the sample had, on average,

approximately twenty years experience practicing and teaching their craft. Most of these teachers

had experience working with leaders in corporations. Many of these teachers also ran

organizations and were leaders in their own right.

The sample of corporate leaders was also highly experienced. Participants included the

CEO of sporting goods manufacturer, a retired military Colonel who had directed Special

Operations forces in Afghanistan, the CEO of a global manufacturing conglomerate, a Senior

Executive Staff member in a large government organization, the co-founder and managing

partner of a forward-thinking consulting firm in New York City, and the CEO of a boutique wine

manufacturer, among others. All participants were selected based on the perception that they either practiced or taught approaches akin to positive leadership in their work.

Each interview was approximately sixty minutes long. Topics included the following: the person's role and tenure, their own self-assessed leadership strengths, their view of the strengths most needed or missing in leadership today, the role of health and/or a healthy body in positive leadership, the "other" role(s) the body may play in positive leadership, and why the body is not currently addressed in leadership training. The goal of this pilot study was to take stock of potential avenues for future research by painting a picture of the most interesting or useful points of intersection between body and leadership in the eyes of expert practitioners. Given that my own somatic training includes dance, I also asked participants about the accessibility of dance as a learning modality in our society. The data on dance as a training modality is beyond the scope of the present study, and therefore not reported here.

The separation of *body for health* and *body for "something else"* was a critical part of the interview protocol. Given the newness of fields like embodied cognition, and the trendiness of buzzwords like "corporate wellness," I suspected that the body as a domain where one cultivates health would be the most accessible response to the question "what role does the body play in leadership." I therefore created a forced scenario, where participants were first asked to empty their minds of their response set related to health, and then asked to re-engage with the question having set those initial answers aside. This method produced a thought-provoking pause at the interview midpoint, when participants were asked to go into the apparent unknown. The answers that followed that pause are described in greater detail below.

Results

Due to time constraints in the completion of this thesis, I was not able to complete the formal coding of the data. Therefore, I will report sample responses that capture the themes described in the literature review of this paper. Given that hypotheses are concerned with the existence (or not) of a connection between the body and leadership, these self reported anecdotes serve as an indication that a connection does exist, at least for some leaders. And, they indicate that the body is being called upon "in the field" to enhance leadership in a variety of different ways.

Participants' Positive Leadership Qualities

Teachers' positive leadership qualities. The first line of questioning aimed to take stock of participants' opinions about the important qualities that make up great leadership in the 21st Century. These questions were in part a manipulation check: do the selected interviewees in fact care about and/or practice *positive leadership*? Indeed many of the participants spoke about their own strengths and important leadership strengths in a way that reflected the qualities of positive leaders. Themes included compassion, adaptability, situational awareness, positive energy, proactivity, authenticity, a service orientation, care for the wellbeing of others and the capacity to connect emotionally with the people they lead. The following are some examples of responses from teachers of body-based mindfulness practice regarding their own leadership strengths:

1 - I am also about transparency and authenticity that is a very very big important thing for me as a facilitator and a leader, is that person that you see in front of the room is that say person that you are going to talk to one on one, is the same person your going to see eating lunch at the break. So, it's not about putting on a persona or trying to uphold some image that's not true. It's about being who you are and one of my kind of core philosophies is that when you leading groups if your nothing to prove and nothing to hide than you actually have a lot of power… if I am fully open and fully available, then there is a lot that can happen from that place that is actually just about serving your students, or your team, or your audience in a very pure way. So that is a kind of authenticity and transparency.

2 - I have the capacity to listen deeply. To listen to the concerns behind people's requests. What they care about. To cultivate a presence in which someone assesses [me] as being present, open and connected. And being able to make assessment of individuals, teams and organizations.

3 - When I put my mind to something I I don't give up! I'm stubborn, persistent. I've been able to accomplish the things I set out to do that were within my control… Also authenticity – stand in myself again. And found ways to not give up myself when trying to move something. Our strengths form our leadership brand. Our brand in the word.

4 - I've got a personal sense of urgency that I've driven from my own health challenges over the years. I spend an extraordinary amount of time reading and trying to figure out what are all the things I can do that improve our odds of having a good day, creating better days for people. If you start there it runs in parallel with the things that make a difference over the years. And it's easier to make the changes when you focus on the short term motivators, the day to day things you can do that make a difference. It's easier to create change.

5 - I think it helped to be independent and not care what most of the people think. I realized there was an audience; there were people that felt like I did. And I especially know the studios, the tap, jazz and I was like, you know, how am I going to compete with all those people. But, when I advertised my classes' people came, because they wanted what I had to offer….I didn't have that early training, so I was constantly trying to study and learn from whoever was out there teaching. And I also studied ethic dance. I studied Spanish and Israeli and Ebonite (phonetic). And that was really helpful, I think that gave another dimension to my work, maybe it made up for the [lack of] ballet, jazz and tap.

6 - I think the playfulness is a big part of it. I think you need to keep it light and there are appropriate moments for (unintelligible) or seriousness, but I think, I know that playfulness is a very important quality for me. I think we all teach what we need to learn, we give the medicine that we need to receive. And that very much for me is that I need play, so I bring play into a lot of what I do, because I think we all need more of that in our live in general. Play is a big quality that I emphasize.

Corporate leaders positive leadership qualities. The corporate leaders in my sample also reported seeing many positive leadership qualities in themselves. The following are some examples of responses from corporate leaders regarding their own leadership strengths:

1 - My strength is interpersonal skills. I hope to be effective in working and collaborating with others. I'm very intuitive and imaginative. I'm deeply emotional. I have a perfect score on the Meyers briggs F. I am sensitive to people's thoughts and feelings. I don't think it's helpful for us to be shoehorned into little constructs like job descriptions and organization charts. I think it demeans our full humanity. I try to experience every person I encounter in their full humanness and be very very non judgmental. And hope they will show up as their most authentic selves, even in the highly contrived artificial world of business.

2 - Facilitative leadership. I'm a big believer in serving. People are not hear to serve me. I'm here to help others succeed. And to help my team thrive. I believe that when the individuals succeed, the organization wins. I recognize that are a lot of people that are a lot smarter than me. that's been who I am for my whole adult life.

3 - I really value getting to know people. To take time to not only get to meet people, but really understand not just what they are doing, but what are some of their challenges, successes. To that end I instituted drum beats. I do 4-6 of these every week. The only pre-scripted part of that is that we don't do it in my office, we do it where you and your team are. you get to set the agenda. Meet team members, use it to watch a test. Use it as an opportunity to brag. I am here to listen and learn and help out.

4 - My noble goal is to help other people grow and develop, as I grow and develop. I've always been driven by seeing and helping people achieve more potential in their lives. being more creative. More bold. Taking more initiative. Making more of an impact. Becoming more self aware and attuned in their relationships. Becoming more spiritual. That's what drives me. Inspiring them to do that and also providing the mechanics. The push the training the environment, the resources for them to be able to do that.

5 - My level of confidence serves me well in creating new programs. It helps me to believe the vision I have in my head can come to fruition. People have said this about me – wow you just make stuff happen. A large part of that is just believing. Something about my brain or outlook is optimistic. I don't allow myself much time to think about doubt. They don't serve me well. especially when trying to create totally new things that don't exist. Trying to create something out of nothing. That takes a fair amount of confidence. If I were leading something that was already defined, it would be less important. Then I'd say empathy, and encouraging others would be more important.

6 - The other one for me is self awareness and a high level of my own emotions. I've done some meditation, I find it very useful just in terms of a practice of really monitoring how I'm feeling. Not trying to necessarily change those feelings. Noting them. being aware of them as I'm making choices. Deciding what to work on, how I'm working with someone. Even working with someone I dislike. It's important to monitor my own emotions, so I can be able to navigate with them.

Needed or Missing Leadership Qualities

Teachers on needed or missing positive leadership qualities. When prompted,

participants also spoke enthusiastically about the important changes needed in modern-day

leadership, which mirrored many of the qualities described in the research on Positive

Organizational Scholarship. The following are some examples of responses from teachers of

body-based mindfulness practice regarding important qualities that are needed for great

leadership in the 21ˢᵗ Century:

1 - The ability to hold and navigate complexity – people say it's a complex world and it's really true. I hold our bodies as the same as ourselves. I think for most of human history we lived in tribes 300 or less. And were related to one piece of land. It's so recent dealing with multiple cultures facing each other- and our land has become the entire globe. And some of us are not highly connected to land. In some ways we' re navigating a world that we're not deeply prepared to navigate. It's stimulating and complex. Even over-stimulating.

2 - I used to take a poll of very large organizations. I asked the question: what do leaders do? The white board filled with many things - strategize, communicate etc. Then I would ask: in order for them to do this, who do the leaders have to be? People said they would have to have integrity. Accountability. Commitment. Be able to take skillful action. Fulfill on promises. Be strong listeners. Build trust. Coordinate with others. They were the same things that showed up in the Abhidharma – Plato, Homer and the work of the early Greeks. Showed up in the Bhagavad Gita. They were the things that make a good citizen… We're also looking at leadership in a wider sense. The qualities of a good leader would also make up a good citizen.

3 - Agility – learning agility. The ability to give each situation what it needs. We are creatures of habit. Agility can only be built from experience. Right now there is exponential change and acceleration. It's becoming even more and more important.

4 - Leaders lack consciousness that sees a bigger picture. There are stages of consciousness and levels of consciousness – we grow up through stages… people who have measured that see how we progress from narcissism, to building some empathy, then rationality, then a stage where we reconnect with people and see a bigger picture. The view of the evolution of consciousness informs my thinking. We as leaders MUST MOVE from Wall Street thinking - the rational and calculus – to a bigger view. It's Capitalism 2.0 – the strategic or sensitive self. Triple bottom line. What are the externalities. That we will have to start thinking about to be sustainable.

5 - I think we need to revise or update our definition of leadership quite a bit, so that the definition is inherent that what the person is doing is improving the lives of another person or an entire community. Working in the world of wellbeing, it's amazing to me how few leaders have genuine interest or spending time thinking about how they can improve the wellbeing. I saw the chief of HR of [one company] change his title to Chief Employee Experience Officer. Leaders will have to show why we're better off doing something working collectively versus working independently.

6 - Most leaders who have public identities have not done enough personal work, self cultivation. So, without doing that, what shows up in place of those things are those deep psychic and emotional wounds. That makes it difficult to move authentically toward people. People allow themselves to be more influenced by self interest versus altruism. The person drifts toward more of a self interest. That reflects that the person has lost sight of their north star… accepting

bribes, becoming corrupt. Their emotional body can take over. They're not using enough of a centered intent. Not enough purposefulness. You can see it in speech. It becomes incoherent in their bodies as well. You can see it…But usually when the compass baring is lost, you can see it.

7 - In the past, in order to be a well bread gentleman, which everybody aspired, the aristocrats of course were taught [dance] from childhood and had these attributes, the middle class wanted them. [One author] writes about the middle class taking all these classes so they can pass for aristocrats. You needed to know how to mount and ride a hoarse well. You had to know swordsmanship… And you had to know how to dance, you had to be an excellent dancer. But, dancing wasn't just doing steps, it was learning manners, it was learning how to behave in court, if you were invited to court to see the king. How to bow, how to ask a lady to dance, all of the ballroom were for the manners of the court, which were the manners of life. And you know the book [phonetic]? Its an Italian book about becoming a leader… but its about training to be a gentleman and it's a book from the renaissance.

8 - It's important for leaders to look at the margins – of their competencies and expertise. To have leaders continually be committed to look at their next level. Good people will be swallowed up by trying to perform for stakeholders. There is a place where someone stays true to who they are as much as they can moment to moment… they must be be a learner. That could be moment to moment – being curious. Asking who is this person in front of me. take on a new practice. Take on something different – begin to dance. Learn what it means to be a beginner, a guild mentor or coach. And begin to integrate in themselves. And also appreciate others who are also learners.

Corporate leaders on needed or missing positive leadership qualities. The corporate

leaders in our sample also believed that similar qualities are often missing in leadership today.

The following are some examples of responses from corporate leaders regarding important

qualities that are needed for great leadership in the 21st Century:

1 - What I see here, in general (though there are different pockets) – so many of our leaders are afraid to take a risk. They're more worried about how they will be perceived, or how it will look. Or how it will affect their rating. You don't move forward very quickly when you sit in the comfort zone. I have this on my white board – life begins at the edge of your comfort zone. I really do believe that –from a leadership perspective we cant' ask people do do things we aren't willing to do ourselves. How do you motivate people into an unknown future, if you're not willing to give it a try. Where I work, and it's common in bureaucratic organizations, I see a fear of leaning forward and leaning in that regards the people I see doing that, I gravitate towards them. I feel I can confide in them. I can feel like I'm the only one challenging things, and nobody wants to have the conversation.

2 - There is a human psychology problem. [There are] big ambiguous slow moving scary changes, and humans are really bad at addressing them. It's working against so many things.

It's more comfortable to have the air conditioning on. Easier to sit in your car than take a bike. We are working against the natural comfort and laziness of people. I'm not sure how leaders will help us address it. Maybe a better style of communication. Maybe more funding for science to fix the problems. Or what it will take. Courage. It will take a lot of courage.

3 - The combination of humility and their desire to learn. Their natural curiosity. Their learning muscle. The idea that even though a leader may have achieved a certain level of success in the business world as defined today by society, they still need the deeper search for more connection of themselves to their own purpose. More connection to other people in a way that is grounded in a humility about themselves and their own success. At least in my experience, when we find a leader who has those qualities, but also is very smart and strong intellect - in the business world they know how to execute the essential ingredients of being successful in business - but couple it with both learning appetite and capability. About what they don't know and how much they do know. That also folds into willingness to learn from others, think about new ways of doing things. Access your own intuition and creativity. That quality differentiates a world class leader from a good leader.

4 - Communication. Not the formal, distant, blast out to people. But almost the art of communicating. We say it and put it in write ups for what we want to find. But we very rarely follow through. It's two way. The person has very good active listening skills. Takes time to build the relationships to be able to communicate. Is willing to look at many venues of communication. That no two people receive and send information the same way… Interpersonal skills. Being an active listener. Someone stuck in transmit all the time, but their receive side doesn't work. they don't sit back and listen. It's not just that you stop talking and let someone else talk. But you act upon what you heard.

5 - The world is changing rapidly. To adapt and respond and anticipate absolutely requires learning. And to grow yourself as a leader also requires learning. Personal ego patterns and drivers are deeply embedded from childhood. Those are reinforced throughout your life – to be able to examine that and deepen the level of self understanding, grounded in a humility and self acceptance. To understand yourself and how you're perceived by others and so forth. Also learning the latest way to think about strategy, and other hard tangible ways of learning. Technical things. The domain of learning also incorporates a lot of things. Listening. Risk taking. Opening yourself. Accessing your intuition. It's a big concept to me that has a lot of pillars. And they are all important areas.

Leadership and the Healthy Body

Teachers on leadership and the healthy body. Due to the recent trend in corporations

to place a focus on heath and wellbeing, I suspected that participants' initial answer to the

question "what is the role of the body in leadership" would point to the role of physical health.

Therefore, I first asked directly about physical heath in the interview protocol, then used it as a

counterpoint to talk about other possible roles the body or body-awareness might play. Most

participants found it easy to talk about the importance of good physical health for leaders.

Whether or not they saw themselves as "following the rules" with regards to health, they

believed that poor health made leadership challenging. They also believed that good health

provided a solid foundation for one's own leadership, while also inspiring respect from others.

Finally, may participants also felt that *modeling* good health for one's employees was an

important aspect of leadership. The following are some examples of responses from teachers of

body-based mindfulness that related to good physical health and leadership:

1 - I think of physical, mental and emotional health as related. Physical health opens and closes options. We have to spend more time putting attention on it, if we're operating at lower capacity. How we eat what we put in different things , it's mood. If we're moving or not, already affects our moods Some people are dealing with chronic illness. People can contribute from many different states of health… but it does affect everything.

2 - I think it speaks to self care and I have been in stages of my life where I haven't taken care of my body a lot and I was in a tone of pain. I think if your not taking care of yourself or in a healthy state then your distracted by your own pain and you constantly trying to alleviate that sensation, so your not a clear mirror. You can't actually see or hear a group, because you've constantly got this inner dialogue of what's going on. Its actually the responsibility of the leader to show up whole and healthy and well in yourself, so you can be a clear mirror, so you can feel and reflect the group without distortion. So I think it's huge and in the sense that we are role modeling in every sense of our being that again they can see us completely, because there is nothing you can hide fully than if that's a value for you that people take care of themselves than I think on any team or in any group self-responsibility is huge. The team is going to be much stronger if everyone is responsible for taking good care of themselves and that's a value that you hold, then there is a lot more that's possible.

3 - If you pay attention to your health – and you can transport oxygen through your body – I say you can think more clearly. If you work on your cardiovascular health you should be able to stay in the fray [of work] much longer. They can manager their energy in a bigger way. Drucker [wrote] the main work of a leader is to manage their energy. Dao De Jing also says that by building strength in the physical health - those practices done in the right context with right intention - you can also more effectively manage your emotions. You can shift anger for example in a particular way, allows you to stay more in the present moment. And more easily deal with conflict in a way that allows solution. Clear thinking, endurance, manage emotions.

4 - [Health] affects leadership at every level – when someone walks in the room unhealthy, tense etc. We pick up on that, when we sense they can't manage themselves. The

feeling we get from people matters. There is no energy neutral interaction – you either give someone energy or suck it out of them. When you interact with someone who is in poor health, they feel drained. If as leaders we're draining our people, it's not serving anything…. you have to manage your own energy before others. It is physics. We pick up on energy. We are energy sensing devices. We pick up on what other people are putting out. If it's depression, tension, health. I worked in a high energy physics lab in college – it really teaches you how everything is energy. Even matter is a frozen form of energy.

5 - If you have leaders who are a good role model when it comes to well being, it's an entirely different environment. In small pockets I see people starting to make that transition. I'm hoping the new currency for leaders will be more about collective wellbeing and less about strictly monetary compensation. The thing I think a lot of leaders still don't quite get today – wellbeing and health are great things for the rest of our employees but they don't live it. and if they don't live it, even the best wellness programs might do more harm than good if your executives and your leaders and managers aren't setting the right examples. We've got to have leaders talking about their own well-being, modeling eating the right food. Talking about sleep as a priority.

6 - Putting your own physical health first and focusing your attention there might be the only way you can be your very best in a leadership role. there are so many leaders I admire who had great thoughts over time, but boy could they have been more effective if they weren't so wiped out by noon every day. And not thinking about their back pain while sitting in a chair for the seventh hour in a row. We've got to start thinking about the way we structure our days on a much more tactical level as leaders. So that our bodies are at their full capacity all day long. Boy is there a huge sort that occurs between 10 am and 3pm and there are some who fizzle. As leaders we've got to be talking about our own investment in our health, in terms of the food we put in our mouth, the way we value sleep. In order to set the example! In the USA where freedom is valued, a lot of people don't want their leaders to have any involvement.

Corporate leaders on leadership and the healthy body. The corporate leaders in my

sample also agreed that a healthy body makes a big difference in how they and their colleagues

lead. Many of the leaders we spoke to felt their own health and wellness regimens served as

important fuel that supported their leadership. The following are some examples of responses

from corporate leaders that related to good physical health and leadership:

1 - I think the body has nothing specifically to do with leadership. Yet, if you have a healthy body and are in balance, you act more authentically. You act more clearly and are more straight, more direct, and more open than if you're not healthy and you're out of balance. If a person is overweight, they will have trouble climbing the stairs. Or get exhausted because they have no physical strength. Then it depends where it comes from – does he eat too much, is it a

physical imbalance, or an emotional problem? And if you're not happy with your body, you can't do your job right. You're always acting out of imbalance. It doesn't matter if you're a leader or not. But if you're out of balance physically, you're not doing a good job as you would if you were rounded and balanced in your body… Many years ago I ran a marathon. To do it, I had to get in shape. Then when I was in shape I got clearer, had better perception. It made it easier to work… So it really has to do with one another. So for me, if I have a lot of work, I try to exercise more in order to stay in balance.

2 - All things being equal, its better to be in good health or good shape. It's better to be in good health than not in good health. It generally will give one more energy. I am in excellent health… I've never not been in excellent health. if I were to gain a lot of weight or have a disability it would be more challenging. Yet I do a lot of diversity and inclusion work. there is a lot of unconscious bias against people who may be disabled or not well… I led a diversity and inclusion workshop. There was a woman who lost over 100 pounds. Had applied for a senior role and didn't make it through the first hurdle. But when she'd lost the weight, she got the job. Her difference in appearance was enormous after that. she was glad to have lost the weight. Feels better and has more energy. But she believed she would have done as good a job when she was heavier.

3 - Health… it may seem like an intangible but I think it's critical. You didn't get to meet our executive director, but it plays central in how he thinks about the organization. Healthy mind healthy body. 3 years ago he invested in a wellness program – an hour a day over the course of a summer. Paid for people to take an hour a day to benefit from something from a wellness perspective. Some people would take a walk, some people would go to the gym or have some quiet time. We all present as a whole person. Someone walks in and is dragging. You might ask are you feeling ok. If you know them, you might ask are you ok. Can I help. If you don't know the person – if you don't come in confident, healthy and rested, people look and say "wow I don't think that's the person I want to be, I wonder if that job is a downer." Your body tells a different story than your words.

4 - People get under stress, and gain (or lose) weight, but if you approach them to get back in shape, they will say "this has nothing to do with my job – you are the manager of my job but not my body, so leave me alone". Although it is connected. And you can't discriminate against people for not being healthy… so that's a challenge. The body is not on the radar as important. So people may draw conclusions about discrimination for example… But if you watch it for long enough, you will hear that people had a colleague who just died. And then people will say "oh he looked really unhealthy" or " I saw it for a long time" but nobody seriously talked to him about it. people also just let people die, and then just move on. everyone feels sorry in the moment. But the truth is people saw some thing much earlier, and the body is always a sign of it.

5 - One thing I talk about a lot is work life balance, if it's out of balance nothing at work or after work. I'm tired a lot. And if so I'm dragging. And not giving someone the full attention. And then I realize I shouldn't wake up in the morning feeling exhausted. So I use that information and try to pay attention. I will take my dog and go hit the desert and walk 3-5 miles in the afternoon. It mentally helps me refresh. Physically it's really important. I don't know how I'd attack the next job I want to take here if I'm not taking care of myself. Working ourselves to

death is not a good thing. It's not only important but it's also important for others. Your professional relationships improve, your energy improves.

*6 - **What role does having a healthy body play in leadership?** That's a great question. I've never thought about it. I think many of these qualities I mentioned lead to a better attitude towards my health. I think it's driven by the same thing. But I don't know if the fact that I take care of myself would make me a more effective leader or not. I do think there is some level – a continuum or an S curve – at some level it would be hard for others – and probably for the right reasons – to have respect and follow someone who was out of control with their own body and health and so-forth. And I've seen that. in the previous company I worked for, as a division president. I was reporting to the CEO. He didn't take care of himself. He drank a lot. And didn't have great moral character either. I left the organization because of that. I didn't have respect for him even when I was there. Which lead me to say I had to leave. It's a corrosive thing. It was as much about his moral behavior and ego centric way of leading as much as his body and health. but those are closely related, but I never thought about it from the body standpoint.*

7 - So important. When you feel healthy everything works better. You can think clearly, you can speak clearly. It's absolutely key. With my list of key attributes, every single one works better when you're healthy. But when you're feeling sick, it's harder to connect with people. But mental clarity too, your brain is foggy when you're sick or tired or out of shape. It's important that leaders have a high level of energy.

*8 - I don't stray too far. But I see a lot of people that do. I do exercise regularly with a mix of different things. I try to watch what I eat. I do try to eat very health compared to the normal American diet. But compared to a vegan or someone it's not as good as it could be… I've learned a lot about nutrition and so forth. And I do try to control my stress through meditation. And I have a balanced work and lifestyle – I do take time off. You can't out work this job. There are time periods when it's intense. I never go that long without making sure that I take adequate time away. And breaks….When our kids were born I said I wouldn't be one of those guys that woke up at 50 and didn't know our children. I didn't push those things aside. **And how has that impacted your leadership?** I think its important for those around me to do the same thing. I ask people about their families… I walk around at 7pm and give people a hard time about going home. I tell them to get the hell out and go home. I think some leaders and CEOs would almost do the opposite. I had good mentors, and I have copied them over the years.*

The Body, Leadership and Character Strengths

Teachers on the body, leadership and cultivating character strengths. Although some participants found it easier to speak about the "other" possible roles of the body in leadership than others, the overwhelming majority did draw connections through personal examples, when given the time to consider the question in depth. Participants spoke about body language, as well

as body awareness, in helping to cultivate strengths. Some themes that emerged highlighted the

body's importance in positive leadership strengths like compassion, perspective taking and

empathy, as well as decision making, inspiration, leadership and motivation. The following are

some examples of responses from teachers of body-based mindfulness practice that relate to the

body and leadership strengths:

1 - Health is just the beginning… for every leadership skill you could take every quality
and map it down to the basic pattern embodied that allows them to manifest those behaviors
from inside you… If you want to become more embodied in your agility, you have to develop new
habits. You commonly see people get feedback on leadership but don't know how to make
changes. If they can get it into their body, they'll be much more successful. If they access the
visionary pattern they'll be much more successful. More easy to see a bigger picture.

2 - [More recently] we [human beings] came to the interpretation we now have of the
body as an object. The big shift is to know that our aliveness comes through the bodies. I'm
hoping that we're de-objectifying ourselves, and our nature. My paradigm is that we cannot
transform the self – we can't develop our leadership, without also transforming what's
embodied. We talk about IQ, EQ and social intelligence. I think about the body as "evolutionary
intelligence" – it's our inheritance that is incredible at adapting. If our intellect had to adapt all
the time, we wouldn't have made it. Our body is faster, and intellect is slower. When I think
about those leadership qualities- we can't develop a new competency without that becoming
embodied. We learn it through the intellect and body. Holding complexity is an awesome idea,
for example – but we have to actually do it by facing a stressor or stimuli… holding
contradictions is a somatic, embodied process.

3 - Presence and charisma – that can be really hard to define – a healthy body projects
more presence. Good physical posture projects confidence. Classes like yoga can help people
change their posture. That's a very long process that they really have to commit to. One's
posture really is one self. You can look at how they stand or walk, and make guesses about how
they are and who they are telling the world they are. physical…Change your self is to change
your posture – the feedback loop happens in both directions. When I was teaching ballroom - It's
difficult for people to change posture. This doesn't feel like me. it feels arrogant etc. but when
they got used to doing it, they became a different person. They became a more confident person
by standing with confident posture.

4 - Exactly, and manners… I don't know, they just roll their eyes if you say that word to
young people. Manners, nobody learns manners. They don't say hello, they don't say goodbye.
They don't know how to be nice to old ladies… But, there are some, there are some young men
that do have those qualities. I do wanna say, "where did you learn this from? Did your mother
teach you this or did you have a grandmother living at home with you?" But, that was all part of
it and I think it absolutely is vital element that is missing from the education of men and women

today. Women need it too and pilates class will get your body in shape and you need that, but what do you do with it. That's not the end, the end is to learn how to dance.

5 - I never met a dancer I didn't like. And working in a group, learning how to accommodate to a group. Learning how to give orders, they say you need to know how to follow orders… I say it goes back to the Greeks, the Greek soldiers of Sparta fought in a phalanx, where you had to learn how to work together with other men. They would take these shields to cover them up, I don't remember how many were in (unintelligible), I think like 12, and you all put your shields on the outside to protect your body and you move forward. Well that's dancing and having to work together. Having to work together and learning how to sense and follow your own path without bumping into anyone else. How to accommodate faithfully. You learn those spatial things in dance and I think those qualities are also leadership qualities.

6 - I think a lot of people are holding back. I think they actually have clearer visions and riskier choices they could be making, but I think there is a lot of fear on leaders and facilitators parts of how their audience is going to respond or not. When an audience or a team feel that there is an insecurity or a lack of clarity in the vision of the leader, they're not going to go. And that is the worst fear of the leader, is that the audience isn't going to go with them, so its like you need to take that leap. This is where were going, this is how were gonna do it, this is how were getting there… You are literally making mental road maps for people and that's where everything begins, like thoughts, vibrations, if your really clear and you speak it into reality than it is and then people will do that thing, because its obvious what's about to happen and if you put it forward with a question mark or a possibility or something your not sure about that you wanna try. Then people are only going to match the level of confidence or clarity that you exude.

7 - I think good posture; alignment has a lot to do with it. I think how you present yourself, which is a very important part of royalty and dance education that you know how to carry yourself well. And you know, the unconscious physical presence. I mean, physical impression that you make that people don't consciously say anything, but that is unconscious and it has to do with somatics. And think the discipline of dancing, willpower and mind control and memorization.

8 - The cutting edge is the claim that the body – the energy that emanate the body… qi, pranna etc. We [in America] are one of the few cultures that doesn't have a word for energy that isn't mechanical. It's inextricably linked to the self and who we are. By working through the body, we are able to cultivate the self. In the sense of being able to train certain kinds of virtues, behaviors and actions that people didn't previously have access to – that they haven't been part of who they are. The work is to help people re-interpret what we mean by body. e.g. Say soma. Body makes people think about body fat, or a better golf stroke etc. The body as icon, a symbol, a good butler. We are talking about how people act and behave. We see what's been learned. How they have healed their own [emotional] wounds or not. We see the body as self. Cultivating the self.

9 - I'm constantly amazed by the way that my own level of energy in a given day either sends really helpful signals to people I'm just meeting and interacting with… to ones that are nowhere near as helpful. An example – was at a talk in the Midwest. They put me in a hotel room

that was right above the train line. Got almost no sleep. Didn't exercise. Didn't get time to eat. Went to an event with hundreds of people. At about 25% - after that I started tracking my continuous heart rate while I'm giving talks. I have to have a high energy level throughout important times when there are a lot of people who expect me to be at my best and be on my game. Making those kinds of super practical connections really helps me to structure things in advance. Making sure I do things to be able to have that level of energy.

10 - I worked in [a large government organization] and I could imagine body and mind coming together. I worked there for a decade. Taught aikido and Zen. I… became the deputy manager. I found that the way we show up has everything to do with it. The way we show up in the dojo… we'd do these things at work and I'd see the parallel of what's needed.

11 - We have an engine and a break to make our movement happen. Not all bodies do that the same way. Does the break go on, then the engine overpower it. or they go on at the same time. Or engine first break later… 4 ways of moving. Got lost in the literature, resurrected in the 70s – resurrected by Betsy Wetzig - a dancer. There 4 patterns in the body, and they connect to personality. Dancers who were most driven and aggressive in dance also were aggressive with her. Those who were precise and could do neat and tidy movements at work. She anecdotally connected the dots. The physicality and thought patterns were the same. I connected to what I had learned through martial arts – it was a simple and clean framework – four patterns. The driver, the visionary, the organizer and the collaborator. We saw them connect to the Meyers Briggs. They did map to the dominant patterns in personality – they don't reduce, like primary colors. Can be blended. Become habitual. If they work, they become strength. If not, they can become problematic. They can be physically felt in the body…. You can quickly move from one to another. The physical movement alone induces that change. You can put people in the movement and they have their own experience.

12 - When Cambodians began to reconstruct their culture from the killing fields… movement and the body has to do with how we reconstruct narrative. First they dug up old musical instruments and reintroduced music and dance. Music and dance is what came first. Then they reconstructed their sports. Then their schools. Then their religion. It shows something very important about what it means to humans to be able to move together in time.

13 - Our reactions – they are embodied habits…They happen before the level of thinking it through. You get upset… it was a somatic process, at the end you might even wonder why you were upset! For example I work with a corporate leader in Canada –he said "I don't know why but I feel more whole – which is what I've been learning." He told a story - he said "ok I'm at the hotel, in the elevator, just feeling – elevator doors opened and two people walked in, and I contracted my [body], my whole core. I noticed I saw them as dangerous. That happened because of my contraction. So I relaxed it and felt present again.

Corporate leaders on the body, leadership and cultivating character strengths.

While they had a somewhat harder time verbalizing their thoughts, most of the corporate leaders

also cited examples that linked the body to aspects of their leadership *other than* physical

wellbeing. The following are some examples of responses from corporate leaders that relate to

the body and leadership strengths:

1 - EQ – emotional awareness. Awareness of one's own emotions or other people's emotions. Body awareness is key to improving that skill. And key for everyone to perform well in leadership and in relationship with others. When one is aware in one's own body, it's much easier to feel changes in the body. When you feel tense, or scared and feel a constriction in your chest. Those sorts of physical markers, people can train themselves to become more aware of them. Dance or any mindful movement or meditation or pilates, really help people be aware of those physical markers of emotion. They also become more able to identify those markers in someone else's body. That leads to empathy and is key to leadership.

2 - The same could be said for a leader's ability to listen to others ideas. People sit with a closed chest – end up with a defensive posture, pelvis tilted backward. When you stand with that kind of posture, and listen, it's difficult for that person to express themselves in an open way – the body is not projecting a posture of openness. I think it makes one's own mind more closed. And they will be less willing to share ideas that could be a key idea. Being open to ideas is a big thing that [our company] values. Empowering everyone under you to be a genius is a big quality here.

3 - I pay attention to energy. I know the energy of my preferred leadership style – if you exercise it regularly you get more fun out of each style. You are more able to apply them to reach more people. I have a better understanding of different kinds of styles – the collaborator, the driver, the organizer and the visionary. It helps me to accept the other people. Also a conclusion is that if you are a "well balanced" person physically and mentally then you can accept other people much more easily than if you are one sided. The leadership is just one aspect, but it would also apply to other things too… It's important t know your body, because then you also know who you are as a leader. Then you can lead others. You will know yourself. I think it's more important to know yourself, than to know others if you know others only, you are probably a worse leader.

4 - There are many forms of communication – how you walk up to a person or how you approach them. If you're sitting with one guy, we always know when he is not interested in the conversation. He pushes his chair back and his legs sprawl out. And he leans back. And is arms rest on the chair. And he seems to be listening, but we know he doesn't like what he's hearing. Someone came in the other day and said "I was having a conversation with him, and I knew I'd lost him when he pushed his chair back… " it's not a bold gesture, but he always does it when he's not listening any more.

5 - Also, I do believe that body language- the kind of interpersonal connection- I do subscribe to the perspective that what is said in a communication is a small percentage of what is actually communicated….For example I can tell when someone is being fully authentic with me, or not. And it has a lot more to do with how they are than what they are saying. But if you try

to – if I try to fake it by the body language I was giving out, versus being authentic. Then It would be worse. Folks would feel that you were faking it. I think it comes through. **How do you tell the difference?** *You can see emotion. You feel emotion. Is someone really – is the right emotion really coming through. I don't know. There has to be a set of body things that go along with it connection – authentic connection – versus not.*

6 - Body language is important. Expressions, facial expressions. Gesticulations. I do business in parts of the world where what one says with one's hands is almost as important as what you say. And there are kinetic codes, that connect with gesticulation and motion. I can be very expressive facially. Encouraging. I'm told that people can tell what I'm thinking and feeling and I generally intend that. I think we should be authentic. Expression is part of that. tone of voice, gesture, verbal inflections convey more meaning than a transcript of a conversation

7 - The effectiveness as a leader is how you engage your whole self. I say "how you present" and I don't mean you just dress right. You want to see charismatic. You believe what they say when their body language matches the enthusiasm coming out of their mouth. And if not I wonder if they really believe what they said. Or are just uncomfortable? but probably not. I pay attention to everything. I like to move around, use my hands, I like to stop. It does matter because it portrays self confidence and ability. When we see people present well as a whole. I was at a meeting the other day. We invited someone to come talk to us about a very relevant topic. He came in and sat on the side. Waiting for his part. But he didn't get up. it surprised me, it stuck in me that half of the people sitting in front of him had their backs to him. he didn't get out of the chair. He was invited here. But waited for them to turn to him and look at him. it was a communication. The impression it left with some people was "I don't have to get up" you need to turn and face me.

8 - I am 6'3inches tall. I have been my entire professional life. I never think about height, my height. I have wonderful friends, five feet tall, five one five two. Some are great leaders. But many of my friends who are average or below average height say you have a luxury because you are a tall man. It does seem to correlate with income and rapidity of promotion. Walking into a room and being the tallest person.

9 - The Buddhist meditation technique of noticing your breath – it brings you into the present moment. It's a simple body function, but I believe that when different emotion are exercised in you – when you're triggered by something – it's good to get really proficient and self aware about where these things show up in your body. What do they feel like and where they feel like that. I have studied some things – I can see that when I'm triggered in a certain way it does lead to a similar and consistent body sensation. When I'm centered and present I can sense that. I'd like to get better at it.

10- I see someone walking head hung down and dragging in their step. I do walk fast, keep my chin up, walk with confidence, show people I'm excited to be here and that I have a lot of energy. I think it's important. I'd mentor people also on what they wear. People will judge you on that, and how you dress.

The Body, Leadership and Practical Wisdom

Teachers on the body, leadership and cultivating practical wisdom. One interesting initial finding was that, when asked about the role of the body in leadership *beyond* the domain of health, many participants from both groups spontaneously produced answers that resembled aspects of practical wisdom. Some seasoned leaders who were interviewed described decision making that came from "their gut." They talked about unconsciously "reading a room" based on the feelings in their own bodies, and adjusting their behavior to match the needs of the situation. And they reflected that awareness of their own emotions and physiology helped them coordinate better with others in high stakes conversations. They also spoke about body awareness as a conscious tool that helped them calibrate their action to suit a given situation. The following are examples of responses from teachers of body-based mindfulness practice that resemble practical wisdom.

1 - As a leader, you are a poet. And you understand. Using your body as an effective tool of communication. Not just sending signals out – but also receiving signals. Better understanding what's being said around you…A lot of leadership is being seen, being vulnerable, being exposed. To be empathetic. That is not command and control leadership of the past era. That might have worked. Now it's about learning to be seen. The best leaders were very transparent. A lot of artists have that skill – they know how to make themselves available and exposed. So they will be poised to be world leaders. They have the skills. I call it the "utility of the creative process" – through the act of going through the creative process in the majority of their lives, they have arrived at certain skills attributes that are assets moving forward. Ability to take in disparate parts of information and arrive at a conclusion. Artists do that. they know how to do that.

2 - One of the things that good leaders do is cause no harm. We are talking about embodying that. In Japanese martial art there is a phrase: musubi – knot. You tie in with your opponent – you learn how to blend with them. You feel their partner to such a degree that they want to go a little bit more with you.

3 - The body helps us how to not go too far and how to do the right things in the right moment. I started with dance as a little girl. Aikido reminded me of dance. When you work with the body deeply you learn that you can overdo things. There are natural limits. When you work with the body naturally it comes together well. When you force or push things too much you will get into trouble. It helps us manage paradoxes.

4 - If you want to become more embodied in your agility, you have to develop new habits. You commonly see people get feedback on leadership but don't know how to make changes. If they can get it into their body, they'll be much more successful. If they access the visionary pattern they'll be much more successful. More easy to see a bigger picture. **How does it inform over using or underusing strengths?** *[The body] gives us something real to engage with. It calibrates us naturally with what is possible. It's a very real laboratory in which you can see the impact of going too far. If you work too hard you get sick. If you get too caught up In driver intensity you start running over people. You can feel in the body. If you stay tuned to the body, it will keep telling you when all is not well. If you stay in touch with the body, you will know when you've gone to far. We put a lot of emphasis on the hara – how to center in the hara. It's the seat of a deep kind of knowingness. A whole nervous system that was ignored for 90 years. There is enormous wisdom in the body that grounds us. Gives us a sense of natural balance and natural rhythm.*

5 - I think that there is a lot more possibility with the body. Especially, when your doing an improvised activity, whether that's improvised dance, movement, yoga or martial arts. You come back to a certain practice there is a great baseline of classic form and from that classic form you get to play jazz and that is where the creativity, the improvisation comes in. You know having done a lot of partner acrobatics in my life, so much trust is involved there, trust in myself, trust in my partner, trust in something else. And so much of the practice that we generate was improvised, was discovery, what's gonna happen next, what happens when I turn this way and it continues to give me more faith and trust. And a way to tangibly practice and that's were creativity and innovation lies. I think it's developing that muscle of confidence and surrender and trust to walk into the unknown that's where creativity and innovation happens, if were not willing to into that space that's knew that we don't know and its funny because often as a leader, we are supposed to know, to have that clarity and confidence and have the answers. But, equally leaders need to be willing to oscillate between having the clarity and surrendering if you don't know.

6 - If we can use our body for physical empathy. Read their energy. If you can't do in martial arts, you will be surprised by their attack. Using body in a relaxed way as a kind of massive ear drum so that you an sense and go from there. With beginners we have to break it down into formulas and steps. You have to give them some technique to use. But technique is supposed to lead them toward a deeper intuition. Like recipes in books, it's not just about sticking with the recipe in the long run.

7 - Knowing when to call on the right strengths at the right moment… Knowing those talents is a huge gap. let alone when to call on the right ones in the right moment. We've got a long ways to go in terms of creating self awareness around your natural talent. But also your physiological state. How can you help others to see when they're using their strengths on a day to day basis. Physiologically – I'm excited about how technology will give us a sense of physiological self awareness that was never possible in the past. I've tested out every device imaginable from a sleep and energy perspective –the amount of awareness I have about my own state is really remarkable today.

8 - [That has to do with] Pragmatic Wisdom – understanding wisdom like "there is truly interdependence" "e.g. compassion. - that we legitimatize the cares and concerns of others. Interconnectedness. Fundamental need for belonging or inclusion. (for example understanding that looking away can be experienced as physical pain). The pragmatic part of it – how do we make that operational in the world? Not just a bumper sticker, but actually what are the practices and new behaviors necessary so that experience becomes a part of us. Not just holding a belief system, but taking it with rigor and taking it as how we want to be... so that I am a testament to that, through my behaviors and action

9 - ***How do you tell difference or how do you think people tell the difference between something that's put on versus something that's a deep embodied version of that same thing?*** *I don't know if I know how other people do it. I think my meter is just really sensitive, because I have observed so many people for so long. I have a deep sense of your bull shitting me or a sense that this is legit. And I'm usually right, usually something comes down the line later and I'm like oh yea that was... I don't know, I'm not sure I feel like I have a sense of knowing if someone is trying to prove or trying to hide something.* ***What do you see or notice? What kind of clues do you get?*** *...You can feel it when its an ego driven motivation or when its actually a purpose outcome, communality motivation.*

10 -   I think if you welcome the wisdom of the body you again tap into something much greater than what your individualized, separate, isolated mind can actually do. So when we open the wisdom of the body... you know we talk about our gut instincts like, "oh we met this person and had this interview and I got a really bad feeling about them, but I hired them anyway because they have these qualifications and it turned out later that their references were false and they had lied their way in and didn't have these skills and you know I knew something was off but I didn't listen." I think we all have that capacity, we all have intuition, we all have a gut instinct and often times we ignore it... Its messy and people are like if I talk about my feelings I won't be able to make hard core decision that a leader needs to make about hiring and firing and that we all have feelings, when you interview something you may get a feeling they are not the right person and your sensing something isn't right, but you do it any way. Then you find out later you were right, so I think sometimes we default to the mind, when the body is just as wise, if not more wise and we don't value because its woo woo, or not based in fact.

Teachers on the body, leadership and cultivating practical wisdom. Corporate leaders also seemed to situate their sense of "knowing" and their capacity to "make good decisions" in their bodies, although they found it more difficult to articulate at first. In addition, they too spoke about using bodily senses to help them assess how to do the right thing in the right moment. The following are examples of responses from corporate leaders that resemble Practical Wisdom.

1 - It's not just the non-verbals. People are visual. We make a lot of calls on people by what we see and feel. We can gauge if it's right or wrong, but it's part of human fabric. We have a bunch of senses. And we use them all to judge the world around it. how we perceive people based on body language – it's not even the right term. And if we know that, do we think about it?

2 - I have seen leadership training with horses. The person has to lead a horse. You can't fake an animal. The animal sees immediately, who is the person who is talking to them or leading them. the animal immediately sees that without the person even talking. People are not as aware of it, they are missing those senses. Or they are just not as good at it – maybe we think we don't need that perception anymore.

3 - There is a fellow who I have worked with for many years. His personal space bubble is really tiny. He's always up in everyone's face. You back up and then he comes forward. Even though he actually really enjoys one on one communication, people are uncomfortable around him because he stands too close. It's tough feedback to give. For him that' show he feels he is relating to somebody. He'd do well in other parts of the world where there is dense population.

4 - Specifically to women – we all have strengths and weaknesses. It's how we work on our weaknesses and leverage but don't exploit our strengths. I can think of two senior executives, on east coast, women, assertive and attractive. They are both confident enough to know they are attractive – one of them it doesn't play into how she leads or conducts herself at all. She does not use that as a strength – in a good way. By contrast there is another woman who exploits her appearance, uses it almost shamelessly. Flirts too much. And officers don't feel comfortable with her. It's not just what she says, but it's more snuggling her body toward someone else. It's her way of being buddy buddy. But you watch her and perceive that.

5 - It's pretty much how I have tried to improve myself. Certainly I recognize and work toward neutralizing areas I'm not good at. But at the end of the day, my approach has been more driven by leveraging my strengths versus taking my weakness and making them strengths. I do believe that growing the awareness of weaknesses is critical. And the simple awareness is a huge step. Much progress beyond awareness of it allows the strengths I do have to compensate for it. not overpower or ignore the weaknesses but to accept that in a relaxed way and figure out how to accomplish goals through leveraging strengths.

*6 - **Where does your intuition come from?** There's a little bit of mystery in that. like a sixth sense. Body language is an important visual cue – more important than what they say. Tone of voice. Inflection of words. And the words themselves. In terms of intuition the feelings a person brings to the moment.*

8 - It's important to monitor my own emotions, so I can be able to navigate with them. it happens a lot in the workplace that people are tired or frustrated or angry. Or scared of something getting taken away from the. But they're unaware of things going on in their bodies and emotional selves, they don't know how the emotions are impacting them and how to reframe. I'm good at noticing my emotions. That allows me to be productive more frequently. A lot of people put in a lot of hours but those hours are not always productive. In zombie mode. Staring at a screen. Clicking on things. Not really thinking in a deep way. They need to take a break. The

computer is addictive. Being aware of my own emotions and physical states helps me to take breaks when I need to, and come back refreshed. When I'm working it means I'm thinking more clearly and really addressing problems on a more profound level.

*9 - **Think deeply – what does that mean?** If I am a leader and I'm trying to find a solution to a problem, there may be various sort term or easy solutions or things that have been done before. I can default to them. they are paths less traveled or things I've seen done. but it is possible that with many problems there is a better solution. If I have time to step back and look at the greater situation, I may come to a better way of addressing it, that gets more at the root. Is more scaleable. A new way of handling it. It takes time and freedom distractions ability to access that.*

Why is the Body Not Included?

Teachers discuss reasons why the body is not included in leadership training. We also asked participants to speak briefly about why they believe that the body is not included more frequently in conversations about leadership and leadership development. The following are examples of responses from corporate leaders on why the body is missing in these conversations:

1 - I think for a lot of people its messy and it's vulnerable. It's about being vulnerable. I think a lot of people get like, "oh I don't want to open up that can of worms." You know, "oh we don't want to get into out emotion, we don't want to get into our hearts and get vulnerable, because then we'll be weak then we won't have clarity, we won't be able to make decisions and we won't be able to have the hard edge we need for business and for making money and making the hard decisions about hiring and firing if we get too emotionally involved." There is a part of us that wants to cut off out own humanity so that we can be efficient.

2 - I don't understand it. I think almost sexuality has a lot to do with it, because you know, if you try to get boys into dance classes you have to have very enlightened parents. Fathers, "oh not my son isn't gonna study ballet he isn't gonna study dance" by extension ballet becomes all of dance. "I don't want him running around in sissy tights".... Jean Kelly [is a better example]. I only thought of him as a tap dancer, but he had a very rich career as a director. And when you think about how many dancers, choreographers become directors Herbert Ross, Nora K's husband (phonetic), was one of the 1st. Then Jerome Robins who was a choreographer 1st and then went on to be a director of plays. There is a dozen of them, who were not only good dancers, good teachers, choreographers, but also became directors, which is definitely stepping up the ladder in the leadership role.

3 - In the history of the church [there was a] splitting apart – there is mind and there are emotions. Nature and humans. In the split – we've moved the body into a corner. People worry it's the path to sin, hell. You have to "keep things in check." So many men are trained to not

have emotions except anger. And not to talk about it. When I first started training in the military, I would bring it up. There was lot of side eyeing. A lot of looking. What does this mean? People felt very exposed. Self conscious. Can't even make sense to what it has to do with leadership. I had to build relevance. Context. But then people would grab me in the hallway and say "have you heard of…" – there was a huge underground conversation happening. There were more people involved than they would admit. Now it's less underground.

4 - One thing I've observed is that the semantics of this stuff matters too much – the word body has been to some degree stigmatized, like mind body. Positive psychology is also stigmatized in the workplace – by psychology even more than positive. The language on it matters a little bit. Executives already have so much stigma about having unwarranted conversations about When you see body you think about shape of body size of body – it's a physical thing. It's a much more challenging conversation. It's why I've spent a lot of time working through the right framing. I had 50 chief executives in a room, and they said: wellbeing still sounds like wellness and all that heath stuff – we know we're supposed to talk a good game on it, but we really don't spend any time on it. So wellbeing is a tough sell. I'm still trying to will it there, but we have to talk their language. Executives want to talk about energy and performance. And so I've tried to anchor it there in my book.

5 - I think we'll get there. These things take 10-20-30 years. When we first started talking about employee engagement nobody thought it would work – engagement is what you do before you get married. But engagement eventually came through in the corporate world. But we have to give things like that time.

6 - Fundamentally its because of our cultural inheritance… We come from a very rationalistic tradition – body is not seen as the self. Education focuses on thinking. We are embedded in a tradition we don't recognize as having limitations. We've bumped up against limitations and are trying to figure our way out. In sports we know about training, but we're not taking it off the matt to the self. I also think people don't know what to do with all the feeling! Also feeling has been relegated to "less than" it's feminine, out of control. If we were neutral about feeling it would be easier. But we're not neutral. Their world views get confronted – Is this real? Strong? Success? A big tendency to see strong and good leader as not feminine. But when they get into it they feel more alive. But they also feel not skilled. It asks people to go through that level of confrontation with themselves. Somatics is not for sissies!

Corporate leaders discuss reasons why the body is not included in leadership training. To our surprise, many of the corporate leaders we spoke to expressed a desire to see this subject addressed more frequently in leadership training programs. They willingly gave suggestions about how to introduce the topic in a way that would be "hearable" to a corporate audience, and provided some good insight into the reason this is not already being done. The

following are examples of responses from corporate leaders on why the body is missing in these

conversations:

 1 - People think it's a taboo subject. I suspect that there is a concern – we're so adverse in this bureaucratic context – to talking about it. Its hard to not talk about body type. Maybe we lack education to talk about what it means – we could then have the conversation. Its never been in the syllabus of our leadership training we don't have the language to have the conversation. Maybe people need more context. But we do say leadership is that your actions are consistent with your words. And actions are about how you present, what you do, and the impressions you leave on others. And I don't know how to have that conversation without bringing in the holistic approach.

 2 - Most people now a days work with knowledge, numbers and figures. If you work in construction, you need your body to work. but a lot of people now spend time in front of computer screens and excel spreadsheets, it seems the body is not important do work. it's just not the primary focus anymore. But in past it was the primary focus of attention. But now people think I can work on an excel sheet even if you weigh 500 pounds. Of course you can, but the body still has an influence on how you work – the way you do mental work… It's just neglected – by everybody. Because they don't care. But as soon as you're sick or something is wrong with you, then you're not able to do your job anymore. Then they just look for someone else and put THEM in the job, rather than changing habits or changing the environment. People don't pay much attention, they're just not honest about it.

 3 - I'm aware of having a body, I will be aware if someone hugs me, and I don't want to be touched. In general I don't think I have much body mindfulness at all. I took the FEBI mindfulness test. I get the theory of it. But if you are a person like me who was never a team athlete. I am a runner, hiker, play singles. I've never done anything in my life that would make me mindful of my body. I'm not grotesquely awkward, so I must at least be neutral… But for me it's about personality, character, thinking, intellectual, research. The physicality part is at risk for unconscious bias.

 4- People have been to team builders where you do a ropes course or trust falls. I have yet to meet anyone who doesn't deeply hate those activities. You are in gym shorts, surrounded by colleagues who were probably awkward in gym class. That's the deficit in this domain. Heard horror stories of people doing trust falls and were dropped. A friend was doing a ropes course and genitals were touched. You have to build a very firm container around it. Making a distinction. Meditation and mindfulness is a whole other interesting perspective.

 5 - A lot of what I've talked about – for example learning - that whole domain does not have social acceptance in the business world. For one to view that as important, you have to be willing to be a bit off-consensus. Either not care what others think, or go against the consensus culture. But it's not like from a 0 to 100. Humility, it's not necessarily all that radical. And it's less radical today than 20 years ago. There is a societal magnet or sludge. That on the health and wellness side, is even greater. It's starting to become more normal to talk about. But when you look at what people consume. And becoming obese. And dependence on prescription drugs.

And the view that a doctor fixes you vs an eastern perspective. These things are deeply embedded into our society. It's very against the mainstream. That's why I think it is not focused on or talked about or written about as much as other aspects of leadership.

6 - America has a puritanical history- it's very head oriented and the body is to be ignored and stifled and distrusted. All of the input we're getting from the body should be denied and ignored. That legacy is still with us culturally. I also think we have lot of body issues. obesity epidemic, coupled with extreme body issue disorders that are fed to us on a daily basis. And we have a lot of cheap bad food. There are a lot of people who are unhappy with body. It's a sensitive topic. Nobody wants to make anyone feel uncomfortable in the workplace. People are unhappy with the body, any talking about it makes them uncomfortable.

7 - Anything to do with sexuality makes people uncomfortable. Many kinds of movement are not sexual. Discussion of the body can make people uncomfortable. So it ends up being "off the table." Some people are so scared of sexual harassment that they don't want even to mention it.

8 - A lot of it comes back to being dissatisfied. People have learned helplessness around it. especially if they've tried to change and haven't. don't want to go back to it. it probably is for most people a place they feel helpless. 99% of diets are ineffective. Most people feel discouraged! And if you ask can you change your posture, I'd say hell no are you kidding? Telling them they're going to move in new ways can be very scary for people.

Discussion

These initial findings suggest that both corporate leaders and teachers of body-based wisdom view the body as playing an important and tangible role in effective, positive leadership. Several of the practitioners of body-based wisdom confessed that indeed, the cultivation of more embodied and conscious leaders in the 21st Century was a driving factor in their work. These individuals spoke freely and easily of the many benefits they see for the introduction of body-based mindfulness practices into traditional leadership training programs. They spoke of the body as important for taking action, for understanding others, for influencing others and for intuitive decision making. As one participant mentioned, "it's hard to do anything without it."

Many of the corporate leaders, on the other hand, did not have a readily available vocabulary with which to talk about leadership from a body-based perspective. When asked

about the role of the body in leadership *other than good health*, one of the most common first

responses was, "Wow, that's a good question. I haven't thought much about that." Yet, when

given the time to answer, they produced stories and examples that reflected an innate, unspoken

awareness of their bodies as allies in their quest to cultivate good leadership in themselves and

others. Framing the question as "something other than health" seemed to point to a blind spot

that was underdeveloped in language and conscious understanding, but that was nonetheless

being called upon in action.

These findings suggest that it would be useful to take a closer look at the ways body-

based mindfulness practices might be helpful in understanding and teaching positive leadership.

From these interviews, it seems that great leaders are using their bodies, sometimes

unconsciously, to produce great results. That being the case, perhaps incorporating the body into

training on leadership strengths or practical wisdom *could* begin to unlock the mystery of these

positive leaders' "special sauce."

Study Limitations

First and foremost, our failure to complete a detailed coding of the data is a major

limitation of the results portion of this study. Unfortunately, due to constraints of time,

challenges with transcription, and the limited availability of our participants, we were unable to

develop and execute a formal coding scheme prior to the submission of this paper. Lacking

formal analysis, the results discussed above are primarily anecdotal, and therefore subject to

confirmation bias. Furthermore, the initial interview questions explored in this study do not

effectively solve the question: can positive leadership be trained through the body? Rather than

explore cause and effect, they take the *establishment of a relationship* as their sole task. They

neither concretely identify the mechanism by which the body impacts leadership, nor establish

the best method of body-based leadership training. To fully answer the questions put forth in my

hypotheses, an experimental or longitudinal design would be required. I provide some

suggestions for such studies in the following section.

Another limitation of this study is that few counter-opinions regarding the role of the

body and leadership were encountered. Thus, the literature review reflects far more supporting

evidence than evidence that disconfirms my hypotheses. This is in part due to the newness of the

topic. A few very recent articles do describe the boundary conditions, for example, of body-

based priming methods like power posing (Park, Streamer, Huang & Galinsky, 2012; Ranehill et.

al., 2015). In these articles, the effects of power posing are either not replicated or shown to be

culturally specific. This research suggests that the relationship between the body and leadership

qualities may be culturally dependent. Yet there are few recent articles that explicitly work to

demonstrate that the body and leadership are unrelated. Perhaps because of the long long-term

societal assumption that the body is not as important as the mind, most scholars who are taking

up the conversation are invested in making a case in the opposite direction. These scholars note

that the body does seem to play *some* role in the cognitive and social psychology mechanisms

that underpin effective leadership behavior (and behavior in general).

A final limitation of this study is that the sample of leaders and teachers included were

identified because of their embodiment of some version of positive leadership. Therefore, the

data do not represent the general population. Given my sample, it could be the case that the

themes in my data are not generalizable, or do not represent the average leader's experiences.

That said, positive organizational scholarship has taken as one of it's missions to study the

"positively deviant" - extraordinary results that represent the tip of the spear when it comes to

organizational culture and leadership. I see this study as one that epitomizes that approach. The

leaders and teachers interviewed have spent years perfecting their craft, and were chosen because they have achieved extra-ordinary results. In taking stock of the positively extreme tail of the distribution when it comes to both the body and leadership, I believe I have captured the essence of a new and fascinating frontier. My hope is that these results, though by no means conclusive, can point us in the direction of where to look next when it comes to the development and enhancement of positive leadership.

Future research

In order to shore up the limitations of the present study, I plan to develop a coding scheme that would help us look more deeply at the following questions: 1) What leadership strengths and qualities are proactively named by the participants as important, and how do these qualities compare to those exhibited by positive leaders as demonstrated by research in the field of positive organizational scholarship? 2) What themes emerge with regards to the role of a healthy body in effective, positive leadership? These questions demonstrate a link between my sample and positive leadership, and build a general foundation for my hypotheses that the body does play some role in positive leadership.

I will also look at the following questions, which are directly related to my hypotheses: When asked about the role of the body in leadership *other than physical health*, 1) what tangible leadership strengths are spontaneously mentioned by participants in connection with the body? 2) in what ways do participants connect the body to the conscious, or unconscious, cultivation of strengths? 2) what themes emerge related to body awareness and the calibration or appropriate use of strengths in the moment? 3) what themes emerge related to the development or use of other aspects of practical wisdom?

Once fully analyzed, the results of this study could inform the development of future lines of research. The results could also suggest fruitful new approaches for leadership trainers and practitioners to test in the field. If the data do reveal concrete themes that are generalizable across participants in both groups, I will recommend the further exploration of those themes in future studies. In order to examine the utility of body-based mindfulness practice in helping to cultivate positive leadership, it will be important to design studies that either measure or manipulate body-awareness, body posture and body movement as the dependent variable. We could then more rigorously examine the effect these have on positive leadership behavior in the laboratory setting. In the paragraphs that follow, I briefly discuss two potential studies that could take my research one step further.

Study two: Proposal. As a follow-up to the present study, I propose the development of a laboratory study that directly addresses the viability of body-based mindfulness practice as a tool for developing leadership strengths. One relevant question for this kind of study could be: is it possible to increase the accessibility and demonstrability of a latent leadership strength by engaging in conscious, deliberate body-based practice? As a simple test of my theory that leadership strengths can be cultivated through body-based mindfulness practice, I propose drawing upon the existing research of Attan, Whitelaw and Ferguson (2014). For the sake of simplicity, I would choose two of the four leadership styles measured by the FEBI (e.g. driver and collaborator), and attempt to train them, through movement, in a laboratory setting. Participants would be pre-screened for their current level of embodiment in each of these styles. Then, participants would be invited to practice the movement pattern associated with their *lower* FEBI style for ten minutes each day, over a period of twenty-one days (see Attan et al., 2014). After the practice period, participants would again complete the FEBI measure.

A raise in scores post-intervention would indicate the utility of body-based mindfulness practice in helping to cultivate a new, or latent, strength. Participants could also be invited to engage in a style-consistent leadership activity (e.g. effectively collaborate with a peer in the lab setting) to examine whether this type of learning would generalize to produce strength-related behaviors. I propose that this type of experiment could be designed for any of the 24 VIA Character Strengths. Such a research program would be a great contribution to the current literature on training virtues and positive leadership.

Study three: Proposal. Another follow up to the present study could address the cultivation of *practical wisdom* through body-based mindfulness practice in a domain relevant to leadership: effective coordination between peers (collaboration). In this study, participants would first complete a measure of body awareness, and a measure of their top character strengths. Participants would then learn the individual portion of a basic martial arts movement that is typically executed in pairs. They would also be taught how to use their top character strength in the physical exercise task. Participants would then be given fifteen minutes to practice their move, with instructions to either 1) use their top character strength "as much as possible" or 2) consider the importance of good collaboration and practice using that strength "just enough." Finally, participants would have the chance to practice using their strength in an unrelated collaborative task with a condition-blind laboratory assistant. Following the exercise, the laboratory assistant, and the participant would both be invited to rate the levels of effectiveness, enjoyableness and flow in their collaboration. As a manipulation check, the participant would also be invited to rate how much or how little he/she used her character strength in the interaction. A higher degree of coloration among participants in the "just enough" condition

would serve as initial evidence that practical wisdom, can, in part, be trained through body-based mindfulness practice. Body awareness would be examined as a potential mediator in this study.

Practical application. In addition to future research, I am interested in the practical application of body-based mindfulness as a leadership training tool. To that end, I have included in the appendix of this paper a description of a simple body-based positive psychology intervention for coaches and leadership trainers. My aim is to spark innovation among those who work in applied settings and wish to bring the wisdom of the body into their daily work. In order to serve this goal, I am also interested in hosting a summit that brings together teachers of body-based mindfulness, researchers in positive organizational scholarship and corporate leaders who are interested to learn practices, explore needs, discuss results, and implement projects in their organizations. This summit would make use of the Appreciative Inquiry format (Cooperrider, 2012), and may be hosted in the summer of 2016.

Conclusions

Taken together, the literature review and initial interview results of this study suggest that the body may play an important role in the underlying mechanisms that support effective, positive leadership. First, research suggests that having a healthy body that is free from physical, mental and emotional constraints makes it possible for a leader to sustain his or her energy in the long run. This is important for effective leadership. According to one of our interview participants, it takes at least seven years to create culture change in an organization. As she put it, "leadership is not a race, it's a marathon." Perhaps learning to listen to the body's physical cues enables a leader to develop a healthy relationship with energy, and energy management. If so, this relationship would form a solid bodily foundation from which other important actions could be executed.

Furthermore, there is initial evidence to suggest that our current dialog about physical health only scratches the surface of what the body may have to offer modern-day positive leaders. Scientific research in embodied cognition, social psychology and body awareness, along with applied work in somatics, movement therapy and embodied leadership point to the *wisdom of the body* as a primary informant that can complement, enhance, and even override our cognition. Our interviews seem to echo these sentiments, locating the roots of important actions like decision making, influence, communication, connecting with others, and empathy - as well as positive states like authenticity - in body-awareness, body movement and body posture.

Despite the growing popularity of Carol Dweck's (2006) work on growth mindset in the workplace, many of us still find that the qualities of great leadership are difficult to teach. Given the potential payoff for individuals, organizations and the planet should we learn how to teach them well, I believe it's worth going a bit out of our comfort zones in order to crack the code. I propose the human body is a compelling new (and ancient) arena that could become the positive leadership training ground of the future. My desire is that the ideas presented in this paper spark a revolution of thought on our approach to developing leadership strengths and cultivating the wisdom to use those strengths for good.

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Appendix

A New Positive Intervention for Coaches and Leadership Trainers

In order to promote an exploration of the body-based mindfulness approach among coaches and trainers of positive leadership, I briefly describe a new positive intervention that makes use of the body. The intervention is called *The New Gear*. It is designed to cultivate new strengths in the context of an interpersonal relationship via practiced shifts in body awareness and body language. Consistent with Niemeic's (2013) approach, the New Gear intervention involves three stages: *awareness*, *exploration* and *application*. It can be implemented professionally in the following way:

Part One: Awareness

The trainer engages in a conversation with the trainee about a relationship. The trainee (or client) is given 5-10 minutes to say everything there is to say about that relationship as it is now. Both the trainer and client observe the client's patterns in speech, body and emotion while the client is speaking. The trainer invites the client to feel his or her body, and describe the sensations that are arising. Next, the trainer invites the client to say everything there is to say about the relationship in its ideal state, including what is meaningful about the relationship, what shared goals the client has with the other person, what they admire about this person etc. Again, both observe the client's patterns in speech, body and emotion. Again, the trainer invites the client to feel his or her body, and describe the sensations that are arising. Together, the practitioner and client make note of the patterns in speech, body and emotion that are unique to the second stage.

Part Two: Exploration

The client is invited to spend 21 days pairing these second-stage sensations with a physical exercise in order to build the body's comfort and fluidity in accessing this "New Gear." If the client has an existing exercise routine, the client may practice the new physiological and emotional pattern during their daily exercise. Otherwise, the client may choose a simple activity like walking to the bus stop each morning. For example, if the client discovers that while envisioning the ideal relationship their body feels more open, softer and more relaxed, they can practice walking in that way, while imagining the person with whom they desire to cultivate a better relationship.

Part Three: Application

The client brings The New Gear directly into the target relationship. Having built the muscle in the practice phase, the client is invited to mindfully observe his or her physiology and emotions while engaging in the target relationship, and make conscious adjustments to replicate the newly practiced patterns.

The New Gear intervention targets attention and physiology. The expected changes are increased self-awareness and self-regulation. The practice draws attention to physiological and emotional states, and cultivates body-based mindfulness. Via regular practice of a new emotional or physiological state, the client builds the confidence and skill to access that state in a new setting (the target relationship). If this body-based positive intervention were successful, we would expect the client to experience better relationships. Specifically, this intervention would be ideal for a leader who is seeking more connection or effectiveness in an interpersonal relationship, either at work or in their personal life.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention, the trainer could ask the client to rate the intimacy, connection and effectiveness of the relationship on a scale of 1 to 10 before

and after the intervention. The trainer could also measure how much the client likes the other person, and how much this relationship contributes to their sense of well-being on a similar scale 10-point scale. Finally, the trainer could ask the client to complete a scale measuring autonomy, relatedness and control in the relationship. If possible, the trainer could also obtain similar ratings from the person with whom the client was attempting to deepen their relationship (though this may not be possible in some, more delicate, cases). Post-test improvement would indicate a successful intervention.