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Increasing Employee Performance and Wellbeing using Meditation and Mindfulness at Work

How does the control of our thoughts and emotions directly influence our
daily life.

Bachelor's Thesis

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Abstract

Stress has been a central concern for companies in recent years and an increasing number of techniques are emerging to reduce it and improve our quality of life. Recent discoveries in epigenetics have revealed the importance of controlling our thoughts and emotions, particularly through meditation and mindfulness practices, in order to improve our mental and physical health. Given that the subject is very recent and that skepticism about the expression of spirituality at work is widespread, this thesis attempts to raise awareness of the immense potential of these new methods with the help of scientific medical data collected in recent years in epigenetics research. Two objectives are pursued in this respect. Firstly, this thesis will discuss the transition to a new form of organization that takes into account individuals as a whole, and meets the physical and mental needs of employees. Secondly, This work will provide scientific evidence that controlling our thoughts and emotions through meditation reduces stress reactions and has a direct measurable effect on our physical and mental health.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the working world has experienced an explosion of cases of chronic stress and burnout at the workplace. Stress and ill being seem to have become a normal and accepted phenomenon that every employee experiences on a daily basis. Most people try to live and cope with this constant pressure as well as they can. (Florea & Florea, 2016, p. 28-29) This type of work environment has serious consequences for our long-term mental and physical health if we do not ensure that we get out of this constant state of emergency.

It is legitimate to ask why there are so many cases of disease nowadays and how is it that our immune system is so weakened. Why has cancer become one of the most prevalent diseases of our time? How did people treat themselves before the development of modern medicine?

The latest research that seeks to solve this problem has explored many paths and one area in particular, epigenetics, has addressed the question of the influence of our mind on our body along with the link between these two entities. Epigenetics studies the nature of the mechanisms that cause a change in the expression of our genes, without altering their nucleotide sequences. (Dispenza, 2012, p. 138-139) In other words, what are the external and internal factors that cause our body to adapt and modify itself according to the information it receives. More precisely, these researches have discovered the impact of our thoughts, beliefs and emotions on our health. It is not only the fact that illnesses start in our minds because of constant exposure to stressful situations, negative emotions and toxic thoughts, but the fact that it all starts in our mind. (Lipton, 2010, p. 35-36) Human beings have a greater healing power over their bodies than they believe. Hence the importance of studying these phenomena in a more precise way as it represents an immense potential for healing. Buddha (n.d.) sums it up very well by saying: "Every human being is the author of his own health or disease."

For decades, traditional medicine treated the body as a physical machine whose symptoms were insignificant. We healed because we treated the problem as we would treat a physical machine: by pressing the buttons that did not work properly. (Chopra & Tanzi, 2013, p. 135) New discoveries in quantum physics have redefined our understanding of energy. We realize that in reality, there is nothing physical but that everything is energy. This new understanding of the world allows us to shift our perception that something is solid and permanent to the fact that things have the potential to change and therefore heal. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 203-208) By assuming

that there is a mind-body connection, we go against traditional medicine and give back to the mind, symptoms and emotions their central place and their true role as indicators of our state of being. (Hamilton, 2009, p. 37) More precisely, we postulate that it is possible to deal with the negative consequences of stress beforehand and thus strengthen our immune system by already working on our own energy, i.e. our emotions and thoughts.

The goal pursued is to discover to what extent it is possible to regain control of our biology and prevent our body from different diseases with the help of our thoughts, this invisible energy that comes from our mind and that shapes our body and our relationship to the world that we need to master. To achieve this, we assume that real mental and emotional work must be done. Meditation allows us to work on our mind and our perception of the world, in order to modify the information and signals sent to the body so that it can readjust the functioning of its cells. Individuals, through their ability to modify their environments and their perceptions of that environment, have the power to control their genetic activities. (Lipton, 2010, p. 85-86) Symptoms and stressors have an essential role to play and are there to wake us up and make us aware that this work needs to be done.

Meditation is an experimental practice that has existed for millennia and is part of most religious and philosophical practices in the world. Our mind is constantly restless and saturated with limiting parasitic thoughts. The meditative state allows us to calm this constant flow of thought and to refocus on ourselves. Meditation stimulates the parasympathetic or relaxation of the nervous system, and this is what allows healing. (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012, p. 192-194)

This thesis analyzes the work of leading scientists, doctors and professors in order to verify the hypothesis on a body-mind connection and to what extent can we influence our bodies using our minds in order to know what is really possible when it comes to healing.

The methodology of this thesis is to answer this question on the basis of academic publications and research on the mind-body relationship. First, an overview of the relevant facts needed to understand the importance of caring about the well-being of employees is given. Next, the meaning of consciousness and the role it plays in our daily lives is discussed. Third, the neuroscience literature on the existence of a mind-body connection is reviewed in an effort to understand how our thoughts, beliefs and emotions influence our biology. And fourth, more concrete ways and tools are developed to begin to effect change and work on our inner environment, including the practice of meditation and mindfulness.

2. Current labour market situation and work trends

The working world is constantly changing. Companies are rethinking the way they treat their employees and looking for new ways to organize their work. Employees are increasingly demanding, they change job more frequently and are looking for companies that offer them a pleasant working environment. It followed, a kind of talent war that forces companies to adapt quickly to market changes in order to attract the best employee and thus achieve the best possible performance. This evolution brings a lot of flexibility and new opportunities but also new challenges. How can we succeed in motivating these employees, empowering them and ensuring their well-being at the same time? What are the trends to follow and what should be offered to employees in order to remain an attractive employer in the eyes of stakeholders? What is essential?

2.1. From traditional to new business paradigms

Over the past few years, there has been a gradual transformation in the conventional and reductionist scientific vision of business that has dominated Western culture since the 17th century. These changes are visible on several scales: ecological awareness, increased influence of the women's movement, increase in collaboration between business partners, a growing interest in meaning and connection to deep truth and spirituality. The labor market and the way employees are viewed are also affected by this shift in thinking. (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004, p. 249-250) As a consequence, firms can no longer consider "employees" as "workers" who only bring their own manpower. Knowledge workers have become the most vital asset in the knowledge society. (Ho, 2011, p. 3) Knowledge workers are workers who use several types of knowledge in a combined way. They mainly mobilize their cognitive, relational and communicative faculties, in collaboration with other workers and/or machines within the framework of their professional activity. As mentioned above, these employees are a real resource and a major asset because they have the ability to learn and adapt quickly to changing market conditions. (Murgia & Maestripieri & Armano, 2016, p. 1)

This new desire to consider the well being of employees is not just a retort, but is reflected in corporate budgets as well. Despite the fact that the 2008 recession hit heavily the workplace training industry, the industry has rebounded and demand continued to grow since 2009. By 2018, the size of this market was estimated at US\$366.2 billion. (Statista, 2019)

This increase in training and well-being spending can be explained by a reaction of companies to the alarming and continuous increase of workplace stress and burnout, which are pervasive problems that affect employee performance and personal health (Edler & Nidich, 2014, p. 19-21). The term burnout is used to refer to a state of emotional exhaustion, negative attitudes towards others and dissatisfaction with his/her own work performance. (Statista, 2017) Exhaustion is the key concept behind burnout syndrome. People feel overwhelmed and realize that their emotional and physical resources are exhausted. A second characteristic also emerges regarding burnout, namely: withdrawal. This withdrawal takes the form of cynicism, negative reactions, insensitivity or excessive detachment from different aspects of their work. (González-Morales, 2012, p. 44) This change in the employee's behavior is not without consequences. It is directly related to increased absenteeism and job turnover, alcohol and drug abuse and, which, in the long term, reduced work performance and contributes to the development of a negative atmosphere and energy at work. These effects do not only have an impact on the person suffering from burnout but on the whole team. (Edler & Nidich, 2014, p. 19-20)

All companies want to avoid these kinds of negative effects and problems within their teams, because, it has been proven that companies with high turnover rates are underperforming compared to their rivals. This brings us back to the importance of taking care of a company's human capital and creating and developing competitive advantages with it. (Hatch & Dyer, 2004, p. 1155-1159)

Employee burnout is not a personal problem or an indicator of incompetence, but is caused by ineffective leadership and imperfect organizational practices. Therefore, it is a real challenge that must be addressed at the organizational level. As mentioned above, the budget allocated to employee well being increases from year to year. But how can we explain the fact that the quotas for people suffering from permanent stress and burnout are not decreasing? Would it be possible to find new ways to allow employees to reduce their stress and thus increase their level of well being permanently? Is there a more efficient and less expensive way to achieve those goals?

When we analyze more precisely the different statistics regarding the means deployed to cope with stress, we notice the emergence of new practices of meditation and mindfulness (Shonin & Van Gordon, 2015, p. 899-900). However, the percentage of companies that use these practices remains low. Most of the measures implemented by companies aim only to improve the physical health of employees, such as preventive health risk screening and vaccinations, and health risk assessment, exercise programs, etc. This is already a good start, but it is not enough. In the United States, only 21% of employees had the opportunity to participate in meditation or mindfulness

programs, and this number is even lower in Europe (Statista 2019) The Harvard Business School studied and compared the performance of 10 companies with a strong internal culture and spirituality with 10 companies with a weak corporate culture over a period of 11 years and noted a dramatic correlation between the strength of an organization's corporate culture and its profitability. Some companies with strong spirituality surpassed others by 400 to 500% in terms of net earnings, return-on-investment, and shareholder value. (Thompson, 2000, p. 2)

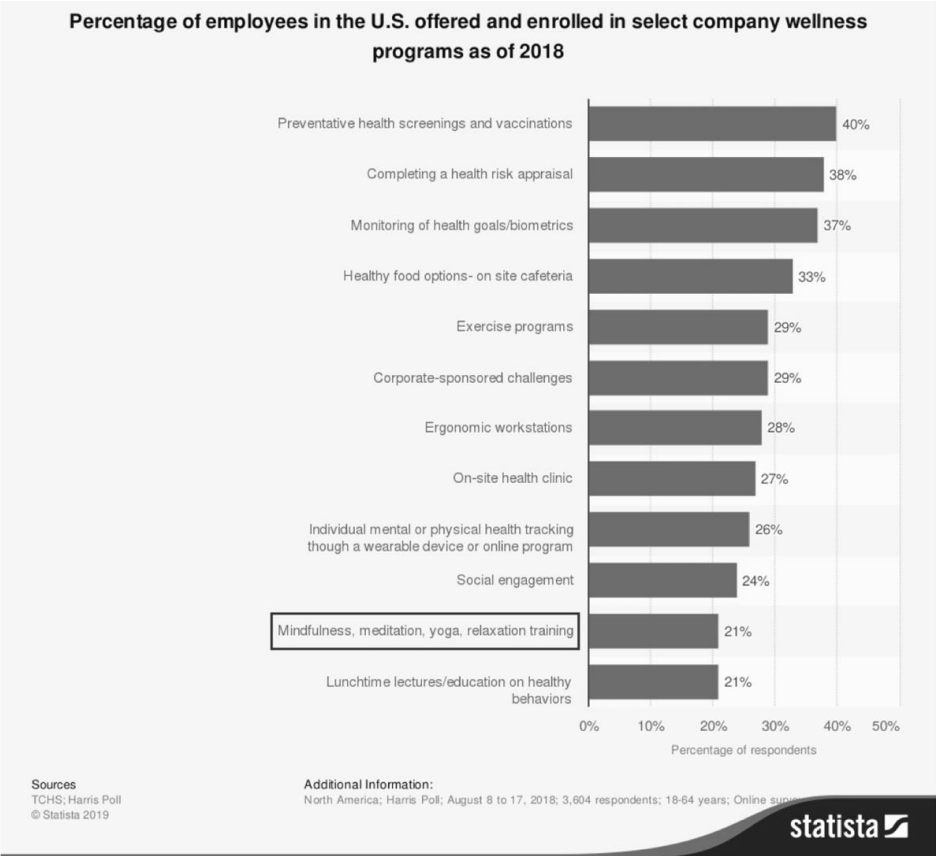


Figure 1:Percentage of employee in the U.S offered in company wellness programs in 2018. Source: Training Industry, 2019.

These statistics and studies make it possible to highlight the various challenges that companies are currently facing. Firms have to care for their employees and thus strengthen the company's culture and become more efficient. However, most companies lack information and do not know exactly which methods are the most effective to implement. The will is there but this new field remains very unclear. As previously mentioned, there is considerable empirical evidence that demonstrates the importance of workplace spirituality in creating an organizational culture in which employees feel valued and are therefore more effective. However, it remains to be

understood how such a spirited culture and organization can be constructed. (Garcia-Zamo, 2003, p. 362-363)

3. Invest in your human capital

One of the most effective ways to address these new challenges is to focus on the training, education and well being of its employees. As stated above, markets change rapidly and force companies to adapt quickly to new market conditions. In light of this, employees are the main levers to be used and optimized, as they are the cores, the driving force of most businesses. In contrast to internal structures, that are generally designed to last and are slower to change, human capital is more flexible and responsive if it has been accustomed to do so. Employees are able to bring this speed of adaptation to the market if they are used to rethinking their habits, creating new ones and seizing opportunities. (Hatch & Dyer, 2004, p. 1155-1159) It is therefore necessary to address this aspect and put in place the necessary measures, which train employees to work this way. These measures must in turn be incorporated into the culture of the company so that it becomes an automatism.

Consequently, in order to achieve sustainable change, it appears central to be concerned about the people in your team, their way of thinking, their vision of things and work and their wellbeing. It is essential to look at and work on the thoughts and emotions of employees in order to develop a more dynamic work environment. An employee who feels good and constantly thinks about acting in the best interests of the organization is a valuable resource. This is the ultimate goal that we are seeking to achieve, as it will subsequently increase the company's overall performance innovatively, financially and humanely. We therefore see a first essential point appearing, namely to train and accustom employees to work on their way of thinking and their perception of work. This first point is still a little vague but it will be developed and illustrated throughout this work. (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012, p. 189)

The starting point for initiating this process and developing a corporate culture that uses the full potential of its employees is a shift in thinking from command-and-control to coordinate-and cultivate. (Malone, 2004, p. 11) i.e. to establish bases and a structure that allows each employee to manage his/her work in an autonomous and responsible way and at the same time to feel connected and respected within the company for which he/she works. In this way, the company's human capital will be transformed into a real long-term competitive advantage.

3.1. Human Capital seen as competitive advantage

Bill Gates once said: "In the long run, your human capital is your main base of competition." (n.d.) This quote puts people back at the center of concerns and highlights the essential aspect of caring for these employees, motivating them, including them in the company processes and decisions so that they feel connected to the company's purpose. His vision and message is clear: Investing in people is the key to success.

Today, companies must compete for their survival through continuous improvement and innovation at all levels to maintain their competitive advantages. That is, companies need innovation and breakthroughs are generated and carried by the employees themselves. (Ho, 2011, p. 2)

Most business economists generally use resource-based theory to explain differences in performance between different organizations within the same market. The resource-based view theory is one of the most influential theories that highlights and explains the sustainable differences in how successful companies perform by identifying the factors that influence company resources allocation. (Campbell & al., 2012, p. 377-379) The basic idea is that a company that has invested and developed valuable and rare resources can generate a competitive advantage that will allow them to differentiate themselves from their competitors and therefore leads to superior overall performance. For a company to be able to maintain and develop a sustainable competitive advantage, its resources have to be valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable so that competitors cannot replicate them. (Barney, 1991, p. 102)

This is where human capital comes into play. In this particular context, human capital can make a difference because of its inimitability based on its intangible, company-specific and socially complex nature. Each employee and each team is unique and brings with it its different strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, having qualified, motivated and passionate employee is essential to a company's success. For this reason, it is crucial to put in place effective strategies to continually improve employee skills and motivate them. (Ho, 2011, p. 3) In recent years, we have seen an increasing flowering of new methods and research that recognize that there is still enormous potential to be tapped in terms of employees and the way they are treated within the corporate culture. This can be done by creating a pleasant working environment, warm offices, plants or other infrastructure, but also by stimulating the employees intellectually and emotionally. This

second way goes one step further and addresses the inner needs of every human being and it is precisely this way that will be deepened in this work.

Each company has its own way of looking after and enhancing its human capital. There are as many different ways as there are companies. Companies can increase the size of their human capital by hiring staff from external sources. However, when an organization acquires human capital from one of its rivals, it surely appropriates some of its know-how, but this process will generate additional adjustment costs in order to incorporate this new employee and ensure that he/she corresponds to his/her new work environment. (Hatch & Dyer, 2004, p. 1156)

A second option is to develop superior human resources through internal investments in employee training and education. The purpose of this second alternative is not necessarily to increase the number of employees but rather to focus on existing employees and help them develop new skills and use their full potential. The advantage with this second option is that, internal development results in a human capital that is specific to the company and therefore, inimitable since it corresponds precisely to the need of the organization and has been created for a specific purpose. This team of trained employees will therefore constitute a sustainable competitive advantage that will allow the organization to develop under the best possible conditions. (Campbell & al., 2012, p. 390-391) The success of organizations is nowadays essentially built upon individual's speed in learning. Speed of learning has proven to be an essential element with regard to the rapidity with which markets change. Companies need to have employees who know how to learn and who can quickly retool to face new challenges. In addition, these people will also have the resources to cope and manage the stress that is part of our daily lives in the modern world. Stress is a natural response to improve one's efficiency in dealing with demanding and competitive situations. However, over a long period of time, stress affects the productivity, physical health and mental health of individuals. It is therefore fundamental to know how to manage stress. (Ho, 2011, p. 3-5)

When you have formed a team, though smaller in size, but that works, that has optimal dynamism and motivation, this good energy will be transmitted within the company. This will also form a solid basis for the acquisition of future employees who will be welcomed into a team with a soul. It's a self-reinforcing process because this employee will transfer their learning, and set an example for new employees. (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012, p. 189-190) It is precisely this point, i.e. the internal development methods for the company's employees, which will be addressed in this work.

3.2. The importance of developing this competitive advantage

Hence, this area is particularly important because human capital, as stated above, is a lever that can enable companies to outperform. Employee commitment, energy, responsibility and creativity are among the key factors that will determine the future success of companies. With the rapid evolution of technology and the progressive globalization of the market, traditional organizational management is no longer considered as an appropriate strategy in this highly competitive business environment. (Ho, 2011, p. 3-4) The needs and wishes of employees are changing, they want to adopt new behavior and work patterns that allow them to engage heart and soul (Cornerstone OnDemand, 2018).

Changes are already visible at several levels in many companies. Managers increasingly recognize the importance of providing challenging jobs, participatory decision-making, gratitude and recognition at work, cohesive teams and non-monetary rewards as essential components of employee well being. (Hatch & Dyer, 2004, p. 1173) They are also beginning to test certain methods themselves such as meditation or mindfulness and enjoy the benefits of these changes (Doerr, 2018, p. 11). To give examples, Google, Adobe and the Gate foundation have introduced OKRs into their culture to engage their employees in a meaningful way. OKR means “Objectives Key Results” and is a collaborative goal-setting protocol for companies, teams and individuals invented by Andy Grove, one of the founders of Intel in 1983. This method was then popularized by Google through John Doerr and Larry Page in order to meet deadlines during the strong growth of their company. OKR refers to the combination of overall company objectives (Objective) with concrete tasks and results within a given period of time (Key Results). OKRs are first and foremost a communication tool. They are designed as a tool for communication and negotiation within each team. They then provide everyone with visibility and clarity, while enabling them to define meaningful objectives. They also allow employees to think about the goals they want to achieve both personally and professionally. In this way, they keep their goals in mind and stay focused on them. In order to properly implement the OKRs, it is necessary to understand that their purpose is to generate exchanges on the company's priorities and agree on the best way to achieve them. It is sometimes difficult for organizations and HR departments to recognize the importance of this communication. And yet, in an economy where collaboration and collective intelligence are at the heart of value creation, the impact of the exchange between employees and their managers is immense. Communicating with these employees already brings together a wealth of information specific to each individual and also makes it easier to create a culture that listens to employees and responds to their needs. (Doerr, 2018, p. 22-26) Therefore OKRs are a good example of the

many ways, which aims to include people in a team and to create a sense of community and mutual support.

All these reflections are aimed at a common goal: attracting and caring for employees in their company. Walter Wriston (n.d.) sums up this very well when he says: "Human capital will go where it is wanted, and will stay where it is well treated. It cannot be driven, it can only be attracted". Strengthening human capital and changing culture and mindset will be the major future challenge for any company wishing to remain competitive simply because the value of a company is a function of the way financial and intellectual capital is managed by human capital. (Campbell & al., 2012, p. 376) The question of how to attract and retain talent within its team is becoming one of today's main preoccupations.

These few examples certainly illustrate a growing interest in these new practices, but they represent only a small number of cases. This remains an area that is currently under-exploited but whose effects can have a significant impact on performance. Awareness is necessary to enable individuals to gain confidence in themselves and their work and to redirect their attention to the objectives to be achieved and not to the problems to be avoided. This vision and optimism will subsequently increase their performance as well. After the awareness work, it will be a question of showing them how, i.e. with which tools they can develop themselves personally and find the best way to strengthen their inner environment/mind. In this way, they will have confidence in what they are doing and will be encouraged to surpass themselves and fight for their goals as well as those of the company. (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004, p. 259)

However, in spite of the fact that several studies such as the one mentioned above has shown that by using meditation and mindfulness, it is possible to improve employee performance, there still seems to be a lot of skepticism about these practices and it is for this reason that only a minority of companies are interested in these topics. (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 87) It is therefore legitimate to ask why companies do not focus more on individuals and establish themselves as worthy organizations that pursue higher goals than the mere commercial objective. The following chapter focuses on the main reasons why companies are sometimes reluctant to set up meditation and mindfulness and on the challenges of implementing practices to increase spirituality in the workplace.

4. The concept of consciousness

One of the problems that we often find is that companies do not take into account the importance of the minds and souls of these employees. Companies and management often have other priorities and don't free up time for their teams and for looking after them as individuals as a whole. There is often not enough communication behind strict internal hierarchies and employees are not asked enough about what they really need and want. As a result, employees do not feel emotionally connected to the company and find it difficult to identify with the corporate culture. (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012, p. 190-192) Linking an employee to the company's mission and vision is first and foremost about touching them emotionally and giving them recognition and an opportunity to express themselves orally and spiritually.

4.1. Consciousness explained

As the first principle of the hermetic philosophy says: "All is spirit". Science has long rejected the idea of any consciousness or spirit, because it considered it as too vague. It is true that the word consciousness is widely used and takes on different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. (Dispenza, 2012, p. 73) In the context of this work, when the term "consciousness" is mentioned, reference is made to a fundamental intelligence present in each of us. As a piece of life, as a body, you are a certain amount of atoms. And there's a fundamental intelligence that puts all these parts together in a particular way to make life. There is a deep and unimaginable level of intelligence that can transform simple things like air into life. If the air stops, life goes away. (Sadhguru, 2015) Doctor Joe Dispenza (2012, p. 75-80) gives a very nice definition of the concept of consciousness. In fact, it is this concept that is at the basis of all his reflections. It affirms that there is an intelligence, an invisible consciousness, in each one of us that gives life. It sustains us, maintains us, protects us and heals us at every moment. It creates nearly 100 trillion specialized cells (from only 2), it makes the hearts of living beings beat hundreds of thousands of times a day, and it can organize hundreds of thousands of chemical reactions in a single cell every second. At the time, he thought that if this intelligence was real and if it demonstrated such amazing abilities in a deliberate, conscious and loving way, individuals could turn their attention away from the outside world and begin to go inside and connect with it, develop a relationship with it. This process of connection with our inner world requires an absolute presence. This experience is what we more commonly refer to as mindfulness. That is, being present in the moment, without thinking or regretting the past, without worrying about the future, without obsessing about the conditions of the external life, without concentrating on the pains or symptoms. As in any

relationship we have with someone, we all know when someone is present or not with us. Because consciousness is awareness, awareness is attention, and attention is being present and noticing, this consciousness is aware of when we are present and when we are not. For this reason, we must be totally true and present when we interact with this mind. Our presence must correspond to its presence, our will to its will, and our mind to its mind. The ultimate goal is to reach this coherence, this synchronicity. (Dispenza, 2014, p. 30)

Consequently, the body has the ability to heal itself, however it is necessary to apply its knowledge of mindfulness to create a true healing experience. As part of this work, this process can help employees work on and improve their reactions to stress and pressure, in order to counteract the harmful biological effects that cortisol has on our bodies. The only reason you experience life and existence is because you are conscious. If you are unconscious, you do not know whether you are alive or dead. (Hamilton, 2009, p. 110) However, we often don't realize this and are content to live our lives like a machine. Hence the importance of taking this time and experiencing mindfulness in order to begin to realize that we are alive.

When individuals are strongly identified with their physical bodies, the limits of what they are and what they are not are distinctly clear. In this state, they feel like a separate existence. This state of mind and way of looking at one's life means that they are in survival mode. When we identify ourselves as a body, the limits of who we are are set at 100%. We then speak of a need to feel connected again with a greater whole. (Ross, 2017) We all have this need more or less strongly expressed this connection. This is also reflected in the growing interest in alternative medicine and the growing need for meaning and connection to a deeper truth. The world is changing fast and people's minds are lost and are looking for meaning in it all. This search for meaning includes an awakening of the mind. (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004, p. 249)

“All of us are conscious to some extent. The question is to what degree you are conscious” (Sadhguru, 2015) Consciousness is there all the time. We are alive and that means we are conscious. However, most people have only minimal access to this consciousness. It is therefore necessary to develop this access and to rise ourselves up to experience it. As your access improves, your sense of boundaries expands. So the key is to focus on how we can elevate ourselves to expand our boundaries, see new opportunities and gain that confidence and stability in life again. If we are in harmony with ourselves, the outside world can change, transform itself as it pleases, we will have this confidence because our inner vehicle will allow us to cross all the paths that present themselves to us. The power is in our hands.

4.2. Two complementary intelligences

When analyzing more precisely the composition of the human mind, scientists distinguish two distinct intelligences: On the one hand the self-aware mind, that represents the thinking self and expresses the creative mind and free will. On the other hand the subconscious mind, which is the central computer of our body made up of a database of programmed behavioral data. Some programs come from our genetics and are instinctive; others are acquired through our developmental learning experience. The subconscious mind functions according to a simple sequence of stimulus-response. Indeed, when the body perceives an environmental signal, it automatically triggers a previously recorded behavioral response without recourse to our conscious intelligence. It is the quality of the programs stored in our subconscious that determines the effectiveness of this two-intelligence system. (Lipton, 2010, p. 285) This is the link with consciousness. By elevating ourselves, we become aware of this stimulus-response process and can therefore better control it in order to direct our responses towards the desired goals.

We therefore understand in what way consciousness can elevate our mind and the efficiency of our two minds and thus our efficiency in general. Companies can also benefit from this knowledge by informing their employees about it. The problem is that most organizations focus mainly on the power of the will of their employees in the belief that they can bypass the negative programs of our subconscious mind. (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012, p. 190-194) However, it is almost impossible to be constantly analyzing our behavior. This is an oversimplification of reality. As their attention turns away from their behavior, the subconscious mind will take over and generate automatic responses previously recorded on the basis of their past experiences. Problems and programs must be addressed and modified at the source. This is the only way to change his thinking patterns and reactionary responses in a sustainable way. (Lipton, 2007, p. 3)

We now understand the need to focus on the subconscious mind and to elevate ourselves in order to reprogram these stimulus-response patterns. In this way it becomes possible to transform and heal from these negative programs in order to be able to use one's full potential and create a win-win situation for both the employees and the organization itself.

For the time being, we are going to leave aside the more spiritual aspect for and focus once again more specifically on companies and deal with the subject of stress experienced by employees in the workplace. The concept of spirituality will, of course, be developed later, but it is necessary to mention first how this new way of looking at things is relevant in this period of transition.

5. Facing a new challenge

Structural changes are easier to implement and often require less brainwork than deeper changes in the corporate culture. Everything has to go very fast and people want to see results quickly. This is one of the reasons why companies mainly focus on structural changes to achieve quick results in the short term. Structural changes are necessary but not sufficient.

By only taking into account structural changes, executives forget the very essence that makes a company, that is, the people who work there: the employees. It is necessary to consider the employee as a whole and also as an individual belonging to a community, which at a corporate level, constitutes the team with which they will work. Each employee has a body and above all, a soul that must be cared for, so that they can work under the best possible conditions and make the required efforts at work. (Thompson, 2000, p. 2-3) Moreover, looking at the individual as a whole also directly addresses the problem of stress and burnout in the workplace. Employees feel stressed because they are not linked with themselves and their work no more. They no longer see the meaning or the essence because they are overworked and overwhelmed by emotions. A return to stability and a reassessment of the situation is crucial so that they can regain control of their lives and external stressors no longer have such a negative effect on their performance. This new integral vision of employees has already proven its positive effects on business performance, as it has been observed that the companies that thrive today are those that have understood the dynamics of the people they employ and how they shape and influence organization and culture, not the other way around. (Doerr, 2018, p. 11)

5.1. Stress, the new threat

All these internal changes in corporate culture and this new way of looking at these teams are mainly aimed at eradicating or at least reducing employee stress at work. Today, stress has become the number one concern for most people and companies are constantly searching for new methods to combat this state of mental and emotional strain. It is well known that stress triggers many negative consequences on the body, but most people are not sure what they exactly are. (Florea & Florea, 2016, p. 28) Whether stress has multiple negative consequences or is the source of any disease, the debate is open and scientific opinions diverge. What is certain and where scientists agree is that it is necessary to take action and reduce this stress as much as possible to improve one's quality of life.

Stress and burnout, come mainly from the working environment because working adults are expected to cope with the stress resulting from a multitude of social, occupational and family demands. (Ho, 2011, p. 4). Stress is a natural and justified response of the body to improve the effectiveness of individuals in dealing with demanding and competitive situations. However, over a long period of time, stress begins to have negative effects on the body because it affects not only people's productivity, but also their physical and mental health (Benson, 2005, p. 56). In itself, stress is not bad, a little stress even leads to an increase in efficiency in most individuals, however, it is necessary to find solutions so that this stress does not become permanent and leads to burnout or has other harmful effects on employees' health.

Dr. Jeffrey D. Thompson (2015), founder and director of the Center for Neuroacoustic Research in Carlsbad, California is one of the scientists who is convinced and defends the fact that stress is the ultimate cause of disease. A second professor, Dr. Joan Borysenko, (1984) PhD candidate in medical science at Harvard Medical School and president of Mind-Body Health Sciences adds that 90% of what takes people to the doctor are stress-based. In short, reducing stress has a direct impact on one's health and allows us to stay healthy. Conversely, a stressed person is more likely to develop diseases and to face recurring or chronic health problems. This can be explained by the different chemical reactions generated by the body under stress. These internal chemical changes will be explained and developed in depth in the next chapters. (p. 250-252)

There are in fact 3 types of stress: First, physical stress that occurs when you are involved in an accident, a shock, a fall or injuries. The body is injured and has to recover. Secondly, chemical stress due to chemical shocks such as viruses, bacteria, hormonal imbalance, food, heavy metals or our blood sugar level. And finally, emotional stress, which is triggered by emotional overwork such as family tragedies, job loss, financial problems, pressure at work, etc. (Noonan & Schomer, 2017, 0:11:00)

These three types of stress lead our bodies into a state of imbalance. On the one hand, most people and our current medical system respond quickly and are very knowledgeable about how to treat physical injuries and chemical trauma. A specific treatment is administered so that the body regains its equilibrium and the person concerned returns to his or her normal activities. Emotional stress on the other hand seems to lead to more confusion when it comes to heal it. Because of this lack of understanding, the majority of the people do not have the tools to deal with it. By not worrying about and trying to cure this state of emotional imbalance, we leave people in a state of permanent stress. The body begins to defend itself from this state and the consequences

on the body and mind can deteriorate very quickly, hence the importance of talking about this problem and looking for remedies. (Noonan & Schomer, 2017, 0:13:00)

Our body doesn't know the difference between the different types of stress mentioned above. Even if the stress is related to a boss, finances or pressure, our organism triggers a stress reaction and releases cortisol and norepinephrine into our body. Moreover, while our organism functions as a fight and flight mechanism all the time, by definition, it mobilizes resources from our gut, our elimination system, our immune system, our brain system and puts that energy in our muscles to fight for our life. In a more precise way and in order to cite a few examples, this means that your memory is not optimal, your concentration is low, you cannot digest your food properly, you cannot eliminate toxins properly and your immune system is chronically compromised. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 38)

A good example to illustrate the effect of stress on our bodies comes from medicine. In fact, medicine has long been aware of and utilizes the impact of stress on the human body, particularly in organ transplantation. Doctors and surgeons administer stress hormones to patients to weaken their immune system so that the body does not reject the new organ and accepts it more easily. (Lipton, 2010, p. 187-188) In this case, the effect of stress on the immune system is used to make surgery easier. The body is weaker and its energy will be used to make its vital functions work, which will leave it with less energy and capacity to fight against the new organ considered as a foreign element. This example from the medical world highlights the fact that the immune system and the body's defenses are diminished when individuals are subjected to stress. (Noonan & Schomer, 2017, 0:14:10)

However, the advantage with these symptoms and feelings of stress is that it makes you realize that something is not working, as it should. This awareness then allows us to stop and "watch ourselves go by". Take stock to begin, settle down and simply analyze what is going on in ourselves, our thoughts and emotions. This enables us to become aware of our existence, of the fact that we are here and now, living beings and endowed with the incredible gift of life and consciousness.

Scientists have been administering medicine for nearly three centuries now, based on the work of Descartes, Newton and Darwin. This idea that these signals our bodies are sending us are meaningless and that our body is a machine is still widespread today. Newton's medicine for example considers the human body as a simple physical device and if there is something wrong with it, it is the consequence of a problem in the mechanics of this physical machine. (Lipton, 2010,p. 155) This vision of the body has been very useful in simplifying and making our

understanding of the human body more accessible. However, we can no longer talk about the body as a simple machine, on which we just have to press the right buttons to solve the problems related to it. Human beings are much more complex and it is necessary to listen to and consider both body and mind.

The next chapter expands the concept of the human being in order to explain and understand why our body is not a machine but an interconnected organism where every internal and external experience influences these components.

5.2. Broadening our conception of the human being

Thanks to the progress of scientific discoveries, and in particular the development of quantum physics in 1925, it has been possible to broaden our conception of the human being. One of the theoretical underpinnings of quantum physics states that there is an invisible energy around us that we had not considered and that we did not even talk about in medicine because our body has long been considered a physical machine. (Noonan & Schomer, 2017, 0:18:40) Physicists are gradually realizing that our perception of what is physical and what is not is a pure illusion. “Matter is Energy... Energy is Light... We are all Light Beings” (Albert Einstein, n.d.). Nothing is really physical, but everything is energy. Therefore, human beings, like everything else, are above all energy (Lipton, 2010, p. 120-122).

We are energy. This statement takes on its full meaning when we look at our cellular composition. When we analyze more precisely the cells that make up the human body, we notice that inside each cell we find our DNA. If we continue to zoom in, we can see that this DNA is made up of atoms and that these atoms are in turn 99.99999999999999% empty space. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 207-209) The particles themselves are in fact essentially emerged and derived from what we call the quantum field. We can think of particles as simple waves of energy, literally vibrations of energy. This shifts our mind from thinking that something is apparently solid and permanent to perhaps, something can change and be healed. This is the starting point. This is where the healing process of emotional stress begins. (Hamilton, 2009, p. 109)

“Everything is energy and that’s all there is to it. Match frequency of reality you want and you cannot help but get that reality. It cannot be any other way. This is not philosophy. This is physics” (Albert Einstein, n.d.).

The following chapter deepens the concept of energy as well as the understanding of the human

body as part of the physical quantum field.

6. Scientific findings about mind-body connection

Over the past decade, the amount of research published in scientific journals has shown without a shadow of a doubt that there is a growing connection between mind and body (Kang & Whittingham, 2010, p. 161). Thoughts, beliefs and emotions all cause truly significant chemical, physiological and biological changes in the body (Hamilton, 2009, p. 260). We are witnessing a transition where the link between mind and body has been considered very unclear to concrete, factual and scientific evidence (Noonan & Schomer, 2017, 0:20:38).

The recent discoveries of Dr. Bruce Lipton's are, among other breakthroughs, changing our understanding and vision of human beings. Bruce Lipton is an American developmental biologist specialized in epigenetics. He is an advocate of the theory that the expression of our body's genes could be influenced by internal and external environmental factors. The human body, as mentioned in the previous chapter, has long been and is still perceived as a simple biochemical machine that would be programmed by these genes, which were self-actualizing. (Lipton, 2008, p. 10) However, it has been proven by several scientists that genes can be activated and deactivated according to our environment and more particularly our perception and interpretation of it. Indeed, epigenetics itself is a science that studies the fact that it is not only our genetic inheritance that defines the composition of our genes, but also our external and internal environment that program our genes to create disease or to be healthy. (McEwen, 2017, p. 1) The placebo effect is often used as an example of this gene activation theory, because it directly compares the effect of chemicals with the power of thought on a significant group of patients.

6.1. Placebo experience

As mentioned earlier, the placebo effect is often used to illustrate the power of thought on the human body. In this specific field, reference can be made in particular to the discoveries of David R. Hamilton. David R. Hamilton (2009) obtained a degree in Biological and Medicinal Chemistry and a PhD in Organic Chemistry before working as a scientist in the pharmaceutical industry for several years. In particular, he was developing drugs to treat cardiovascular disease and cancer. (p. 219) He was disconcerted by what was happening when he had to test the drugs he was developing. In a typical trial, the treatment is given to 100 people to test whether the drug is effective or not. However, it is also necessary to give a placebo to another 100 people for comparison purposes.

By aggregating the results, it can be seen, in the majority of the case, for 75 people to see

improvement with the drug. But it is not uncommon for 60, 70, 75 people also notice improvements, without ingesting any chemicals, only with the help of the placebo, because they think they are getting the drug too. What this experience emphasizes is the fact that belief itself can shift biology. (Hamilton, 2010, p. 107) Experiments such as these show that a certain percentage of these people will accept, believe and surrender to the idea that they are receiving the substance or treatment in question. They begin to program their autonomic nervous system to make them a pharmacy of chemicals that exactly match the ones they think they are taking. (Dispenza, 2014, p. 132)

This brings a whole new way of looking at and understanding our thoughts and the power they have over our bodies. The inner environment of each human being is made up of emotions that are triggered by external situations. These emotions produce chemical reactions, which in turn signal the genes to activate or deactivate themselves. Genes do not physically change but their expression is altered. And it is this expression that is most important because it affects our lives and health. This new conception of the body incorporates the dimension of mind and spirit that plays a fundamental role in any healing as well as reprogramming. It recognizes that by changing our perception, thoughts and beliefs, we send different signals to our cells and reprogram their expression. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 46) “Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become a reality” (Earl Nightingale, n.d.).

These changes can be used to cure a specific illness or to improve private life situations, which will also be reflected at work and on the employee's overall performance. Then when people are at peace, this knowledge can continue to be used in more targeted ways such as seminars or group work to stimulate motivation, work identification and innovation. When people focus on and pay attention to the goals they want to achieve, they also redirect their energy towards those goals. In the future, these people will be better able to see the different opportunities, ideas, details in their environments and this will allow them to progress towards the realization of their wishes.

It is now a question of how it is possible to plant these ideas in our subconscious and to take care of them, to make them grow in order to attract to us the reality that we wish to live.

6.2. Use the body's energy to reprogram it.

Our body is made up of more than 100 billion cells and these cells contain energy. Each cell is electrically charged at about 1.4 volts. Specialists have examined the question of how this enormous amount of energy can be controlled and directed towards the desired goals. These cells are intrinsically intelligent and can survive alone when removed from the body, but each cell gives up its individuality to become a member of a multicellular community. The body is indeed the result of a cooperative effort by this community of 100 billion individual cells. A community is by definition an organization that shares a common vision and is committed to a common goal. Therefore, although each cell represents a free unit, the community adapts to our intentions and thoughts with a central voice. It is this central voice that is assimilated to the mind and spirit. (Lipton, 2007, p. 2) By being able to control your mind, you can control the expression of your genes and therefore your physical and mental state. It has been proven that the most effective way to concentrate these 140 billion accumulated volts and to control one's mind is through meditation and training as these techniques allow us to heal and reprogram our genes. (Lipton, 2008, p. 1)

Meditation therefore allows individuals to better control their mind and also to control and manage their stress. A lot of studies that have examined this topic and analyzed the correlations between meditation and well-being at work, and thus the ability of employees to manage their stress, have all achieved the same results: Meditation is an effective and proven tool that improves the lives of employees as a whole. This tool is effective because it focuses on healing these disorders by modifying our environment and our reactions to external situations and by controlling our emotions. (Shonin, 2014a, p. 818)

Consequently, this energy has immense potential when it comes to curing stress, burnout, lack of motivation and illness in general. Or when it comes to increasing and improving employees' speed of learning, their own perception of their performance or their general state of being. (Ho, 2011, p. 1)

The next chapter goes a step further in the scientific explanation of meditation and spirituality in order to establish a solid scientific basis for the implementation of meditation and mindfulness in the workplace.

7. Scientific evidence of the correlation between spirituality and performances

After having laid the foundations of the concept of the mind-body connection, it is now time to deepen this correlation in a scientific way, as well as talking about concrete methods and tools that can be put in place.

7.1. Clarification of the concept of the quantum field

In order to understand and be able to explain the higher mental processes such as self-awareness, intuition, meditative states, it is necessary to first understand the concept of the quantum field already mentioned in the previous section. This unified field is composed of energy and frequencies. Furthermore, each vibration frequency carries a multitude of information with it. (Dispenza, 2012, p. 50) This unified field is neither physical nor material, since these are vibrations. It is this property that makes the subatomic world unique. It has not only physical qualities but also energetic properties. This field governs all the laws of nature and is a kind of intelligence, an autonomous energy that orders life. (Meijer, 2014, p. 181) The Big Bang explosion is often mentioned in order to illustrate the concept of the quantum field and make it more accessible. How can it be explained that after the Big Bang, which is the biggest explosion that has ever existed, so much order has been created? There must be an intelligence capable of organizing its energy in order to create a perfectly ordered environment.

Another characteristic of the physical field that also needs to be considered is entanglement. Entanglement is a term widely used in quantum physics, which means that once something is unified, once something begins as a whole even though it is physically separated, energetically everything is still connected. In the case of the Big Bang, if we go back far enough in time, there was a time when every living being and the earth were connected and were one. What happened was that, physically, the particles started to separate after the explosion, but energetically they remained connected. (Braden, 2019, p. 55) So the next question would be: how is it possible to harness this energy on an individual and corporate level? (Dispenza, 2017, p. 71)

It is possible for human beings to take advantage of this energy and use it to conceive our lives. The quantum field is a state where all possibilities are possible. When consciousness enters this field, there are no bodies, no one and no objects. The only thing that persists are infinite unknown

possibilities that present themselves to us in the form of energy (Sharma, 2018, p. 558) This field is essentially composed of energy and as we know, energy is frequencies that move, transmit and exist in the place where the observer places his attention. This has been proven by observing atoms, which are the building blocks of everything in our universe. The latter consist of a central nucleus surrounded by a vast field containing one or more electrons and this vast field is, in turn, composed of 99.99999999999999% of empty space. This empty space is not actually empty, because it is composed of a vast frequency field which in turn is loaded with information and vibrations. In other words, atoms are almost essentially composed of emptiness and therefore of energetic frequencies. Individuals can use this energy by choosing the direction in which they want to direct it and focus their attention on the goals they want to achieve. Rhonda Byrne (2008, p. 23), the author of the book *The Secret* based on the Law of Attraction sums it up very well when she says: "One energy field. Our bodies have distracted us from our energy. We are the infinite field of unfolding possibilities. The creative force."

This highlights the immense potential that employees can have to change their reality and therefore the reality of the firms since most companies are communities of individuals. The mind-bodyconnection gives a sense of empowerment. By using their mind they can contribute to the process of evolution towards well-being, novelty and success. (Hamilton, 2009, p. 225) When we add all these individual frequencies together to achieve a common objective, we realize the mass of energy deployed and therefore the full potential of this practice. But this requires individual responsibility. Each of us has a role to play and is responsible for the energy he or she releases into the world. (Dispenza , 2017, p. 74)

As a matter of fact, electrons exist simultaneously in the state of infinite possibilities or probabilities. It is only when an external observer places his attention on a specific material thing that the quantum field collapses in the form of a "collapse of the wave function" to give way to a particle that we will call electrons. In other words, electron particles do not exist until someone focuses his attention on them. When the observer diverts his attention, this particle instantly becomes energy and therefore possibilities again. (Bohm, 1987, p. 366) On the one hand, if we apply this knowledge to individuals and to employees, we deduce that if employees observe their existence every day based on their past experiences and known events, with the same state of mind, it will cause a collapse of the energy field on information patterns that are identical to those known in the past. On the other hand, if they decide to focus their attention on new things, new objectives, they create innovations and unexplored ways of thinking that diverge from those of the past. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 75) This is exactly how innovations and other breakthroughs are achieved.

The engineer and physicist Nikola Tesla (n.d.), who is behind dozens of breakthroughs in the production, transmission and application of electric powder had already figured out how important it was and how he could harness that energy when he said: "If you want to find the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration." For him, all success was due to the power of thought and higher mental process. And Nikola Tesla rightly states this when he says that energy frequency and vibration are the ubiquitous source of everything we seek. The day we match our frequency with the vibration we wish to achieve and use our attention to channel our energy in the desired direction visible changes will begin to occur in our lives.

COLLAPSING the WAVE FUNCTION

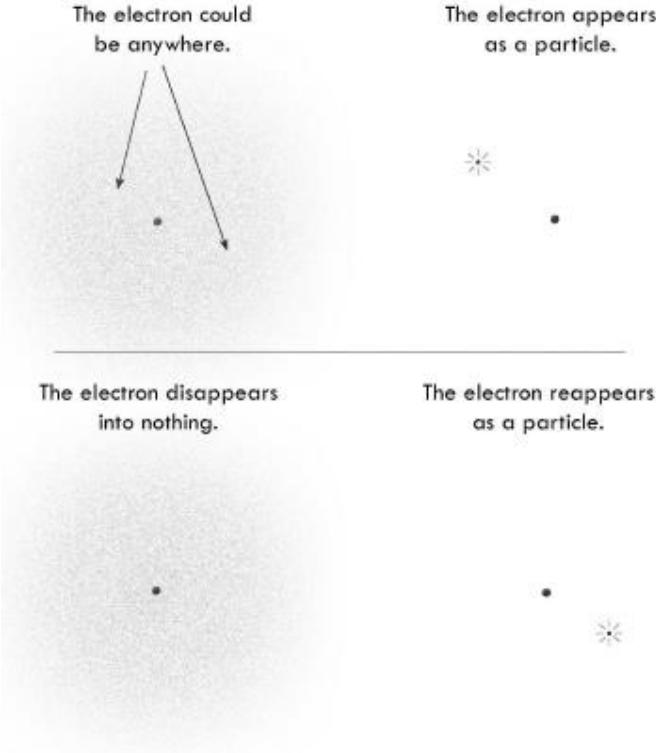


Figure 2: Collapsing the wave function. Source: Dispenza, 2012, p. 51

7.2. Implications for workplaces

Transposed into the context of workplace spirituality, this means that the company perceives these employees as having both a mind and a spirit and believing that the development of the spirit is as important as the development of the mind. (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 134) These employees should consequently be given the opportunity to express their intelligence, their emotions and feelings at work. In this way, they feed their minds and are more in line with themselves. Giving them access to these tools also gives them access to a certain degree of autonomy when it comes to coping with stress and to improve their well being. It is a way to prevent permanent stress as well as burnout, by bringing employees to constantly work on their well being and their inner self.

Moreover, it has been demonstrated that the development of our inner life leads to a more productive and meaningful outer life. (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 134) However, in order to be able to help individuals and employees to develop their spirituality, it is first of all necessary to clarify and define this concept and to explain the appropriate methods to achieve the desired objectives.

The next chapter provides a more detailed definition of the term "spirituality" and differentiates it distinctly from religion since these two terms are often confused.

8. Introduction to spirituality

Talking about the souls of employees, spirituality, and the interconnection between the different members of a team is a sensitive subject. Spirituality is relatively new in the workplace but not elsewhere in human experience. Thus, the human being already has a predefined knowledge base and vision of spirituality outside the workplace. Each person lives and expresses his or her spirituality in a personal way, because it is an essential part of every human being. Studies conducted by Mitroff and Denton (1999) have shown that "People are hungry for ways in which to practice spirituality in the workplace". They believe strongly that unless organizations learn how to harness the "whole person" and the immense spiritual energy that is at the core of everyone, they will not be able to produce world-class products and services. (p. 83)

Nevertheless, as mentioned before, this is not something firms traditionally have allowed employee to express in the workplace because this concept is generally considered as a phenomenon that is too soft, too nebulous and too difficult to define. In addition, society has a long history of relegating deeply personal beliefs such as religion to private places, which further complicates a serious and systematic study of the subject by university scientists. (Mitroff and Denton, 1999, p. 84)

8.1. Distrust and skepticism towards spirituality

The problem with this censorship of spirituality in the workplace is that it is often linked and confused with religion. Spirituality takes essence in the religious imagery, which goes against the classical theories of management and organization articulated by Weber (1978) and Taylor (1911). According to this traditional vision of work, employees performed their tasks without expressing their essential self. This way of thinking depicts the reality of past decades, where only rational and scientific consciousness was valid. Indeed, those economists concluded that the only way humans could manage their spirituality was by separating it distinctly and completely from their work. But at our current stage of human development, we face a new challenge. It is no longer viable to see companies as mere machines, which, from a given input, can generate outputs without taking into account the physical and mental well being of their employee. This is the reason why spirituality has to be integrated into the management and culture of the company. No organization can survive for long without spirituality and soul. (Ackers & Preston, 1997, p. 678)

As outlined above, most people confuse religion and spirituality. However, when we talk about spirituality in the workplace, it is not a question of religion, conversion or acceptance of a specific belief system. (Thompson, 2000, p. 2) It is about ensuring that employees can see themselves as spiritual beings whose souls need to be nourished at work as well as in their daily lives in general. There is no question of separating work from their overall lives. The opposite effect is even sought, namely the fact of being able to be bound and feel fulfilled in these two worlds, personal and professional. The objective is that they can find meaning in their tasks and experience a sense of belonging. (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 135)

8.2. Definition of spirituality

Spirituality comes from the word spirit, which was originally used to describe invisible moving forces that influence the physical realm. Quantum physics takes us back to a time when it was said that the invisible forces that we have dismissed in medicine have turned out to be the primary forces that control everything. These primary forces include the mind, the consciousness, and that is why, if we want to return to the supreme power over our biology, it is imperative to control our thoughts. They represent the invisible energy of our mind that not only shapes our body but shapes our relationship with the world we live in. (Lipton, 2010, p. 234) Taken on a company-wide basis, this means that if employees are able to control their thoughts and direct them in ways that nourish their daily lives, their relationships and interactions will be improved. Thus, it also means that the company as a whole will be positively affected by these internal changes.

As spirituality is a very personal concept and it is difficult to give it a general definition because each person lives his or her spirituality differently. However, we can take up the main characteristics cited by the participants in the Mitroff and Denton study given in 1999 and which is still shared today.

In the first step, the participants defined spirituality as being, highly individual and personal. This first characteristic makes it possible to distinguish directly between spirituality and religion, since religion is organized and communitarian. (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 89) It is necessary to differentiate these two terms from the outset in order to avoid confusion, in view of the fact that religion is often associated with negative feelings that divide rather than connect individuals, which is absolutely not the case in spirituality (Brandt, 1996, p. 2) Even more important is the fact that organized religion is very often oriented towards the outside world, rites, writings and the views of others, which is not the case with spirituality. Spirituality focuses on what is happening inside individuals, their emotions and the thoughts they feed. The true purpose of spirituality is

to enable human beings to access a greater personal awareness of universal values that will help them to live and work more effectively and joyfully. It is an innate and universal search for transcendent meaning in their own lives (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004, p. 252)

In the continuity of this definition, spirituality has been described as the basic belief that there is a greater force, a supreme power that governs the entire universe. This force gives a purpose to everything and everyone because the universe is not meaningless. Since it is a sovereign force, it has repercussions on everything and everything is an expression of that unifying force. As explained using the example of the Big Bang and entanglement, everything is interconnected with the rest. (Garcia-Zamo, 2003, p. 358) And spirituality is precisely the feeling of interconnection with this whole. This feeling of being connected to others is even more important at work since the workplace is, for most employees, the only constant link with other people. Indeed, for most people, this link is the only source of interaction with a community, their only access to a social life. (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004, p. 257) This is the reason why, employees need to feel connected to their work and colleagues. On the other hand, most of these people are not directly aware of this need because they have never really taken the time to think about it. Therefore, companies have a big role to play and can bring this awareness to the table by putting in place practices and tools to enable employees to make this connecting experience. By including these core concepts that are fundamental to the company's values and by working to create an atmosphere of caring, respect and identification, companies can create a sense of belonging and community in the office. (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012 p. 205)

Employees are first and foremost social beings and the proper functioning of a company depends on the cohesion and teamwork of its employees. Each one brings his piece to the puzzle and it is the concordance of all these employees that will allow the company to stand out and provide quality work. (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004, p. 253)

Despite the many existing definitions of spirituality, most scientists agree that the basic concept of spirituality is that each person has both an inner and an outer life. With regard to inner life, it is a question of understanding one's own divine power and how to use it in order to be able to live in the best possible way. In other words, spirituality is a basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe. (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 84) We are 99% energy. This is a scientific fact that was demonstrated in the previous chapter. Since we are energy, we are spiritual by nature. So when we struggle, when we experience chaos and pain, we have internal energy blockages. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 207-209) We try to look fine on the outside but we're not good on the inside. Therefore, our outer world reflects the internal energy. This tension

between our inner and outer world is at the root of our unhappiness. Suppress resistance and true strength, freedom and happiness will appear out of nowhere. Everything is internal. The way we see the outer world is a reflection of what we feel inside. Hence the importance of working and looking after one's inner peace. (Dispenza, 2014, p. 62)

The last concept mentioned, namely feeling connected to the whole universe, is a difficult concept to describe because the rules of Newtonian physics as we know them do not apply to it. However, it provides an essential understanding when it comes to working on employees' emotions and thoughts in order to change their conception of work and their life in general. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 73) In fact, the human brain is an interface organ that manages the mind and consciousness and also receives information from the outside, hence the impression that some people have of being connected to a whole. The brain analyzes incoming and existing data, so that the information received about the outside world can be integrated. Put differently, it is a kind of interference hologram that produces and receives information. (Meijer, 2014, p. 182) Our brain, therefore, represents our individual universe and shapes our perception of our actual environment. On the basis of these brain patterns as well as our past experiences, our mind is able to anticipate future events. These expectations can then lead to physiological reactions such as stress, anxiety, joy or happiness depending on the individual's personal interpretation of the current situation. However, these brain patterns are not fixed. They can be changed and reprogrammed to trigger new reactions. By working on the thoughts, emotions and reactions to these emotions we are able to change our perception of our environment and improve our mental and physical health. But to do so, it is necessary to change the way you think. As Dr. Joe Dispenza (2012) points out : „If you want a new outcome, you will have to break the habit of being yourself, and reinvent a new self.“ (p. 64)

Having clarified the notion of spirituality, it is now possible to use this knowledge and transpose it to the working world in order to define what are spiritual workplaces. As with spirituality, there is also an enormous amount of definition of spirited workplace. They depend strongly on each company as this concept is linked to the internal culture and to the employees who work within these structures. But the concepts behind these terms are more general. Indeed, it seems that a large majority of people agree to describe a spiritual workplace as a work environment that cares about the needs of the employees and also seeks to nourish the inner life of the employees. (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 86) This research is essential if we wish to improve employees' well being and sense of belonging. Giving employees the opportunities and tools to refocus on themselves and identify their needs in order to be more productive is the first step in creating a more harmonious and fluid work environment. (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012, p. 189) Once they are aware of this, it is much easier to satisfy their needs properly and to offer them suitable solutions. Through this

exercise, the company once again places the employees in the center of attention and gives them importance, which will also strengthen their commitment and sense of belonging. Acknowledging their needs in order to satisfy them better and also to enable them to get to know themselves better is therefore essential.

Many people remain very sceptical about this concept of spirituality. There is, however, one area where extraordinary and visible changes have taken place. It concerns people with cancer who have experienced radical remissions. The next chapter deals with these medically inexplicable recoveries, in order to give even more validity and credibility to the importance of spirituality and the power of thought over our bodies.

8.3. The use of mental, emotional and spiritual factors in radical remissions

One of the most telling areas that demonstrates the power that each of us possesses within us is when doctors see and witness radical remissions. Kelly Turner (2014), Ph.D., is a researcher in the field of integrative oncology and the Founder of the Radical Remission Project. For over 10 years, she has studied and specialized in research on radical cancer remissions, which are remissions that occur either in the absence of Western medicine or after Western medicine has failed to achieve remission. (p. 408-412) Her discoveries are relevant to this work because they underline the importance of mental, emotional and spiritual factors in the healing process of these patients and thus also prove the power of these methods on the human body and, more generally, on our environment. She met people around the world, analyzed more than 1,500 cases and conducted more than 250 in-depth interviews to understand what helped them heal despite the doctors' pessimistic diagnoses. Through her work, she has discovered more than 75 tools that these people use to heal themselves. Not all patients used all 75 factors. However, after reviewing the data, they all use the following nine tools:

- 1. Taking control of your health**
- 2. Following your Intuition**
- 3. Releasing suppressed emotions**
- 4. Increasing positive emotions**
- 5. Embracing social support**
- 6. Deepening your spiritual connection**
- 7. Having strong reasons for living**

8. Radically changing your Diet
9. Using herbs and supplements

In analyzing these 9 factors, we can see that only two of them are purely physical, namely changing one's diet and taking supplements and herbs. The rest of the factors are mental, emotional or spiritual. So we realize that there really is a way to activate the immune system by working on our mental and emotional state. (Turner, 2014, p. 14) These tools represent levers to improve one's daily life, to cure oneself or to prevent diseases. They are often used by sick patients who are looking for alternative ways to treat themselves in a more natural way but can also be used upstream to prevent certain harmful effects, such as those of stress in the workplace for example. (Noonan & Schomer, 2017, 0:25:20)

Seeing the measurable effects on our immune system, we then realize the power of this knowledge in all areas of our lives, whether personal or professional. What we believe and think right now, programs our immune system either to stop and not work because we have to run away from its stressor, or to take care of its body and function properly because there doesn't seem to be a threat against which to protect ourselves. In short, we are either in the fight and flight or in rest and repair, and it is our beliefs that make that switch. (Turner, 2014, p. 176)

Consequently, when we strengthen and control our thinking, our reaction to the emotions we feel and our spiritual connection, we take care of our inner environment. Through this process, our whole body, and more precisely our immune system, is improved and healthier. (Malarkey et al., 2013, p. 145) Therefore, these three factors represent the keys elements when we want to work on improving our daily life and our health. Added to this is the fact that the human being is a living being who is part of a community and that we are all intrinsically connected. When a person is at one with himself and feels good, he will automatically exert a positive influence on his team and his co-workers. And this is the ultimate goal sought within work teams, because it is necessary to have motivated employees with a real drive who support each other and identify with the work or projects they develop.

After having clarified the basics of spirituality as well as its link with science, the next chapter gives the first mechanisms that it are essential to put in place in order to regain control of our reactions to our emotions, our thoughts and our connection with the spiritual and thus improve the daily life of employees and their performance.

8.4. Manifestation of spirituality among employees

Applied to the field of work, spirituality becomes more specific and encompasses above all feelings, thoughts and emotions that are distinct to it. As already stated in the study of spirituality in the workplace from Mitroff and Denton (1999), when workers were asked to describe and define the concept of spirituality, they first of all cited the characteristics of interconnectivity and the search for meaning in the workplace. Consequently, spirituality is above all an expression of a feeling. (p. 91) By using and reinforcing this feeling, employees have the ability to take a break from various stressful situations and step back. Considering this feeling and reinforcing it allows you to see things from a different perspective and to look for solutions rather than being overwhelmed by the negative emotions that usually accompany these situations. From then on, they realize that stress situations, like all other situations, are manageable and part of the normal course of life, because they changed their perception of the situation. This allows them to increase their confidence in life and provides them with a kind of guiding plan.

Another component of spirituality that was also cited by most of the participants in the study was that they have all experienced higher emotions such as attention, hope, kindness, love and optimism (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 86-87). These emotions are not unimportant because most scientists who study the effects of meditation and mindfulness describe them as high emotions, especially in epigenetics, because they have great power and influence when it comes to breaking old patterns to create new ones. And this is precisely the objective we want to achieve in order to reduce employee stress, increase their creativity, their self-confidence and therefore their performance at work. (Braden, 2019, p. 416)

8.5. The importance of higher vibrations

The quantum model of reality, as aforesaid, states that everything exists in the form of waves of information that vibrates at varying degree of frequencies. Moreover, each emotion felt can therefore be assimilated to a certain frequency, which will be more or less high depending on the emotions in question. Dr. Joe Dispenza (2017) speaks of emotions as being *energy in motion*. (p. 136) This helps to better understand the reasoning behind the theory that will follow. Emotions send signals to our brain and the quality of that signal subsequently determines what the brain does in response to this emotion. When the signal emitted is a series of very smooth, beautiful, coherent waves, the brain will respond by producing smooth, organized chemicals that will support life in our bodies. In the long term, this process will help build a strong immune system

and support a healthy life balance. On the other hand, the chemistry of feelings like frustration, anger, hatred, fear, etc. is totally different. It is a large number of very chaotic, unorganized and jagged waves. The brain, again, will respond by producing chemicals that correspond to these vibrations. (Braden, 2019, p. 364)

Using stress as an example, it is possible to illustrate this and make these concepts a little more concrete. Stress emotions such as the negative emotions mentioned above, lower our vibratory frequency and thus also our energy. As can be seen in the diagram below, those primitive emotions often felt in the workplace, have wavelengths that vibrate at much lower and slower frequencies. These frequencies anchor us in our physical body, because they are part of mechanisms derived from our biological evolution, that have been created to ensure our survival. Therefore, our energy is concentrated in our bodies and not in our minds in order to be ready to react to a possible threat. This implies that there is less energy available for our mind, which creates an imbalance within our being. Furthermore, when we are under stress, our energy field enters a state of resistance. Our blood doesn't circulate as well. Our PH level is affected too, we become more acid and inflammation occurs. (Dispenza, 2014, p. 176)

SURVIVAL EMOTIONS VS. ELEVATED EMOTIONS

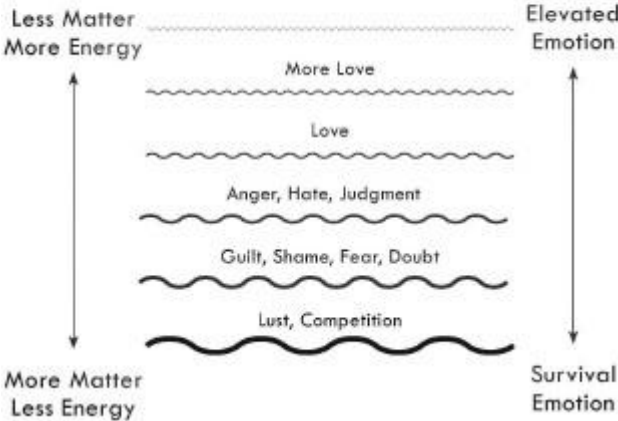


Figure 3: Survival emotions vs. elevated emotions. Source: Dispenza, 2012, p. 176.

At this moment that a vicious circle sets in, from which it is generally difficult to break out. It starts with stress, which accumulates later on and can lead in some cases to burnouts. Burnout is the logical continuation of the harmful effects when a person is under stress for an extended period of time. This disease is characterized by the

feeling of being drained from the inside as well as emotionally and physically exhausted (Gonzalez-Morales & Peirò & Rodriguez & Bliese, 2012, p. 44).

The problem in these situations and the reason why it is difficult to get out of them is that, each day, unconsciously, people recreate the same patterns and circumstances by always thinking and acting in the same way. They constantly diffuse the same electromagnetic field, emitting the same energy with the same message. From an energy point of view, this means that the same past energy continues to carry the same information, which leads people to anticipate and therefore think the same things and create the same future. (Dispenza, 2014, p. 176)

The ultimate goal is to change this electromagnetic field we are constantly broadcasting and cultivate the elevated emotions that nourish our body and mind and give us energy. (Meijer & Geesink, 2017, p. 44) Alternatively said, the only way to transform our state of being is to change the way we think and how we feel. This is possible but the process requires a lot of perseverance and regularity in practice. The objective at this moment, in order to be able to get out of these schemes and create a new future that is in harmony with us and with what we want is to create it by focusing and staying in the present moment. As a reminder, where you place your attention is where you place your energy. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (n.d.) introduces this idea very well when he says: "If you are depressed, you are living in the past. If you are feeling anxious, you are living in the future. If you are in peace, you are living in the present." This means that, at the moment the person's attention is focused on a familiar emotion or situation, his or her attention and energy are in the past. In the same way that if this person starts thinking about things they will have to do, people they will have to see, they will focus their attention on a productive future and will therefore not be in the present moment. In both cases, the person will transfer his energy either in the past or in the future. All the energy will be absorbed by these known experiences. As a result, there is no energy left that can be used to create new experiences and change old patterns that tarnish that person's life (Dispenza, 2017, p. 142).

Therefore, by reorienting where we focus our attention, we are also reorienting the way our energy is placed. This process requires changing also the way we think and feel over an extended period of time so that new experiences can occur in our lives. These change are made in the form of modifications of neuropath ways in the brain of individuals. The neuroplastic nature of our brain allows us to learn new ways of thinking, acting, feeling and being in the world. However, for a change to be permanent, it is necessary to repeat it a certain number of times so that a routine can be established and new neural connections and responses created. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 70)

The illustration below depicts this distribution of energy over time. It also underlines the fact that only the present moment can create a new reality. By focusing on the past or the future, human beings only repeat programs that have already occurred. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 134)

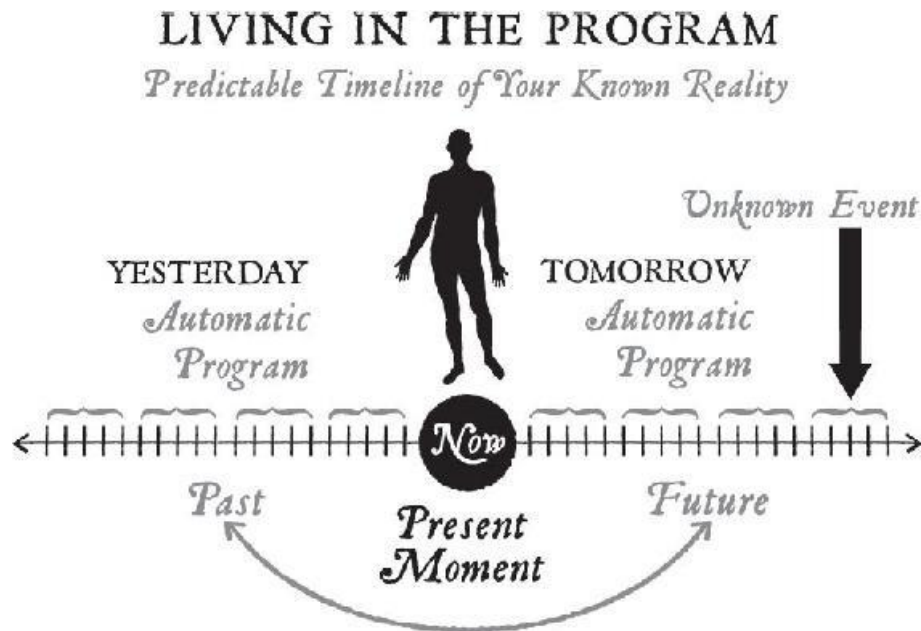


Figure 4 : Living in the program. Source: Dispenza, 2017, p. 134

Taking everything into account, with the purpose of putting in place the most effective formula possible to improve the well-being of employees at work and consequently increase their performance, companies must set up a routine and a framework within which employees have the opportunity to calm down their minds and experience mindfulness. This is essential, because it is only by experiencing the present moment that individuals can focus their energy on the changes to be made in their thinking, feelings, emotions and at the same time have a real impact on their lives and work. This process will not only bring about changes in their professional lives but also in their private lives. A balanced personal environment will also have an impact as well as a strengthening effect on their professional lives. The gap between the personal and professional spheres will be reduced and the employee will no longer have to wait for the weekend or evening to turn back home and finally be free from his or her work.

Success lies in considering individuals as whole and being concerned about their overall well being. (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004, p. 252) In fact, Anne Mulcahy (n.d.), CEO of the Xerox company from August 2001 to July 2009 sums it up very well when she says: "Employees who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person, not just an employee, are more productive, more satisfied, more fulfilled. Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers, which leads to profitability."

Leaders need to redirect their focus and pay attention to the needs for meaning of their employees who are spiritually conscious individuals in search of meaning. Their role is to guide them and to offer them tools and methods so that they can realize themselves spiritually. With the help of these new resources, they will be able to experience more joy in these tasks and be more productive. (Vaill, 1998, p. 178)

The next chapter focuses on meditation and on how these brain patterns can be changed through this practise, so that employees can be able to learn more quickly, feel less stress and are ready to face different future challenges in order to become a key element of the company's long-term success.

9. Bringing meditation into the workplace

After having described more precisely the concept of spirituality and highlighted the levers that make it possible to change employees' old ways of thinking, it is necessary to specify how firms can anchor these methods within the cultures of their companies. These methods have to become routine in order to take advantage from their long-term benefits. This section of the paper, hence focuses on studies that have been conducted and have demonstrated a correlation between meditation and performance, i.e. what the process was, what conditions these studies tested and what they put in place to verify their hypotheses.

Having understood the importance and role of spirituality at work in bringing a sense and meaning into the workplace, the next step is to determine how to make employees feel more connected to their tasks, increase their performance and reduce their stress. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in mindfulness practices at work given the high potential of this method to improve employee well being and reduce stress. Several studies, most of them in the United States, have tested the effects of implementing these methods in the workplace. It appears that the benefits are multiple and that research continues to discover correlations between this type of practice and overall improvement at several levels on working conditions. Like the effects observed, the methods are multiple and since meditation and spirituality is specific to everyone and highly individual, there are as many ways to practice it as there are individuals on the planet.

Some researchers have even developed models that companies can use and adapt to their internal structures. These methods or tools, which aim to create a more dynamic working environment, often take place in several stages. Brandt (1996) cites 11 steps to help companies bring more spirituality to the workplace (See Appendix A). These steps, which are easy to implement, allow the company to create a more spiritually satisfying environment where employees feel at home. There are instructions such as: start holding meeting in a round, bring more nature and plants in the office, give the manufacturing staff exercise break, honor and encourage creative expression, organize simple parties or picnics to acknowledge milestones and achievements, etc. (p. 85)

Starting with this kind of small changes, companies start the transition and put employees on the path to a new vision of work. These tools do not directly address spirituality as such but rather create a framework for the subsequent implementation of practices such as meditation or mindfulness. It is smart and advisable to begin using those small changes. What will be decisive and will make the difference when a company wants to take advantage of the positive effects of meditation and mindfulness at work is to get employees to overcome their fears about these

methods. Most people have prejudices about the development of their spirituality and even more so when it comes to doing it at work. This is related to the fact that the world of work and the world of spirituality have always been separated very distinctly. As a result, most people are reluctant to express their spirituality. (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 84) Consequently, it is essential to start with small modification in the daily work environment that will be easily accepted before implementing and gradually deepening more advanced practices or habits. Other tools such as meditation or mindfulness that dig deeper and will better satisfy the employees' search for meaning and spirituality can then be introduced in a second step.

There seems to be a consensus on how to introduce meditation and mindfulness at work so that it can be welcomed in the best possible conditions. In fact, it was found that the most significant effects and the highest participation quotas could be observed among research groups that had been required to take part in a meditation for the first time, without specifying that it was a meditation. Meditation was then presented as a relaxation exercise in which employees had to take part over an extended period of time. People need to experiment and test this type of practice over a longer period of time before they can feel the positive effects and be less skeptical about it. (Van Gordon et al., 2014, p. 384) Studies that had specified at the beginning of the experiment that it was a meditation noticed that individuals gave up more quickly and easily and could not experience the benefits of meditation over an extended period of time. However, all participants who completed the experience were able to demonstrate personal and professional improvements. Among the benefits that were mentioned following this experience were: perceptive clarity, improve work-related stress and job performance, patience, generosity, facilitate goal attainment, broader perspectives, induce a re-evaluation of life priorities. As meditation is a non-evasive practice, it can be applied on-the-job. (Shonin et al., 2014b, p. 194) It is also a cost-effective method that does not require equipment and can be practiced anywhere, at any time (Dane, 2011, p. 1004).

In the previous chapters, it has been demonstrated that by modifying our emotions, it is possible to modify the expression of our genes and thus to send new chemical signals to our DNA so that our body produces the proteins necessary for the cure of our diseases. For example, when our body and immune system have been under stress for a long period of time, this may have caused activation of the genes responsible for inflammation or disease. It is then possible to activate new genes responsible for growth and regeneration that will deactivate the old genes. With epigenetics, it is therefore possible to modify these genes to follow new instructions and produce new proteins, which in turn will deprogram the body in order for it to grow, regenerate and heal.

This is how it is possible to reprogram the body by thinking differently and feeding it with higher emotions. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 48)

However, in practice, one main obstacle has been identified that hinders the proper functioning of this process. In most cases, individuals are used to feeding their bodies with the same thoughts. Since cells are exposed to the same environment, they in turn constantly emit the same chemical signals to our genes and the individual finds himself blocked and unable to change his genetic expression. (McEwen, 2017, p. 2) The first solution that arises after understanding the importance of external factors on our organization would be to change this external environment. This could be for instance, the internal structure of the company, the work, etc. (Shonin et al., 2014c, p. 818) Certainly, these changes will have an influence on our extra-cellular chemical environment. Nevertheless, it will only be temporary, because our body, conditioned for years to follow a predefined mental and emotional cycle, has become dependent on these emotions and will constantly seek elements that will confirm these predefined patterns. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 49) Sooner or later, employees will return to their basic emotional states and their bodies expect to find the same past experience and thus create the same old emotions. That's when the role of positive thoughts comes into play. In fact, to achieve real and lasting change, it is imperative to generate and promote high levels of positive thinking, whose impact is stronger than that of negative emotions. Remember, it is all energy. It starts with thoughts, emotions amplify it and finally our actions increase their momentum. Each individual within the company has his or her role to play and just by spreading these high emotions, can raise the energy level of the whole team. We therefore come to appeal to the individual responsibility of each person in contributing to the common welfare.

10. Concrete tools and changes to be set up

After presenting a completely new way of looking at the human being as a whole and of being concerned also with the spiritual life of employees, this chapter proposes concrete methods and tools as levers that can be applied in order to develop workplaces and corporate cultures that embrace higher characteristics.

10.1. Perception and interpretation of the environment

Starting from the basics, i.e. when we talk about the environment in which each person evolves, the science of signal transduction states that each biological organism adapts its biology to the place in which it lives and focuses upon the chemical pathways by which cells respond to environmental cues (Lipton, 2010, p. 18). During this adaptation process, the body collects the signals sent by our nervous system regarding the external environment and interprets them so that the cells can subsequently adjust their composition according to the needs of the moment and what is happening in the world. Environmental signals initiate cytoplasmic processes that can alter gene expression and thus control the fate of cells, influence cell movement, control cell survival, or even condemn a cell to death. (Chopra & Tanzi, 2013, p. 29) So this finding highlights the fact that the nature and behavior of an organism is directly linked to its perception of the environment. Alternatively said, the nature of our life is based on how we perceive it. (Lipton, 2010, p. 32)

The lever that appears in this case is the following: consciousness. Consciousness is an interpretation. The mind interprets the environment. Therefore, if people change their perception, their state of mind, their beliefs about life, they change the signals assimilated by the body and thus also adjust the functioning of their cells. (Dispenza, 2014, p. 247) This is significant because through our ability to change our perception of the environment and our environment in general, we are able to control some of our genetic activity and consequently prevent most stress-related diseases and cultivate a healthy mind in a healthy body. Moreover, this process proves to be essential when we want to perform and use the full capabilities of each individual. (Chopra & Tanzi, 2013, p. 47)

10.2. Mindfulness

If we wish to fully understand the link between external phenomena and what is happening inside us, it is also necessary to understand how our mind works. "The energy of the mind is the essence of life" (Aristotle, n.d.). The mind plays a crucial role in the perception and interpretation of our environment and influences our whole life. Moreover, this mind also constitutes the element, which makes the connections between the environment we are in and our cells.

However, as discussed in the chapter on the risks involved in not caring for the welfare of these employees, the mind is not a single entity. It is composed of two interdependent elements that work together, namely: the conscious and the subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is the default program, the autopilot and the conscious mind is the latest evolution of the brain, the creative mind and also the part of the mind that can be controlled. (Braden, 2019, p. 58)

When we consider the current world situation, individuals are operating most of the time through the subconscious mind. The programs hardwired into our subconscious mind come mainly from downloading other people's behavior, since we are constantly absorbing the patterns of all the people we are exposed to. These patterns are constantly repeated and trying to break the mechanics of one's subconscious is like trying to outrun one's shadow. (Lipton, 2010, p. 159) However, emotions, symptoms and stressors are not meaningless and represent significant indicators that can allow us to see the dysfunction and to question ourselves. By giving them importance and taking them into consideration, the problem becomes the exit portal. Emotions are a gift that allows us to understand and realize what we are thinking about and since thoughts are at the root of everything, understanding these thoughts means taking back control of one's life and shaping it according to one's desires. (Byrne, 2008, p. 30)

Most of the time, these stressors come from our minds chattering all the time and telling us things that are generally frightening and limiting. The mind is wonderful when used as a tool, but it can also be really destructive. By identifying these factors and recognizing our need to sort through our thoughts, we are already reducing the excessive flow of information. Then, by incorporating meditation it is possible to get rid of this excessive mental baggage. Dr. Herbert Benson (1975) said, in his early research on meditation that: "Meditation shuts down the fight or flight response, the fear response and stimulates the parasympathetic or also called the relaxing nervous system of the body, and that is what heals." Therefore, at the very basic level, meditation relieves stress. (p. 130)

When a person is in a meditative state, the pituitary gland does amazing things. The pineal or pituitary gland is a pea-sized gland perched in the central rear area of your brain that plays a major role in regulating the body's vital functions and general well-being. It is called the "master gland" of the body because it controls the activity of most other hormone-secreting glands. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 56) It releases oxytocin, dopamine, relaxant, serotonin, endorphins during this spiritual connection. However, in order for the body to release these chemical molecules into the body, we have to take a moment to connect. It doesn't have to be meditation or prayer. It can be a walk in nature, or some other similar activity. The mind needs to calm down, the breathing needs to slow down, and you need to feel that unshakeable peace. (Turner, 2014, p. 314) It is really crucial to settle down and give yourself some time for yourself, so that you can go in search of that inner peace and escape for a while from the hustle and bustle of your daily life. To refocus on the present moment, on the sensations we feel in the here and now, to experiment and become aware of being alive.

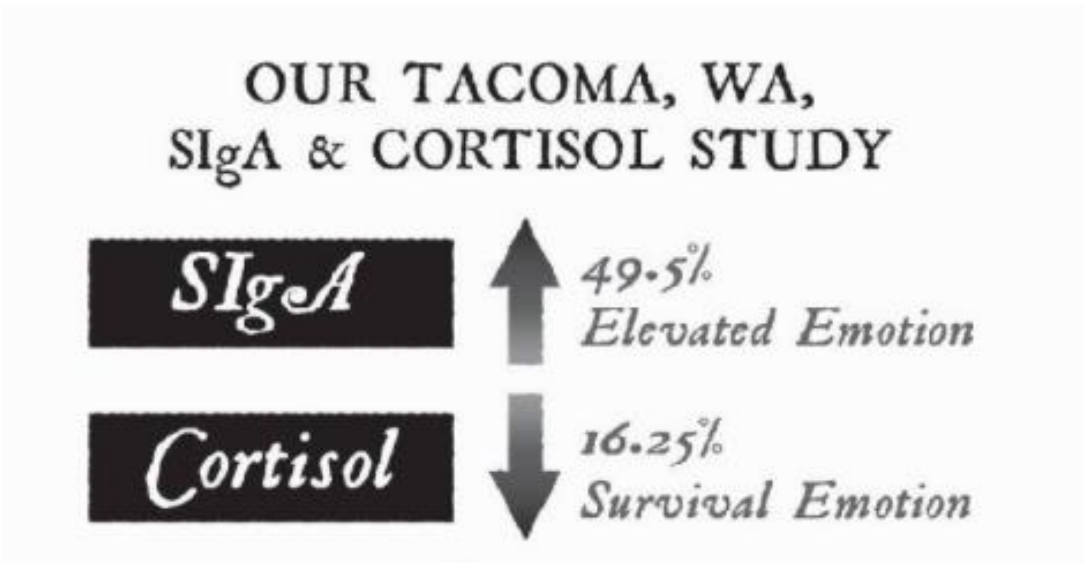


Figure 5: Epigenetics changes after the four-day meditation training. Source: Dispenza, 2017, p. 161.

When we are in a meditative state we begin to feel a certain appeasement and this is due to the different chemical reactions that take place in our bodies at that time. In a study on the effects of meditation conducted by Dr. Joe Dispenza (2017), cortisol circulation and immunoglobulin levels (SIgA) were measured in 120 people before and after a four-day meditation-training period. (p. 159) The goal was to see if there were any epigenetic or chemical changes that occurred after their internal work. After carefully analyzing the results, they noticed that the cortisol level of the

majority of participants had decreased, which meant that they were no longer in survival mode and therefore no longer permanently stressed. But the most important part was that their immunoglobulin levels rose from an average of 51.5 to over 83 to the upper limit of what is considered high and some people even had levels greater than 100. Immunoglobulin is the primary defense against bacteria and viruses and is therefore essential to the proper functioning of our organism. Through meditation and by reaching states of high emotion, even for just a few days, their bodies began to believe that they were in a new environment, allowing them to signal new genes and change their gene expression. (Noonan & Schomer, 2017, 1:20:00)

This means that we don't need an exogenous substance to heal us. We all have the power from within to regulate the genes that make IgA within days. Something as simple as going from a high state of gratitude, joy, love or inspiration for five to ten minutes a day is enough to produce significant epigenetic changes in our health and body. (Dorjee, 2010, p. 5) We now acknowledge the importance of positive emotions and the long-term impact they have on our bodies.

10.3. Clear intentions and high emotions

The final lever that needs to be considered and that plays a central role in creating a healthier workplace for employees is the work on managing their emotions, thoughts and intentions. These emotions and thoughts are indeed what will determine the state of our inner environment and as stated in the sub-chapter on mindfulness, when it is possible for us to control these emotions and our reactions to them, our inner environment is improved. This has a direct effect on our physical and mental health.

In general, there is an awareness of the beneficial effects of positive thinking. There are many new approaches flourishing these days that sell the merits of this change in thinking. However, we are often less aware of the effects of negative thinking on our daily lives. Not surprisingly, researchers have been able to prove that negative thinking is as powerful as positive thinking. It also influences our lives, but in the opposite direction. When the same mind is engaged in negative suggestions, it can damage your health and the negatives effects are referred to as the nocebo effect. While a placebo of positive thoughts can cure you, a nocebo of negative beliefs can cause any illness just because you believe in them. (Lipton, 2010, p. 178)

It is therefore imperative for people to reconsider their way of thinking, in order to make new choices, to overcome certain emotions, to overcome their limited thinking and to open up more possibilities as a result of their personal changes. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 157)

Trust your emotions. Your emotions represent your feedback mechanism that tells you if you are on the right path to achieve what you want inwardly or not. Ask yourself: How do I feel? If the answer is that you feel good then that's fine, you create a reality and a future that is in line with your desires. This means that your thoughts are positive and that you feed your mind in the right way because it is impossible to feel good and have negative thoughts at the same time. If on the contrary you do not feel good, then you are feeding your body with negative thoughts. Take a moment to take a step back and analyze these thoughts so that you can understand them and transform them into positive thoughts in order to feel better again and get back on the path of your desires. (Byrne, 2008, p. 32)

In order to master one's emotions and thoughts and subsequently one's future, it is fundamental to repeatedly visualize this future and to feel the positive emotions in our heart and mind. All the thoughts, choices, actions, experiences and emotions we experience between our present reality and our future reality become correlations of trajectories that lead you to your target. (Hamilton, 2010, p. 37) The more we keep our future alive and frequently visualize it with our attention, intention and energy, the more that future unfolds as a new reality. All the work therefore consists in visualizing the state or reality we wish to attain and nourishing it with higher emotions and thoughts such as gratitude, love, and joy. We must maintain this energy and not let external circumstances, i.e. our environment, fixed attitudes, negative feelings, or unconscious habits divert you from your goals of well being and life. (Dispenza, 2017, p. 561)

It is very difficult to propose a detailed procedure on how to implement meditation or how to get people to work on these emotions, thoughts and feelings. Each individual has his or her own needs and has a different way of refocusing on oneself. However, it is necessary for each company to take the time to reflect on how best to bring this knowledge and personal reflection. The primary goal of this thesis is to provide this knowledge and to highlight the importance of thoughts and emotions in our daily lives. To make people understand that it is possible to change one's life by working on one's thoughts and emotions, especially through meditation and mindfulness.

11. Conclusion

I'd like to bring up the legend of the hummingbird to close this work. This effect sums up the purpose of this work, which is to act with one's skills at one's own level.

One day, says the legend, there was a huge forest fire. All the animals, terrified, were watching the disaster. Only the hummingbird was active, fetching a few drops with its beak and throwing them on the fire. The other animals said to him: Hummingbird! Are you crazy? What's your motivation? You're not going to put out the fire with those drops of water! The hummingbird simply replied: I know that, but I am doing my part.

This illustrates the importance of everyone and the effect of "doing your part" as well as being in tune with oneself. The human being has so many resources and power within him that it frightens him. Our greatest barriers are the ones we put up ourselves. Just one more drop of water can change the course of things and this is also the paradox of this world. It's not the big things, but small internal changes in ourselves our perception of the world that will have a greater impact. To be a hummingbird is to be a super cooperator and an instigator of change. Leading by example. The hummingbird is at peace with its conscience and has confidence in what it does. It forgives and simply realizes that other animals do not yet have this knowledge. He gives the impulse of unconditional love. He takes what is good in people and forgives the rest. The hummingbird feeds on these good thoughts and gives them back to others. As has been explained throughout this work, we are all connected. So it always receives what it gives back. If everyone follows the hummingbird, then we can change the world. This story can also be likened to Gandhi's quote (n.d.): "Be the change you want to see in the world".

The aim of this work was to bring this awareness that our thoughts and emotions have a great influence on our lives as a whole and can also lead to various disorders and illnesses, primarily due to stress in the workplace. By being aware of this, people will pay more attention to their way of thinking and the impact on their daily life will be felt. The message is simple. Start now to control your thoughts, nourish your soul with positive thoughts and lead by example. Use the different tools presented and find the method that suits you. Meditations, nature walks, sports or many others, will allow you to take time for yourself and to fill your own glass with water so that you can give more to your family, colleagues, work, etc. Your glass of water will never be empty because you will constantly be filling it, taking time for yourself and receiving in return. A simple shift in the way we interpret our environment and you will see the benefits in your daily life.

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Appendix

Eleven steps to a more spiritual company

Eleven Steps to a More Spiritual Company

Tom Chappell, CEO of Tom's of Maine, offers these creative and easy-to-initiate ideas for making any company a more spiritually satisfying place.

1. Help employees connect with nature by bringing as many natural features as possible – green plants, sky, lights and fountains – into offices and factories. Nature is a prime source of spiritual sustenance.
2. When possible, hold at least some meetings outdoors. These nature breaks refresh, revive and can greatly improve productivity.
3. Allow manufacturing staff, in particular, to take exercise breaks, which promote both physical and spiritual wellness. Tom's of Maine also places complimentary fruit baskets throughout its manufacturing plant.
4. Stage frequent company celebrations to acknowledge milestones and achievements. If your monthly production just reached an all-time record, take off an hour or two and throw a simple party or picnic. Pat yourselves on the back.
5. Honor and encourage creative expression by decorating your workplace with employee-made paintings, sculpture, craft work and poetry. Allow everyone – not just communications professionals – to contribute to newsletters and other employee publications.
6. Create an evolving Mission Statement employees are proud to live by. Tom's of Maine held open employee forums for nearly two years before coming up with an initial Mission Statement and separate Statement of Beliefs that everyone was satisfied with. The company continues to hold periodic open meetings to refine and improve its mission.
7. Actively encourage employee education. HR might print up periodic lists of interesting, preferably free or low-cost, courses offered nearby. Define education broadly to include nonbusiness courses, from yoga and meditation to book discussion groups to assertiveness training. Intellectual and spiritual growth often go hand in hand.
8. If your firm participates in trade shows or similar business showcases, rotate attendance by staff, and don't limit participation to marketing staff. Tom's routinely sends manufacturing workers, secretaries, accountants, computer programmers and other "unexpected" employees to such events. It cements their spiritual involvement with the company's goals and purposes.
9. Start holding your meetings in the round. It may sound a bit flaky at first, but a round table, or just a circle of chairs, seems to encourage feelings of egalitarianism and openness. Native Americans traditionally used this format for their councils. Tom's of Maine replaced its conventional conference room table with a round table just a few inches above the floor. Meeting attendees, including board members, sit happily on the floor in a nonhierarchical fashion.
10. Encourage everyone to get to know fellow employees as human beings, as well as co-workers. This was once the rule in corporate America, but has now become the exception. Make a point of finding out about people's families, hobbies, community activities, likes and dislikes. Talk openly and freely about yourself.
11. Encourage all employees to take a turn at answering customer correspondence. "It's a tremendously spirit-enhancing experience," says Nancy Rosenzweig, director of communications. "It puts you at the core of the company's purpose, which is pleasing and satisfying those who use our products. So it makes you feel important and effective."

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