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

Enter Mindfulness Practice, adapted for 21st-century professionals by Jon Kabat-Zinn, as “an awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Basic mindfulness practices, such as the breathing exercise described above, are gaining popularity as both a consulting approach and focus of change efforts. With regular integration, mindfulness practice has been observed to help members collaborate and lead with greater presence, empathy, creativity, and gratitude. It has also been recognized by consultants as a facet of compassionate organizational culture and citizenship behavior, as members come to realize how personal attachments can lead to considerable suffering in the face of change.

While there is no golden standard in assimilating mindfulness practice with change consultation, this chapter introduces a theoretical, practical, and economical starting point. It aligns meditative practices observed as early as 400 BCE (Narain, 2003) with transformational change strategies in organizations as futuristic as Google (Chade-Meng, 2012). By comparing contemporary literature on mindfulness with approaches shared by four consultants in the Americas and Europe, this chapter defines Mindfulness Based Consulting (MBC) as: a process of helping members embrace and lead organizational change by transforming their way of being, comprised of heightened awareness and genuine sense of purpose, through mindfulness practice.

Beginner’s Mind

Seasoned consultants understand that despite their best attempts at planning, change efforts are often derailed by unheeded elements of the lived experience. More often than not, when members come toe to toe with change, associated anxieties can lead to an ineffable sense of dread. Fears of inadequacy, helplessness, failure, and futility are some of the most challenging obstacles for change readiness, commitment, and implementation.
A departure from classic change strategies, which typically involve reflection upon past experience, consideration of external stimuli, and strategic orientation toward a desired future state, mindfulness practice requires a non-striving, non-judgmental attitude that continuously returns to the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2009) described as Beginners Mind:

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

Beginners Mind is an approach that fits well with Jamieson’s (2010) characterization of “real” consulting as “not knowing the answers or exactly what you’ll even do at the start” (Jamieson & Armstrong, 2010, p. 3). Nevertheless, consultants who learn about this unassuming approach for the first time often fear exacerbating their client’s worries or invalidating their acumen, because meditation draws attention to the mind without guiding concurrent critical reflection. Ironically, regular mindfulness practice is correlated with a rather substantial and prolonged reduction in anxiety (Roemer et. al, 2008). Practice is also linked to an increase in brain matter concentration associated with learning and memory processes, emotional regulation, self-referential processing, and perspective taking (Holzel et al., 2011). Similarly, mindfulness practice is shown to rewire our most basic personal perceptions (Carmody, 2009), which have a profound influence on self-regulation in the midst of organizational change. Fortunately, benefits like these are also shown to extend well beyond the practice setting (Buchheld et.al, 2001). In summarizing, mindfulness practice may benefit the client-consultant team and the organization they serve by helping all parties grasp the immediate fuller picture, quell psychological distress, make better decisions, and utilize expertise more effectively.

It cannot be overemphasized that mindfulness is most powerful when individuals make a leap of faith beyond practice into a way of being. Later this chapter introduces a model for understanding and recognizing Way of Being, for consultants and clients, as a function of our Mode of Awareness in relationship with our Mode of Existence, by combining literature on Mindfulness Practice (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Bishop et. al, 2004, Holzel et al., 2011; Cashman, 2012), with Existential Psychology (Loy, 1996; May, 1975; Yalom, 1980, 2008), and Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1990; Mezirow et. al, 2000; Taylor, 2005; Cranton, 2006).

**HERE & NOW**

Distracted employees now have their very own prognosis, Attention Deficit Trait (ADT), recognized by symptoms of “distractability, inner frenzy, and impatience” (Hallowell, 2013, p. 1). Just like any other emotional bent, ADT can be wildly contagious, so much so that meditative practices have found a new home in industry giants such as Google, Apple, IBM, Starbucks,
eBay, and AOL Time Warner. Mindfulness is evolving into the strategic centerpiece before, during, and after almost every conceivable organizational change activity, including: client-consultant engagement, brainstorming, gap analysis, and measurement planning. It is also emerging as a central feature of organizational development drivers such as coaching, decision making, mentoring, teambuilding, and leadership development. By incorporating mindfulness practices, organizations have also signaled the necessity of self-renewal in a time when many employees find themselves consumed by the panic of falling behind and underperforming. In this way, change efforts can greatly benefit from an existential understanding of care (Heidegger, 1962), which recognizes the harsh manner in which we are “forever scattered by our daily concerns, dispersed into many unfinished affairs” (Loy, 1996, p. 32). The challenge in suggesting a practice so deeply informed by existential philosophy and rooted in ancient eastern practice is that it must be practical, economically sound, and measurable. It must fit, somehow, in our fast paced world.

The practice of meditation is straightforward, costs little if nothing, and can be practiced during a lunch hour, every minute on the hour, or in the very moment a member notices how far their mind has wandered. In one of the more common practices, sitting meditation can be facilitated in just about any quiet room. In sitting meditation:

The client maintains an upright sitting posture, either in a chair or cross-legged on the floor and attempts to maintain attention on a particular focus, most commonly the somatic sensations in his or her own breathing. Whenever attention wanders from the breath to the inevitable thoughts and feelings that arise, the client will simply take notice of them and then let them go as attention is returned to the breath. As sitting meditation is practiced, there is an emphasis on simply taking notice of whatever the mind happens to wander to and accepting each object without making judgments about it or elaborating on its implications, additional meanings, or need for action (Bishop et. al, 2004, p. 232).

Another practical form is what Chaskalson (2011) suggests in the routine spaces in which members find themselves throughout the workday:

One such practice is to have the experience, just once, of eating a single meal mindfully… It’s best here to choose a simple meal – a bowl of muesli, perhaps, or a sandwich or a piece of fruit. Really pay attention to each aspect of the meal, letting all of your senses fully engage with the process and noticing what you discover in each moment as you proceed (Chaskalson, 2011, p. 53).
In facilitating a faculty learning circle on Meditation and Mindfulness in Teaching at the University of St. Thomas, this author has discovered a number of unsuspecting daily activities practiced by professors to stimulate awareness. One includes a regular five minute meditation as part of course preparation just prior to class. You might imagine doing the same before a client luncheon. Another practice is mindfully walking up the stairs from one’s office to the lecture hall, while drawing and sustaining awareness to every footstep. A third favorite, is taking time to experience the way water evaporates from the skin when placed under a hand-drier. Some have even begun to facilitate mindfulness practice with students at the beginning of each class because they concur that “…reciprocity and attunement with students supports their development and contributes to social and emotional learning” (Schoeberlein & Sheth, 2009, p. 37). Each of these routine practices holds promise across organizational contexts, as it serves to enhance a member’s ability to enter relationship with stakeholders through a refreshed set of eyes. For professors at the University of St. Thomas, it provides a practical way of rediscovering the joy of serving students for the first time, every time.

What about the economics of mindfulness practice? After all, change is rarely spurred by concepts alone but rather by a data and measurement orientation (Burke, 2011). Organizations are just beginning to understand the benefits of innovation, operational efficiency, and self-discovery stemming from mindfulness practice. Since 2006 General Mills has trained over 290 employees in mindfulness based leadership, with participants reporting a 23% increase in productivity, 80% improvement in decision making, and 89% improvement in listening skills (General Mills Website, 2013). In addition to productivity and improved relationships, Chaskalson (2011) notes that characteristics of a mindful workplace often include reduced absenteeism linked with illnesses caused by workplace stress (Chaskalson, 2011).

Those who practice MBC incorporate a number of psychometrically tested instruments for measuring mindfulness processes, intensities, and drivers associated with successful organizational change efforts. For instance, the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale measures “individual differences in the frequency of mindfulness states over time… presence or absence of attention to and awareness of what is occurring in the present” (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 824). Similarly, the Toronto Mindfulness Scale takes on a two-factor measurement structure that is mainly concerned with processes of curiosity and decentering (Lau et. al, 2006). The Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills gauges skills associated with mindfulness, including “observing, describing, acting with awareness and accepting without judgment” (Baer et. al, 2004, p. 191). For those interested in the connection between emotional intelligence and change readiness, the Cognitive Affective Mindfulness Scale was developed to measure factors including mindfulness, distress, well-being, emotional-regulation, and problem-solving (Feldman et. al, 2007). Lastly the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory looks at the lasting effects of mindfulness, including the increase in mindfulness after mindfulness retreats (Buchheld et. al, 2001). A full list of measurements can be found at www.mindfulexperience.org, a site dedicated to research on this subject for professionals in healthcare, psychology, and education.
Breon Michel is a principal consultant for Breon Michel LLC, based out of Phoenix, Arizona. Breon views herself as an integrative health consultant or someone who helps organizations reconnect with their innate capacity for well-being in order to flourish. Breon facilitates programs centered on using mindfulness, followed by inquiry and dialogue, to facilitate stress relief and healing from the inside out. She shares, “The work is collaborative and experiential, requiring a commitment on behalf of key leaders to both engage in the process and support their employees in developing to the fullest.” Having studied under the aegis of Martin Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania, Breon measures the organizational impact of mindfulness through metrics associated with resilience and positive psychology, including: the Resilience Scale, which measures an individual’s capacity for resilience; the Transgression Motivations Questionnaire, which measures forgiveness; and the Work-Life Questionnaire, which measures work-life satisfaction.

Like many other MBC consultants Breon has developed her own measurements, including a pre-post survey similar to the assessment given in the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. In order to anchor these assessments within the context of modern day change theory, consultants should take time to reconsider some of the more pervasive assumptions around ‘being’ and ‘time’ as they manifest in change consultation approaches.

**BEING & TIME**

Planned change is a manifold process, too complex for consultants to rely solely on the usual suspects or models for change consultation (Burke, 2011). Mindfulness practice is certainly unfamiliar to most, yet it holds promise as a powerful approach to helping organizations understand and influence change. The notion that members may only be half awake is an ever-present challenge. During the workday members are subject to countless gremlins that steal from and distort fuller awareness, perhaps none more precarious than the mind itself. Since mindfulness is essentially a practice of being in the moment, we must first consider how - compared with contemporary change literature - mindfulness takes on a radically different view of being and time.

The literature on organizational change has shifted its own attention over the past few decades, from the promise of shared analysis in a knowledge economy (Argyris, 1991), to the competitive advantage of creativity in an innovation economy (De Geus, 2002), and most recently to the underlying necessity of awareness an attention economy (Davenport & Beck, 2012). In order to understand how mindfulness practice fits this evolution, it is helpful to recognize how the field of change leadership has traditionally approached the concepts of being and time. These basic elements, when translated into modern day terms from the philosophical investigations of existentialists such as Martin Heidegger (1962), can have a profound impact on change strategy.
**Orientation to Being**

Our field is second to none in exploring what it means to lead change, as we have addressed traits, power dynamics, and situational variables. Yet it seems we have only scratched the surface of what it means to ‘be’ a leader. Some of the more popular efforts relevant to this approach include literature on Authentic Leadership (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2003; George, 2007; Kohlriesen, 2006) and Emotional Intelligence (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman et. al, 2002; Cherniss & Adler, 2000). Authentic leadership implies an orientation to being that is ostensibly self-directed, self-aware, driven by one’s life story, and dedicated to resembling everyday behaviors in proximity with our personal values (George, 2007). Authentic leaders are said to:

…demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads. They establish long term, meaningful relationships and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are (George et.al, 2007).

The notion of ‘being’ in organizational life has also drawn attention to our relationship with emotion, explored through emerging literature on Emotional Intelligence, often with the expressed purpose of resonating as a leader. This orientation to being suggests that leaders practice being “…aware, and attuned to themselves, to others, and to the world around them” (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005, p. 3).

**Being Something**

Viewing the self as an object for reflection and improvement is shown to have a profound influence on the practice of leading change. At the same time, striving to be ‘something’ – typically measured against categorical performance dimensions - often comes with the hefty and potentially debilitating price of anxiety. It should be noted that this author has observed organizational change efforts distilled into as many as thirty professional improvement goals! Striving to be so many things at once to support change, let alone sustaining awareness of these aims can be daunting, impractical, and potentially counterproductive. Introducing a collection of finite standards of being aligned with organizational change can in many ways distort or arrest a member’s otherwise infinite potential for growth; one which already exists and is most powerful when they are simply made aware of it.

Mindfulness tempers this accelerated measurement approach – exemplified through increasingly complex 360 degree assessments - by helping members access an unadulterated, non-limiting awareness of being and becoming. Unlike the literature on self-awareness with its many critical dimensions, mindfulness practice invites an unencumbered awareness of being versus being something.

Langer (1997), who writes about *Mindful Learning*, points to an ever-present danger in measuring ourselves against finite standards: the devaluation of self and others. Langer harkens
to the many models of intelligence that exist, which gauge an individual’s strengths and weaknesses. Modern organizations still subscribe to this deficit model, perhaps due to a deeper desire to substantiate the existence of development efforts through measurement and correlation. Langer warns however, “Such devaluation sometimes causes people to compensate by devaluing others… Adding dimensions of intelligence encourages such labeling and competition” (Langer, 1997, p. 136). Fortunately, the tide of this Cartesian anxiety seems to have reached its peak in a number of organizations, and MBC consultants are both oriented and equipped to facilitate clients as the surf recedes.

A Western orientation to being some ‘thing’ tends to compartmentalize, commoditize, and even splinter the fuller reality of what it means to be. Most would agree that any finite description of a better self implies one we are, by definition, lacking. Though it is not always the case, MBC practitioners remind clients that this modern orientation to being may unintentionally arrest members from recognizing their fuller promise. To borrow from the art world, strategies for developing employees in support of change may span anywhere between a paint-by-numbers approach emphasizing valuation, and a blank canvas approach encouraging invaluable, game-changing masterpieces.

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

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

Mindfulness practice invites members to sustain attentiveness to the fuller nature of our being by “disengaging oneself from strong attachments to beliefs, thoughts, or emotions…” (Ludwig & Kabat-Zinn, 2008, p. 1350). Through the lens of mindfulness, being is not viewed as a desired state, but rather as a process in continuous motion, described later as a Way of Being. Through regular mindfulness practice, both the client and consultant can become more fully aware of this important distinction and its many implications for organizational change.
**Simply Being**

Mindfulness practice is often referred to as a process of simply being. This is a sweeping departure from the directed and quantifiable aims present in change methodology. Traditional practitioners might ask, ‘how can we change if we do not change a thing?’ In lieu of addressing the self through the lens of static judgments (i.e. I am judgmental, forgetful, irritable), MBC practitioners draw client attention to the continuously unfrozen stream of being and becoming. In this fashion, mindfulness expands one’s perception of being from a finite object into an infinite process. When confronted with change, this fluid orientation also suggests the unthinkable: that we purposefully not strive to disquiet any discomfort that exists in the midst of change. Instead, the invitation is to see it for what it is without interpretation:

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

MBC presents a new option, a way of understanding being by noting anxiety as a byproduct of needing, having, and validating our ego-self. At the same time it recognizes the sheer difficulty of sustaining a blank canvas approach, heeding Søren Kierkegaard’s (1844) expression that *anxiety is the dizziness of freedom* (Kierkegaard as translated by Thomte, 1980). Meditation builds this capacity in the midst of change efforts by inviting members to let go of the attachments and anxieties that accompany their dread of ‘self-lacking.’ Mindfulness facilitates this process by temporarily surrendering attention to our most fundamental perceptions or proprioception. These include the senses of breathing, feeling, smelling, tasting, touching.

**Orientation to Time**

In addition to ‘being’, we must also consider the way ‘time’ is conceptualized and approached in contemporary change literature. In large part we tend to develop change strategies by addressing event-experiences like excerpts from the past; particularly when gauging the gaps we must fill in moving toward a desired state. We tend to direct a substantial amount of energy to harvesting and improving the yield of reflective practice. Change consultants demonstrate this paradigm by introducing mechanisms for reflection in and on action (Schon, 1983), and many do so with the assumption that members have different preferences for learning from experience (Kolb, 1976). Credence to the past and future as it relates to change is also a mainstay in the literature on transitions (Bridges, 2009) as well as a key feature in mapping a member’s immunity to change (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, 2009). Learning from reviewing the assumptions that have influenced our experiences and actions in the past can also shed light on how organizations might transform the underlying premises of their strategies, as suggested in much
of the literature on Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow et. al, 2000). Collectively, these approaches represent two orientations to time in relation to change, described early on by Lewin:

To determine the properties of a present situation or – to use a medical terminology – to make a diagnosis, one can follow two different procedures: One may base one’s statement on conclusions from history (*anamneses*), or one may use *diagnostic tests of the present* (Lewin, 1943, p. 297).

While critical reflection on event-experiences in the past remains absolutely critical to change, the work of Otto Scharmer has expanded how we might better anticipate the future from our sense of the present. Scharmer moves from past interpretation to future ideation by suggesting “a different stream of time – the future that wants to emerge” (Scharmer, 2007, p. 30), and along with Peter Senge has artfully expanded upon the transformative promise of suspending judgment (Senge et. al, 2004).

**Just in Time**

Our concerns about the past and the future are unrelenting, so much so that most of us are unfamiliar with the intimate nature of the present moment. Right now for instance, you may be thinking about how you will integrate mindfulness practice in your next client meeting. Is it even possible? Or you may be thinking outside of this text completely, attending to a past conflict with a colleague for instance. In reality however, the past and future simply do not exist.

So it still seems that change consultants can do more to demonstrate the transformative power of dwelling mindfully in the present without concurrent reflection. Yorks and Kasl (2002) suggest that those who lead adult learning might re-conceptualize experience as a phenomenological process that necessitates more of an affective ‘experiencing’ of a shared moment:

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

MBC practitioners help leaders set reminders for practicing this transformed relationship with time, by posting reminders nearby or setting hourly notifications on smartphone apps. These cues are intentionally set to remind us of the question: ‘How present am I with the full reality of this moment in time?’ MBC practitioners also encourage clients to ask their teams, particularly when brainstorming, consensus building, and decision making: ‘How is the reality of our situation now overshadowed by the way things were, or how we wish them to be?’
For the Time Being

Nancy Glynn, based in Stuttgart, Germany, is the Managing Director of ATTAIN Partners Ltd. Prior to pioneering MBC across Europe, Nancy had supported five cross-border acquisitions, corporate portfolio restructurings, and change efforts brought about by crises. Nancy shares how she consults within the endless stream of moments that comprise time:

The demand for continual change – before one change ends another begins – has led me to co-develop a leadership program on leading change that incorporates lessons applied from neuroscience and mindfulness. This program is suited to today’s VUCA world – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. It integrates 21st century knowledge from neuroscience and mindfulness with selected change management theories and practices, demonstrating what works and why. This debunks the traditional carrot and stick basis – incentive and consequence – of many change programs to enable mindful, adaptive change.

In addition to engaging and expanding present awareness in leaders and teams, MBC also invites greater awareness concerning our lived experience in organizational culture. When practiced by a critical mass of employees, meditation, yoga, and even tai-chi have been observed to heighten an organization’s esprit de corps.

HOW MINDFULNESS TRANSFORMS

As discussed above, the idea of being in the moment is foreign to the way we typically approach change. Yet it is within these more tranquil moments that the potential for strategic innovation and self-transformation presents itself. It is difficult to put our finger on this process since meditation requires us to let go of the thinking mind. However, since 212 B.C., anecdotal evidence has suggested that mindfulness can serve as a powerful catalyst for transformation. While the notion of transformation-from-within is oft romanticized, the study of Transformative Learning Theory provides great insight regarding the observed processes of forming and transforming meaning (Mezirow et. al, 1990; Mezirow, 2000; Taylor, 2005; Cranton, 2006).

It is difficult to capture the depth of Transformative Learning Theory in a chapter or even a book. Yet it is commonly understood that transformative learning occurs when an individual is faced with a disorienting event, one that does not comport well with their existing assumptions. Since the nature of the mind is largely habit forming, our points of view and resulting behaviors emerge from an existing Habit of Mind, described as “a set of assumptions – broad, generalized, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17). In exploring a fuller, unified approach of Transformative Learning Theory, Taylor and Cranton (2012) suggest that the outcome is generally understood as:
… a deep shift in perspective, leading to more open, more permeable, and better-justified meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1978) – but the ways of getting there can differ depending on the person or people and the context or situation (Taylor & Cranton, 2011, p. 3)

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

**Strategic Discovery**

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

Game-changing innovation often requires more than the thinking mind. From an existential perspective, a life dedicated to calculations alone would have kept Archimedes grinding away for no deeper purpose. Our fixation with management, logistics, and efficiency is still important though if unchecked it can detract from an organization’s ability to evolve. Senge and colleagues (2004) warn:

> As long as our thinking is governed by habit – notably by industrial, ‘machine age’ concepts such as control, predictability, standardization, and ‘faster is better’ – we will continue to re-create institutions as they have been, despite their disharmony with the larger world, and the need of all living systems to evolve (Senge, et al., 2004, p. 9).

Eureka moments are always at hand, and seem to thrive in organizations where members are encouraged to relax the mind before, during, and after problem solving. Mindfulness practice has been observed to be particularly helpful in stimulating discovery when it is practiced just prior to activities that require uncensored gap creativity such as brainstorming, or broadened awareness that is particularly germane to SWOT analysis.
Self Discovery

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

Saddled with a new change initiative, what would happen if a leader first took their very own Archimedean recess? Despite their best attempt, they might find that their mind has worked its way back into the theater of anxiety, this time replaying past experiences with change. Upon viewing, the leader might become disoriented to observe that across each of their past experiences they suffer from similar anxieties, which prompt identical routines, and reproduce the same types of unintended, problematic consequences. They may find their actions be so predictable that they can anticipate and recite their own taglines!

It may simply be a matter of human nature that we typecast ourselves. Leaders who fall subject to this approach can be said to orient change around their static sense of self, just as an entire movie script can be written to suit the character appeal of a familiar actor (think Robert De Niro). There is certainly nothing wrong with this unless one wishes to authentically lead transformation; that is, by first transforming oneself. When in our awareness we recognize this self-serving orientation, it may be best that we leave the theater of identity altogether.

Supra-Self Discovery

It may be said that the most powerful approach to accessing the expansive nature of transformation requires a retreat from the self entirely, versus a reflection on the self. In ancient Japanese practice it is said that the study of the self is to forget yourself (Loy, 1996, p. xv). It so happens that through mindfulness practice, leaders can learn to forget themselves in unforgettable ways.

Monica Pigatto, the Managing Director of Atha Consulting based out of Montevideo, Uruguay, has worked with organizations throughout South America, assisting clients with organizational change by introducing awareness and empowerment in the coordination of actions in teams. Her work centers on the promise of discovering the authentic self:

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

At its deepest root transformation is “the emergence of the Self” (Cranton, 2006, p. 195). As mentioned earlier, having a self is enormously important at an objective level, because it allows us to address our use of self, just as we might continue to tune and play an instrument. Use of self is “… critical in the daily interactions of any helping professional role and especially impactful in change since the responsibilities, ethics, and outcomes affect other’s lives” (Jamieson et al., 2013, p. 127). However, in order to better understand Supra-Self Discovery, or self transcendence, it is helpful to view the self not only as an instrument but as the music.

WAY OF BEING

It has been said that “Managers assert drive and control to get things done; leaders pause to discover new ways of being and achieving” (Cashman, 2012, p. 4). Yet what does it mean to discover a new way of being? This is certainly a debate for the ages. However, when clients are asked to describe how mindfulness practice has influenced their way of being, even across cultures as remote as Germany, Uruguay, the U.S., and London, consultants observe two central features: greater sense of purpose and awareness.

Though it certainly warrants further investigation, it is helpful to enter dialogue with clients regarding their Way of Being as a tension between their existence and awareness. More specifically, in the spirit of Lewin, this equation might suggest that an individual’s Way of Being (WOB) is simultaneously equal to and greater than the relationship between an individual’s Mode of Existence (MOE) and Mode of Awareness (MOA).

\[ WOB \geq MOE + MOA \]

Mode of Existence

A common result of mindfulness practice in the organizational setting is that members become aware that they view work-life and home-life through a divided lens. What does it mean after all, to be one person at home and another at work? This would imply a subconscious, role oriented dissection of self where one is never ‘fully being’ in the organization or at home. This realization is ripe for developmental dialogue around a leader’s sense of purpose or Mode of Existence.

Nancy Glynn recounts coaching a high performing leader through a simple meditation exercise that begins at home, which produced a seamless sense of self between home and the workplace:
This client began with a 2-minute tooth-brushing exercise daily. He began gardening in his new home, differently than in the past, really being mindful and enjoying nature, his senses and surroundings. He became mindful in his interactions with others and aware of his behavior and its effect on others. The results, as described by the client, were that he had become a better team leader and better coach, which led to a stronger team; he reported that he felt more relaxed – despite the stress he anticipated; and felt more in control of his emotions.

As explored earlier in the discussion around transformative learning, it can be said that we often operate off of some Habit of Mind. Assimilating this concept with central tenets of existential psychology (Loy, 1996; May, 1975; Yalom, 1980, 2008), our Habit of Mind regarding ‘being’ is referred to as our Mode of Existence. Irvin Yalom (2008) suggests that to some degree we tend toward one of two modes of existence: one pertaining to preoccupations with the Everyday, and the other pertaining to our deeper sense of being, the Ontological. He accounts that unlike our everyday focus, in an ontological focus:

… one marvels not about the way things are but that they are. To exist in this mode means to be continually aware of being. In this mode, which is often referred to as the ontological (from the Greek ontos, means ‘existence’), one remains mindful of being, not only mindful of the fragility of being but mindful, too… of one’s responsibility for one’s own being (Yalom, 1980, p. 31).

An everyday organizational orientation is important, though MBC practitioners remind leaders that this mode alone does not capture the fuller import of being. Mindfulness practice grants access to this modal tension by inviting individuals to temporarily release the cognitive stronghold of the everyday and practice sustaining attention to being itself, in the moment, and without judgment or striving. The following diagram adapts Yalom’s work (1980) to this discussion, and highlights the distinct tensions that might govern a member’s Mode of Existence during organizational change.

This diagram is also designed in the spirit of Lewin’s concept of the lifespace, where analysis centers on the stimuli that help or hinder one orientation over another. However, unlike Lewin’s (1943) theory, which largely suggests a focus on our interaction with external everyday stimuli, the diagram below invites analysis around a member’s awareness of internal stimuli. Where Lewin borrows from physics to analyze a “multitude of factors influencing an event” (Lewin, 1943, p. 293), this diagram focuses on the multitude of attachments influencing one’s mode of existence. Yalom refers to these driving forces as primal conflicts, which include “repression, denial, displacement, and symbolization” (Yalom, 1980, p. 6).
Mode of Existence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyday</th>
<th>Ontological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How things are</td>
<td>That things are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessions</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>Self Fulfillment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mode of Awareness

Transforming our Way of Being requires that we learn to see ourselves as part of something that is both equal to and greater than our everyday situation and everyday self. In order to see this more clearly it is helpful to understand what it means to continuously operate from a Mode of Awareness. Greater awareness or quality of mind is not characterized as a destination, but rather as something that is always abundant. This assumes that the self is more than an individual agent, but rather a “psychological construct that represents the psyche both conscious and unconscious” (Cranton, 2006, p. 195).

When practicing mindfulness, it is important to recognize this judging quality of mind when it appears and intentionally assume the stance of an impartial witness by reminding yourself to just observe it. When you find the mind judging, you don’t have to stop it from doing that. All that is required is to be aware of it happening. No need to judge the judging and make matters even more complicated for yourself (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 34).

As mode of awareness expands a leader may be better able to recognize the presence of anxieties, fears, and personal attachments. Adopting the attitude of beginners mind, MBC practitioners coach leaders to sustain and expand awareness. Sustained attention “refers to the ability to maintain a state of vigilance over prolonged periods of time (Parasuraman, 1998; Posner & Rothbart, 1992, referenced in Bishop et. al, 2004). As explored earlier, this is markedly different from having a static sense of self-awareness. In sustaining awareness the emphasis is not on judgments such as values, prescriptive behaviors, or narratives. In being aware there is no emphasis. Tan (2012), an early engineer who introduced mindfulness to Google suggests:
Use your trained attention to create high-resolution perception into your own cognitive and emotive processes. With that, you become able to observe your thought stream and process of emotion with high clarity, and to do so objectively from a third-person perspective (Tan, 2012, p. 7).

Insofar as organizational dialogue toward change requires openness for “changing and being changed” (Anderson et al, 2004), it may be said that MBC practitioners challenge their clients to do the seemingly impossible: sustain suspended judgment. This is akin to patiently remaining on the very first rung of the Ladder of Inference (Argyris et. al, 1985), where awareness is intentionally directed to the existence of data sans interpretation. The focus is on what Kant famously referred to as the thing in itself (Kant, 2003).

Before a change kickoff meeting a leader may be coached to remain aware of the limits she places on her broader scope of awareness in the boardroom – as difficult as it may be - without judging those limits as good or bad. As she enters the room, rather than anxiously focusing on what she plans to deliver or how she has been perceived in the past, she can practice noticing rather than being consumed by her judgment.

Breon Michel’s consultation efforts pay careful attention to the ways in which members judge themselves and feel lacking in relationship with the organization’s vision. Breon shares:

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

The following diagram, adapted from the work of Kabat-Zinn (1990) for this discussion, demonstrates some of the more predominant tensions that arise from our Mode of Awareness.
Mahatma Gandhi is often quoted as saying, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” These words were most likely never uttered by Gandhi. Instead, many believe that this phrase was an interpretation of his original observation, “As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him” (Gandhi, 1958, p. 241). When we take a closer look, these words seem to imply something more than modeling or practicing change. Gandhi may have actually been advocating that you change the be you wish to see in the world. In order to do so it may be helpful for clients, consultants, and organizational members to reconceptualize their Way of Being.

The model provided below is admittedly a reduction of this concept. However it is a helpful starting point – in combination with mindfulness practice – for entering critical dialogue around a member’s sense of purpose and awareness in association with organizational change. The poles present in this model do not represent an ‘either or’ proposition, where one is either preoccupied with the everyday or purely consumed in ontological focus. Instead, it is meant to portray a holistic tensionality, “… centrally marked by both a complementary and contradictory quality that renders it inherently fluid and dynamic” (Stewart et. al, 1994, p. 27). Consultants may utilize this model as a centerpiece for dialogue with leaders about how they – and their members - can access their way of being through mindfulness practice in order to reduce
anxieties, let go of attachments, free up creative faculties, improve decision making, utilize expertise more wisely, and find a unique sense of fulfillment.

**Way of Being Model**

![Way of Being Model Diagram]

**Way of Being Tensions**

This model illustrates four tensions which, in any given moment or context, members embody a sense of purpose and awareness. It is important to underscore that these do not represent a static typology or style. The focus is less on the labels and aims, and more on the transitions between. Mindfulness practice followed by reflective discourse around these tensions can help clients and consultants better understand how they relate with those who resemble similar and dissimilar Ways of Being. These tensions include: Lacking, Habituating, Transforming, and Transcending.

**Lacking**

A member who, for the time being, embodies a Lacking Way of Being may be described as anxiously preoccupied with their larger purpose in life. Their central worry may be that they lack purpose or even greater raison d'être in the organizational setting. Resulting anxieties including guilt may distract from everyday tasks associated with their position. This attachment may also draw their attention away from the day-to-day operations comprising organizational change. In other words they may not be fully alert (i.e. mindful) regarding the everyday operations of the organization.
As leaders they may be able to espouse what it means to be part of something bigger but at a subconscious level they experience a sense of personal hypocrisy. Introducing mindfulness practice that highlights these sensitivities must be done with a great sense of care, as those who primarily experience themselves as perpetually ‘lacking’ may experience a sense of shock that is too overwhelming to serve as a catalyst for self transformation. This need for sensitivity underscores how important it is for MBC practitioners to undergo intensive mindfulness training with reputable organizations such as the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Healthcare, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

When it comes to organizational change, those who operate through this way of being may be largely unaware of how they transmit this contagion of lacking through everyday interaction. Through mindfulness practice it may become apparent that this way of being can result in a ‘walking on eggshells’ approach to change. This can result in a passionate loathing of performance indicators associated with successful change efforts. As a result of this half-wakeful relationship with the everyday, these members may also be guided in recognizing how their way of being may result in unintentional mistakes and missed practical opportunities.

**Habituating**

A member who, for the time being, embodies a *Habituating Way of Being* may conceptualize their awareness as part and parcel with everyday tasks. Their attention may tend to privilege finite, objective, measurable, everyday aspects of organizational life. They may also find it easy and preferable to define and focus intently upon tangible problems, rather than investigating the deeper premises that frame these problems.

As leaders, they may demonstrate a preoccupation with with fixing what is broken and maintaining what is not broken in line with the status quo; the catch is that they may be unaware of the paradigm from which they operate. In doing so, they may be prone to automating strategies, goals, tasks, and measurement of ‘real world’ success.

When introduced to mindfulness practice, it may be difficult for these members to conceptualize this practice as an ongoing process or something that can translate into a Way of Being. Instead they may prefer to engage in regular practice as a static collection of interventions that serve existing aims, and place priority on measuring results from a purely behaviorist perspective. When introducing mindfulness practice, it may be particularly useful to draw their attention to the continuity of awareness and the concept of non-striving.

**Transforming**

A member who, for the time being, embodies a *Transforming Way of Being* may be more fully aware of their everyday assumptions and practices a greater awareness when addressing the premises and anxieties associated with organizational change strategy. They may also be better at identifying *streams of consciousness* for critical reflection, dialogue, and continuous change.
However these members may overemphasize critical reflection upon everyday orientations, habits, and behaviors in the organization. As a result, there is greater room to explore deeper assumptions pertaining to being and time.

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

When introducing mindfulness, it is particularly helpful to debrief meditation sessions by focusing on the nature of judgments that enter their field of awareness. It is also useful to discuss what it means to release assumptions altogether, as we might transcend limits and boundaries we construct as ‘products’ of critical reflection.

**Transcending**

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

Leaders who tend toward this way of being are also likely more interested in the questions than the answers, thereby exemplifying beginners mind. In both purpose-driven and everyday discussions with others they might draw attention to instances where individuals and teams get ahead of themselves, trapped in the past, or being stifled by attachments that cause suffering. They may also tend to be transparent in their practice of awareness and favor both realities of ‘now’ and the measurements of ‘before and after.’

When guiding mindfulness practice with these members, it is useful to focus on the practice of sustaining awareness, accepting polarities, and helping those with dissimilar Ways of Being expand their awareness and recognize the ever-present potential for transcending one’s self. They may do so by introducing goals that require ‘reach’, affectionately known in the change literature as *Big Hairy Audacious Goals* (Collins, 1996). It is also helpful to follow mindfulness practice with reflection around how the organization can transcend its own industry.
This notion, akin to *Blue Ocean Strategies* (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005), speaks to the visionary nature of a Transcending Way of Being. In many ways, it also resembles Collins’s description of the counterintuitive success enjoyed by *Level 5 Leaders* (2001), who are described as individuals who build “enduring greatness through a paradoxical combination of personal humility plus professional will” (Collins, 2001, p. 70).

**OBSERVED PATTERNS OF MBC INFLUENCE**

MBC practitioners are beginning to notice a number of beneficial patterns that may be associated with their approach, pertaining to change readiness, commitment, and implementation. The framework on the following page is provided to highlight these emerging observations, which seem to warrant investigation, including:

1. Common anxieties and attachments associated with components of transformational change; particularly those presented in the *Burke-Litwin Model* (1990), including: leader, environment, organizational culture, performance, and strategy.

2. Observed transformations in these anxieties and attachments, which seem to result from mindfulness practices that lead to an enhanced understanding of Mode of Existence and Mode of Awareness.

3. Healthier orientations to transformational change, which seem to be related to these transformations, including a greater sense of: gratitude, belonging, oneness, presence, organizational consciousness, faith, fulfillment, purpose, and freedom.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformational Components</th>
<th>Anxieties</th>
<th>Attachments</th>
<th>Transformations</th>
<th>Resolutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Uselessness</td>
<td>Drive Being Heroic Specialness Legacy</td>
<td>Existence: Selfish to Selfless</td>
<td>COMPASSION &amp; GRATITUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meaninglessness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness: Needing to Need-Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Termination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>Manipulation of Objects and Systems</td>
<td>Existence: Separate to Connected</td>
<td>BELONGING &amp; ONENESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helplessness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness: Finite to Infinite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Despair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Org Culture</td>
<td>Marginalization</td>
<td>Espoused Values, Expectations, and Behaviors</td>
<td>Existence: Lost to Familiar</td>
<td>PRESENCE &amp; CONSCIOUSNESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness: Singular to Universal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Org &amp; Individual Performance</td>
<td>Deficit</td>
<td>Measurement and Achievement</td>
<td>Existence: Conformed to Courageous</td>
<td>FAITH &amp; FULFILLMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness: Automatic to Intentional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expiration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision Mission Strategy</td>
<td>Absurdity</td>
<td>Fixed Direction</td>
<td>Existence: Rigid to Flexible</td>
<td>PURPOSE &amp; FREEDOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Futility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness: Confined to Expansive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissonance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leadership: Compassion & Gratitude

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

Attachments can corrupt all levels of an organization. Our need for a job and financial security, for example, may prevent us from speaking out against unethical conduct in the workplace. We know what we ought to do, but our attachments prevent us from doing it, so we condone – and therefore support – bad leadership (Nair, 1994, p. 38).

In order to facilitate a more mindful form of change leadership, exemplified through heightened compassion and gratitude, Nancy Glynn introduces Mindful Listening techniques which couples two individuals and tasks them with reflecting on tenets of mindfulness during and following a listening exercise. Nancy shares “They realize how little anyone listens, a common symptom of organizational ineffectiveness.” Nancy also coaches executives in Mindful Questioning techniques, illustrating how questions may be asked non-judgmentally, open, and frank, in order to help them see the problematic symptoms of organizational culture.

Mindfulness is deeply personal and may have a profound influence on practice. Pulling from personal experience in undergoing cancer therapy, Nancy shares that the key to mindfulness practice is igniting and drawing upon the humanity in herself and others. The humanity that Nancy refers to suggests that we strive to relate to the authentic voice of others by acknowledging the nature and influence of our own attachments and anxieties. Nancy has woven this notion into the simple yet profound vision of her organization: To ignite humanity and see what it can do.

Environment: Belonging & Oneness

In practicing what she preaches, Monica Pigatto reminds herself to be present, without judging herself and others. Monica shares that in order to sense belonging and oneness in an organization we would do well to reduce the anxiety of feeling threatened by stimuli in the environment, which can aggravate worries such as powerlessness, helplessness, and despair.

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

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

**Culture: Presence & Organizational Consciousness**

Breon Michel was recently asked to provide feedback to a military instructor to help her advance to the next level of training. As the unit was transitioning to a ‘culture of initiative’, the aim was to help the instructor feel better equipped to deliver the program on her own. Breon recalls that the process for instilling mindfulness required the ability to be mindful. In particular, Breon practices mindfulness in order to more effectively record and deliver feedback. Breon details the challenge and payoff of remaining aware in this process:

The task of recording feedback required paying attention to my delivery, content, interaction with students, and body language, which called for precise attention to detail while not losing sight of bigger picture. Without mindfulness, it would have been easy to focus too intently on the details. Staying aware of what was going on internally helped me remain relaxed and open to taking in the totality of the experience.

Perhaps one of the greatest assets of using mindfulness in this setting is to deliver feedback in a way that is attuned to the receiver, ensuring that there is plenty of space for listening, reflection and absorption. Commonly, feedback is uncomfortable and one-sided, but integrating mindfulness created a space for understanding, courageousness, and curiosity.

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

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

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

Performance: Faith & Fulfillment

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Strategy: Purpose & Freedom**

We tend to immediately judge ourselves against both external and internal standards. Yet a healthy sense of purpose is one that is balanced with a sense of freedom. Mindfulness is an acceptance of what is, which not only expands our freedom but also our willingness to create. Nancy shares that as a consultant:

I myself am more accepting of ‘what is’ in the culture without judging, and enable leaders to take this productive view allowing for all parties to see more clearly, with fewer clouded lenses. In workshops, mindfulness is woven in to enable clarity, acceptance and motivation. I encourage teams that I am working with to apply tenets of mindfulness in their interactions with one another and to apply this in team meetings, making people keenly aware of problems and better able to address them.

I use business language to guide them in these practices and refer to research, giving them a sense of legitimacy in applying new and effective ways of interacting that depart from the more typical transactional relationships. Through Mindful Listening Techniques and Mindful Questioning – non-judgmental, open and frank – clients begin to see the problematic symptoms of organizational culture.

Most clients find this absolutely fascinating and liberating because it removes the sense of self blame or inadequateness. From there I ensure them that small steps can make a difference and it works for everyone, making it very accessible. I then discuss some practices known to work and see what they would like to start with; something that suits his or her character.
CONCLUSION

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

REFERENCES


Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. (2001). *How the way we talk can change the way we work: Seven languages for transformation*. Jossey-Bass


University of Pennsylvania website (2013). www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu


