

INNERWORK—OUTER DEVELOPMENT:
AN AWARENESS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

by

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Abstract

I begin by describing basic aspects of the Process Work paradigm, such as: process structure (primary and secondary process, the edge), dreambody, dreaming process, levels of reality. Then I talk about Process Work theory and how it relates to innerwork, and I explore the relationship between process-oriented innerwork and Vipassana meditation; how one benefits from the other, explore similarities and differences, and possible synergies. I also talk about my perspective and experience with organizations and the importance of innerwork and meditation for developing awareness and fluidity within them. In the final chapter I talk about the structure of the Awareness Training Program that I developed and applied in a series of workshops for the managers of an organization, and how it was framed for mainstream business organizations keeping in mind the process structure and roles present. I share the feedback that I got from the participants of the program, and my own reflections as a facilitator, as well as how I plan to integrate them and describe the next steps I am planning for this training program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As my final project I created an Awareness Training Program (ATP). The training's setting was a business organization, and the participants were people who volunteered to be part of this program. I will provide more details later.

The focus of this project was to introduce the participants to key aspects of the process-oriented psychology (POP) paradigm, also known as Process Work, to teach them how to do process-oriented innerwork, and then train them to be innerwork facilitators. What makes this training program unique is that it introduces Vipassana meditation as a first step in learning how to do process-oriented innerwork. To my knowledge, such an intervention has not been done before by practitioners applying Process Work in business organizations.

What drove me to do this is that I have always been interested in the relationship between process-oriented innerwork and meditation, and how both, from my perspective, are synergic tools for personal and leadership development. Another reason why I choose to create an innerwork training program for my final project has to do with one of my life-long deepest interests: inner experiences. This has been an interest of mine ever since I can remember. Many questions come to mind, like: What happens inside a person before they decide to do or say something? Where does the impulse come from? How and when do we decide to change (or not to change)? How can we notice when something wants to change from within us, but we resist it?

This interest in inner experiences drove me to ponder the idea of becoming a priest. This came naturally since I was born and raised in a Catholic home and my school education was Catholic as well. My perception of a priest was someone who had

preparation to help people deal and work with their inner experiences, as well as deal and work with his own. Now I know that this assumption is more related with a *dreamfigure* that is still a driving force within me. This idea of becoming a priest stayed with me for a couple of years to the point that I enrolled in the seminary. After almost a year I decided to drop out from the seminary, but my *itch* for exploring and getting to know the inner level (*whatever that meant*) continued, and so my hunt for the right path for me began. This time it manifested as exploring different forms of spiritual practices, rituals, and ceremonies. This helped me have different experiences that were beyond the concept of religion that I knew back then and many of these practices (including meditation) are still present within me.

This drive or energy has pushed me to keep exploring these realms within me, and learn how to help people explore their own; and not only to explore this inner level of experience but also to find the wisdom that lies within. In a way, this has brought me where I am today, to be an organizational consultant. How do I relate the priest dreamfigure and being a consultant? I see being a consultant as a person who is helping/supporting a group (in the case of the priest a parish) to find a way to better understand what is happening and make meaning of it.

This aspect of me is also what brought me to study Process Work. Before I entered the program I only had read a couple of Arnold Mindell's books. These books ignited my curiosity to search for a place to study what I was reading, and as soon as I discovered there was a program that prepared facilitators to use Process Work in a group setting, I knew it was the program for me.

I still consider myself a beginner regarding Process Work. The MACFOC program has marked only the beginning of my studies in Process Work. But from the Process Work pie, the slice that represents innerwork holds a special place in my heart since it was the first aspect of Process Work that I learned about. Innerwork was the doorway that introduced me to this new way of thinking (and dare I say living?), and it has been a huge addition to my personal, leadership, and facilitator development. I see innerwork as a personal practice that sometimes is almost undistinguishable from my meditation practice. This is why I choose teaching about innerwork and meditation as my final project.

My main objectives are to: (a) help participants become more aware of their inner experiences, (b) become more comfortable with acknowledging and exploring them, (c) teach them how to make use of whatever is happening inside of them in the moment by finding its meaning, (d) draw some insight for the larger perspective of their lives, so they can grow and learn from it, and (e) support them in integrating this as a life practice. I am still learning to do this when I am in the middle of a difficult situation; like a conflict I may be part of or while facilitating a hot conflict. The art of noticing and bringing things to the present moment, in the midst of things happening fast, is a life-long learning path, which demands discipline and courage to practice. The goal of this project is to “*get the ball rolling*,” in other words, to get them (the participants of the project) started in their own development path, and leave them with enough tools so that they can continue using them on their own, and helping others to start doing the same.

I decided to put this program together to get my own “*ball rolling*” on integrating what I have learned from my personal meditation practice and what I have learned so far

about Process Work, to consciously focus on this subject that interests me, and start exploring and discovering what I know, as well as, do the same for the things I need to learn more about.

My basic assumption about leadership development is that leaders who are aware of their inner experiences will have a better chance at leading groups and organizations into sustainable growth and development, using Otto Scharmer's concept from his book *Theory U* (2009), working with the *blind spot of leadership*, meaning working with the inner place from where we lead. Traditionally in organizations, people tend to get promoted based primarily on their technical skills, but leading and managing teams involves another set of skills: emotional and relational, personal power, dealing with resistance to change. Being aware of our inner experiences helps us be aware of the inner platform from where we are responding, and also point to the emerging aspects ourselves. Process Work gives us tools to integrate these aspects to have access to all of our personal resources that make our own personal leadership style.

In this contextual essay I share some basic aspects of the process-oriented paradigm that have shaped my perception on inner development, innerwork and its relationship to meditation. I explore the reasons why I think it is important for organizations to have this type of training and development for their members. I also share my experiences during the design, implementation, and feedback, as well as share my reflections on how this training program came to life and what are the next steps for this project.

Chapter 2: Basic Elements of the Process Work Paradigm

In this chapter I will explore some of the basic aspects of Process Work, also known by its more formal name as process-oriented psychology; some of its central ideas and concepts that make this paradigm unique. The ideas explored in this chapter are central to the evolution of this essay, as I will be focusing on a particular part of the Process Work practice: innerwork.

Process Work is a paradigm that has been in constant evolution since its creation in the late 1960s and early 1970s by its founder Dr. Arnold Mindell. Process-oriented psychology stems out of Jungian psychology, and has roots in many different disciplines such as: Taoism, quantum physics, shamanism and aboriginal wisdom, Buddhism, alchemy, information and communication theory, systems theory, and many others.

This paradigm has expanded from a psychological or psychotherapeutic paradigm to an awareness paradigm. It has expanded from focusing on individual, couples, or family therapy, to include group work and conflict facilitation. It has also evolved to include working with people in different states of consciousness, such as extreme states and comatose states.

The latest stages of evolution have been the focus on sentient awareness and earth-based methods such as *vector work*, which is a way of working with inner experiences through noticing the tendency of such experience to move us in a particular direction (north, south, east, or west). The central idea behind this method is the *big U* which is the pattern that emerges and connects all of our *directions*.

The Big U is a pattern, an interpretation, and an experience of the essence and sum of all the parts. Getting to know that U is crucial. It inspires you, carries

you, and . . . makes life a path of least resistance, or least action. (Arnold Mindell, 2007, p. 47)

The latest expansion of Process Work is the *processmind* concept, and method. This can be described as the intelligence and organizing field that guides our personal processes, but is also a meditation practice that helps us stay close to this organizing wisdom.

Process Work is an awareness-based paradigm whose main objective is following whatever is trying to happen in the moment. A Process Work practitioner, when working with a client, uses her awareness to notice experiences, events, signals or pieces of information, and follows them. Whatever is happening in the moment is valued as important, and is even considered needed for the information that it carries for the client. The Process Worker joins with the client in unfolding the experience or signal. In other words, she stays close to whatever is happening and however it is manifesting, long enough so its inherent meaning is able to emerge and becomes evident to the client (be it an individual, a couple, or a large group).

Process Work has a teleological approach to events, dreams, symptoms, conflicts, and so forth. Having Jungian influence and background, Mindell in his book *Dreambody*, explores how Jung's perspective on psychology influenced him: "He [Jung] stepped out of his own medical heritage by showing that the psyche was not necessarily a pathological phenomenon but a meaningful realm of events with its own inner structure and flowing processes" (Arnold Mindell, 1982, p. 40).

I would like to focus on some key aspects of this general description of Process Work that I have just made. Though I will be discussing many different aspects of

Process Work, its exploration in this essay will be focusing on the aspects that inform and define Process Work's innerwork.

So let me take a few steps back and frame a couple of concepts. The idea of *process* is a central concept of Process Work, “[It] refer[s] to changes in perception, to the variation of signals experienced by an observer. The observer’s personality determines which signals he picks up, which he is aware of and which he identifies himself with and therefore reacts to” (Arnold Mindell, 1985, p. 11). In other words, moment to moment there is a flow of information and changes that affect the part of us that we identify with as the “me” or “I,” whether we are aware of this effect or not. From this perspective, awareness is not a fixed thing; it is a changing flow as well. In different books, Arnold Mindell has used the metaphor of a train to explain the concept of *process*; the flow of process is the train moving down the rails, and the things that we identify with are the stations this train visits from time to time, such as: depression, back pain, a mood, and so on.

This flow is mainly divided in two forms, *primary* and *secondary processes*.

Primary processes are closer to awareness, and include content, that is that which you talk about. Secondary processes are all the unconscious phenomena, like body symptoms, of which you are vaguely aware, and to which you have very little relationship, that is, which you cannot control. (Arnold Mindell 1985, p. 6)

The things that are closer to our momentary awareness in most situations are stated by an “I” statement, “I’m an active person . . .” or “I’m passive . . .” These are examples of being identified with an experience and therefore experiences belonging to the primary process. An example of a secondary process can be seen in something like, “this is making me feel depressed.” In this sentence there is a *not me* who is *making me feel depressed*. Process by its own nature, is in constant change, so what is closer or further

from our attention from one moment to the next changes, this means that if something is primary it does not mean that it will stay like that for ever.

Now, what separates or divides processes into primary and secondary is known as the *edge*. An edge is a limit of our momentary identity. It is the boundary between the worlds of our known and unknown experiences. The edge is supported by a belief system which supports the marginalization of the *not me* experience, because it clashes and is against this belief system, or is an experience so new and unknown to us that there is not enough context to be able to identify with this experience and accept it as *me*. When we come to an edge we feel nervousness, maybe a bit confused, overwhelmed, and so forth. The edge is what splits primary from secondary material or processes, this secondary material then manifests itself in unconscious ways such as: Dreams, body experiences, moods, relationship conflicts, and so on. If there is no conscious effort to integrate this secondary material over time, the different aspects of our client or ourselves that are on the other side of the edge will be *lost*, in the sense that they will not be accessible as personal resource.

I mentioned earlier that one of the main objectives of Process Work is *following the process of whatever is trying to happen*, so let us dig deeper into exploring these ideas. So far, we have explored the idea of *process* and how it is divided into primary and secondary processes, and what divides them, the *edge*. Now we will explore some other aspects of Process Work that are crucial to explain this paradigm.

One of the fundamental concepts of the Process Work paradigm is the dreaming body. The dreaming body is a concept that Arnold Mindell came up with (or we might say, discovered as well) as an attempt to integrate the body and mind experiences. “The

Dreambody appears as sentient, generally unrecognized sensations that eventually manifest in dream images, body experiences, and symptoms. The dreaming-body bridges the gap between our measurable, physical bodies and the immeasurable experiences of the so-called mind” (Arnold Mindell, 1982 p. 12). With the dreambody concept, he established a direct connection between body experiences, dreams and feelings, and suggested that we could trace dreams to body experiences and body experiences to dreams, and not only are they connected but are meaningful and hold important information for our development. The dreambody is like a field where these experiences or dreams happen; these are manifestations of the process of that dreambody, also known as dreaming process. We could say then, that the dreambody is a pipe and the process or dreaming process is like water flowing through the pipe, and this water carries important information for us.

Later on, for the evolution of the paradigm he went even further to include the idea that “[The] dreambody is a deep sensation that is personal, but which also belongs to the world. Messages we get from our bodies and dreams are meant in part to be shared with the world around us” (Arnold Mindell, 1982 p. 21). Here Mindell introduces the connection between the individual and collective experiences (this includes groups, organizations, countries, and the planet itself). We could say that it is a field (individual) within a larger field (collective), and that there is an interconnectedness of all these experiences or processes, and that there is value for us individually to receive and integrate those messages, but it is as important to share these messages with the world. This evolution of the dreambody or dreaming body is an important aspect of the process-oriented group work known as Worldwork.

Thus far we have talked about *process* as a flow of information, experiences, and awareness; we have also talked about the dreaming body and its *field-like* quality that holds the mind-body connection; and how personal experiences are linked, and hold value and meaning for the collective whether this means a team, group, nation or planet, a collective field. By going over these aspects of Process Work we can begin to notice that there are different levels of experience that come into play in the Process Work paradigm, which means that different forms of awareness and different ways of focusing our awareness might be needed in working with these different aspects of what we are calling *process*.

Levels of Experience or Reality

The first general approach of dividing the levels of experience or reality from the Process Work perspective would be to split them into two basic groups: Consensus reality (CR) and nonconsensus reality (NCR).

CR corresponds to the majority views and statistical norms. It is a collective understanding about the nature of reality. NCR consists of subjective, dreamlike experiences that are not generally consented upon as “real,” such as dreams, feelings, fantasies, projections, and other experiences that make up our inner world. (Diamond & Jones, 2004, p. 21)

This collective understanding of what reality is and is not, tends to favor (especially in western civilization) that which can be measured, such as weight, objectives, and such. In other words CR is more valued in society; so NCR experiences automatically are perceived as less valuable or less important. Favoring CR over NCR *marginalizes* NCR experiences. “Marginalization means that something that was in the center of your awareness—like frustration or tiredness—is placed in the ‘margins’ of your focus where you can barely see it” (Arnold Mindell, 2000, p. 33). When something in you gets

marginalized, you can barely access it. It becomes a vague experience. It is like trying to notice something clearly from the corner of your eyes while looking straight ahead. You cannot quite make out what is in the margins of your vision. From Arnold Mindell's perspective, not paying attention to this dreaming background (nonconsensus reality experiences) has become a global epidemic: "People everywhere suffer from a chronic form of mild depression because they are taught to focus on everyday reality and forget about the Dreaming background" (Mindell, 2000, p. 7).

Now, let us go back to the CR and NCR levels of reality (dimensions of experience). There is a subdivision that we can make in the nonconsensual aspect of reality. We can subdivide NCR into: Dreamland and Essence. So the continuum might look something like this, from a more concrete and consensual reality to the less concrete and subjective aspects of reality.

Consensual Levels of Reality (CR). The everyday reality, bound by time and space, objects, rational ideas, people and places, body symptoms, concrete. Everything your normal way of seeing and perceiving can notice.

Nonconsensual Levels of Reality (NCR). There are three major levels.

Dreamland. This level is not only experienced when we are sleep. This level and the experiences from it can be noticed while sleeping (in dreams), or while awake (in fantasies and daydreaming). The different parts of these dreams and / or fantasies are aspects of dreamland, known as dreamfigures, roles, timespirits, and so forth. To access this level we need a different kind of awareness and require the skill of detachment.

In between the levels of Essence and Dreamland. Experiences manifest as "flirts" or flashing signals that point to this subtle field of reality.

Flirts are the first way in which the essence world arises. The essence world appears as quick, flickering nonverbal sensations, visual flirts, moods, and hunches. Such experiences occur very rapidly such as our attention being caught for a split second by the brilliant color of a flower. (Amy Mindell, 2002, p. 8)

Essence (Sentient, Dreaming, Dreamtime). This is the level of preverbal experiences that are as difficult to express as to notice. These subtle experiences are vague sensations that are almost ungraspable; this vagueness can be the experience of a tendency for something to happen, vague intuition, or subtle feeling.

The Dreaming Process manifests on all of these levels and depending on the situation, we can notice something on a certain level. So depending on the moment we might be more aware of certain experiences on certain levels rather than others. The idea behind Process Work is that if we are able to catch this “something” (a signal or presignal) we can follow it and find the meaning behind this certain “something” and use this meaning to know ourselves in a deeper way, and perhaps grow as individuals, in our relationships and the world at large.

A signal is the basic form in which we can notice the presence of something happening on the CR level of experience. In Process Work the practitioner follows signals on CR level but also follows them on a non-CR level (the dreamlike aspects of double signals and presignals). Signals on CR and non-CR level point to the dreaming process that is happening. “Process is information which comes to you in especial ways or channels such as seeing, hearing, moving, feeling, relationships, and the world” (Arnold Mindell, 1985, p. 16).

Mindell expanded the Process Work paradigm by including presignals

[which] can be experienced as subtle tendencies that occur *before* they can be verbalized, such as a slight tendency to move before actually moving, vague intuitions, and very subtle feelings. These pre-signals, or sentient experiences as

he [Mindell] called them, are like seeds from which more overt signals and experiences arise. (Amy Mindell, 2002, p. 3)

Now, let us move on to how the dreaming process manifests on the different levels of reality. For example, let us say that one day you wake up with a vague sensation that shifts or changes the way you usually feel when you wake up, something like a subtle mood, but you do not notice it so you start your day with a particular experience of something you just can not get your hands on. Later that same day, you catch yourself daydreaming about “speaking out” on some of the issues that lately have been affecting the office environment, and by the end of the day you find yourself involved in a conflict with one of your peers about something he said about one of your ideas.

This is an over-simplified example of the different levels of experience and reality. First, the vague sensation of a subtle mood is an example of an essence level. This level requires a special focus of awareness and detachment (meaning an inner distance that gives us enough space to notice what is occurring), to notice and pay attention to it. Second, daydreaming or fantasizing about something is an example of a dreamland experience, the images, feelings, and the roles or actors of the fantasy are clear and are part of the experience, unlike the essence level where there are no various parts of the experience. Finally, the actual conflict, the words, gestures, and so on happen on a CR level in the “real” world.

As I have mentioned before, there are different types of awareness or attention required for each level. “Borrowing from Carlos Castaneda’s writings, Mindell used the terms ‘first attention’ and ‘second attention’ to distinguish between different types of awareness and their relationships to consensus and non-consensus realities” (Diamond &

Jones, 2004, p. 23). *First attention* is used to perceive events, objects, everyday situations and it is our “normal” way of perceiving. *Second attention* is needed to become aware of the unconscious, dreamlike experiences that are beyond the “normal” aspects of everyday “reality.” It requires a certain detachment to notice things from a different perspective; it is like taking a step outside of ourselves to observe what we are doing, explore it, and observe what is behind what we are doing. There is also a *third attention*, this is a way of looking and perceiving that is described by Arnold Mindell as “lucidity” in his book *Dreaming While Awake*. This lucidity or third attention is a sentient attention, it notices small tendencies or impulses or fast flashes of experiences.

Up until now, we have used the metaphor of the flow of a river to exemplify the flow of process. I will use water in its different states: solid (ice), liquid (water), and gas (water vapor) as a metaphor for the different types of awareness and levels of reality. *Consensus reality* would be water in its solid state (ice). Ice is hard, you can grab it, and if placed on a smooth surface you could notice it quickly since it pops up from the surface. No real awareness effort is needed if someone were to throw an ice cube at us, and we would most likely feel it when it hits us. *Dreamland* in this metaphor is like water in its liquid state. It is not so clean cut any more; you cannot hold water in your hands but you can feel it. It requires a different approach. Imagine the same smooth surface with water on it, depending on how we are looking at the surface, we might not even notice it is there; we might only notice it when looking at it from a certain angle, when the light reflects off of the water. In this case you may need to shift your way of seeing to perceive the water on the surface. Finally, the *essence* level is vaporized water. Water vapor cannot be seen easily, special awareness must come into play, and then we

would probably perceive the vapor as humidity in the atmosphere or as condensation in the smooth surface used in the other examples.

Table 1

Aspects and Levels of Reality

General Division Levels of Reality	Specific Level of Reality	Signals	Attention	Water Metaphor
Consensus Reality	Consensus Reality	Time, space, weight, consensual aspect of signals, problems, disturbances	First attention	Water as ice: you can touch it and feel it, very obvious
Non-Consensus Reality	Dreamland	Subjective, nonconsensual aspects of signals, experiences, feelings, dreamfigures, roles, ghost roles, fantasies, moods.	Second attention	Water as liquid: you can touch it but not hold it, you can notice it but need a different type of awareness a change in perception.
	Between Dreamland and Essence	Flirts	Second attention	Water as vapor: you can only notice its presence through its effects, such as condensation in a surface.
	Essence Level	Pre-signals, tendencies, impulses, vague intuitions, subtle feelings, very subtle moods / atmosphere.	Third attention	

Following up with the initial idea of *following the process that is trying to happen*; we have so far gone over some of the concepts inherent in this sentence. We reviewed what *process* means from a Process Work perspective, and how *process* holds

meaning which supports our development, the multiple manifestations of process in the dreamingbody (dreams, body symptoms, conflicts, etc.) and how this dreaming body also holds meaning for the collective. Behind the idea “. . . *that is trying to happen*” we have explained how some beliefs act as edges that split the flow of the process into primary and secondary, and how the secondary process tries to manifest on the other side of the edge. This manifestation can be experienced on different levels, from the most to the least tangible (CR and non-CR). We reviewed how marginalization of sentient experience and flirts happens from privileging consensus reality aspects of our daily lives, and how we need different forms of attention to notice focus and work with experiences happening on the different levels (first, second, and third attention).

Now we will explore the following aspect of Process Work: Who is the one that follows the process? In the beginning of this chapter we mention an imaginary practitioner supporting a client by following a particular manifestation of an experience, a *signal*. The awareness of the Process Work practitioner is used to follow and facilitate the client’s process. These two roles, *Practitioner* and *client*, are present in different ways depending on the setting. For instance, in the therapeutic setting the therapist and client occupy those roles; in a group setting, the facilitator plays the practitioner role. In the next chapters I will be focusing on yet another aspect of the Process Work paradigm, *innerwork*. In this setting both roles (practitioner / facilitator and client) are still present but in a different way, the same person represents both.

Innerwork is a self-facilitated process (self-therapy) where awareness is used to notice an inner or outer experience (a disturbance), on any level (CR, NCR) that is happening, and unfolding this experience to the point where insight arises and there is

relief on some level. You act as your own facilitator; you rely on your inner-facilitator (metacommunicator, observer, inner witness, etc.) to support your inner-client.

Answering the original question, “*Who is following the process?*” in the case of innerwork, the inner-facilitator is the one who is following the process. Process Work uses more commonly the name metacommunicator for the detached awareness that helps us observe from a metaperspective what is happening and communicate from that position. “If we have not actively cultivated the capacity for detached awareness, our perception of our process is not neutral” (Diamond & Sparks, 2004, p. 29). Since Process Work has evolved to become an awareness based paradigm, developing a neutral metacommunicator and a detached one as well is an essential aspect of becoming a Process Work practitioner. Without neutrality about what we observe or without enough distance from what is happening in the moment, there is a bigger chance we might just get stuck in the limit of our awareness. “Without the ability to distinguish perception from judgment and interpretation, it is easy to get lost in reaction to an experience and be unable to enter the dreaming experience itself” (Diamond & Sparks, 2004, p. 30). So working with one’s own awareness and neutrality is a fundamental task for the current and emerging Process Work practitioner. The multilevel aspect of the paradigm demands a highly developed metacommunicator.

Chapter 3: Innerwork and Meditation: Relationship, Differences, and Synergy

The focus of this essay is to share with the reader my thoughts behind the Awareness Training program that I put together. In this chapter we will explore the relationship between *innerwork* and *meditation*, similarities, differences, and possible synergies. I will further explore innerwork, its applications and its main objectives. I will explore some of the existing literature on process-oriented innerwork, and talk about its general structure. I will also explore some introductory aspects of meditation, specifically Vipassana meditation. What are some of the elements of Vipassana practice and its goals? I will also share some of the scientific research that has been done on its effects and benefits. Finally, I will explore the relationship between innerwork and meditation, and do a comparative exploration of the benefits of practicing both.

Process-Oriented Innerwork: Process Theory Applied to Innerwork

So far we have established that one of the main objectives of Process Work is to follow the process that is happening in the moment, the belief that there is meaning in what is happening, and that this meaning brings the person closer to a better understanding of who she really is, as well as a more *fluid* sense of self. In the previous chapter, I explored some introductory aspects of Process Theory, and in this chapter I will explain how those concepts apply, relate, and look as innerwork.

Since Process Work is the “daughter” of Jungian Psychology, naturally we could say Jung’s Active Imagination is part of the story. The following description is taken from the New York Association of Analytical Psychology’s web page: “The object of active imagination is to give a voice to sides of the personality (particularly the anima/animus and the shadow) that are normally not heard, thereby establishing a line of

communication between consciousness and the unconscious.” But Process Work “. . . takes Jung’s philosophy of active imagination, namely, its relationship to the process of the individual, and broadens it so that it becomes multi-channeled” (Arnold Mindell, 1985, p. 77).

Process-oriented meditation might look at a certain moment like active imagination, but goes beyond by including other channels such as movement, proprioception (body sensations), relationship, and experiences happening in the world. Innerwork or process-oriented meditation, not only includes and expands Jung’s *active imagination*, but also includes and expands different forms of traditional eastern meditation techniques. “Process Work has much in common with Soto Zen in that the method of working is the goal” (Arnold Mindell, 1985, p. 7). Meditation arises spontaneously, as Mindell explains in his book, *Working on Yourself Alone*, when our inner life can no longer remain still, when it begins to rumble and dream, revolt and excite us to awake. We continuously use our awareness to discover what is happening in the moment and with that, we also discover the way to work with it. One of the main differences between traditional meditation practices and process-oriented meditation is that distractions (whether auditory, feeling, or visual) are the, using alchemic language, “prima material” that is cooked until it is turned into “gold.”

In the prior chapter we defined innerwork as: A self-facilitated process (or self-therapy) where awareness is used to notice an inner or outer experience (a disturbance) happening in the moment, in any channel (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, proprioception, relationship, or world events), and any level (CR, NCR), and unfolding this experience to the point where an insight becomes evident and there is relief on some level.

Mindell in his book, *Working on Yourself Alone*, differentiates two types of awareness that you work with or develop by doing innerwork, short-term and long-term awareness, and says: “Short-term awareness is channel awareness. It is awareness of temporary changes in signals and consciousness. Long-term awareness is insight into the process of awareness itself . . .” (Arnold Mindell, 1985, p. 112). It is one thing to notice the signals and the channel it is happening in, and another to follow the signal or experience to unfold it until its meaning becomes manifest. This form of awareness (short-term awareness) can answer the question that Mindell recommends for working on yourself: *What channel am I in? Am I seeing, feeling or hearing something?* Then there are deeper questions that Mindell addresses with process-oriented meditation: *Who is meditating? Who are these observations for?* By answering these questions we can begin to notice what the primary and secondary processes to which we are awakening are, in the bigger perspective of our lives.

With the evolution and expansion of the paradigm, many new concepts and perspectives have been included. So let us see how innerwork has shifted with this expansion of the paradigm. In the beginning there was a focus mainly on the signals, channels, edges, the roles or timespirits that these signals unfolded into, and their interaction / relationship with the one who is meditating. Later the paradigm expanded to a more sentient nano-experience level. In the initial formulation of the paradigm, when awareness is used as attention to work with experiences in process-oriented meditation, it includes first attention (normal CR focus) and second attention (focus on subjective experiences, fantasies whether visual or auditory, unconscious movements, hence the question: “What channel am I in?”). With the inclusion of essence level, third attention

comes into play. This form of attention deals with subtle tendencies, vague intuitions, subtle feelings and presignals, which are “Imaginary experiences that precede their ‘real’ everyday appearances” (Arnold Mindell, 2004, p. 12).

The more we keep noticing and become aware of the flow of our personal process, the more fluid and congruent we become. “The way awareness works in us is . . . by constantly and patiently chipping away at our lives in order to bring out our original form, visible in our childhood dream, in our personal myth” (Arnold Mindell, 1985, p. 114). This is more related to the long-term awareness that was mentioned previously. The signals and conflicts that we notice with our short-term awareness are meaningful to the particular situation that we are going through, but also hold meaning and insight for our long-term process, our path to “bring out our original form.” Once again we can appreciate the multilevel aspect of Process Work; we are dealing with a particular situation, but we are also dealing with a larger process.

As a further development of the inclusion of the essence level, Mindell introduced the concept of the *Force of Silence*, which is similar in some ways to Jung’s concept of the *Personal Myth* (which is a life-long process / pattern that can be traced to childhood dreams), and relates with the dreambody (dream-body symptom connection): “Chronic symptoms are koans, apparently unanswerable questions meant to increase our consciousness. Many such symptoms require dropping our everyday thinking and using awareness to perceive the force of silence in our bodies” (Arnold Mindell, 2004, p. 5).

This Force of Silence is related, as well, to David Bohm’s concept of the *Pilot Wave* from quantum physics (which generally speaking is a pattern-like tendency that guides a particle from many possibilities to a certain direction). Mindell explored this

connection with Bohm's concept in his books, *Quantum Mind*, *Quantum Mind and Healing*, and *Earth-Based Psychology*. In his book, *Earth-Based Psychology*, Mindell introduced a new concept known as the *big U* which is “. . . the thread connecting all your dream fragments. It is the sum of all your parallel worlds and contains the major direction of your life” (Arnold Mindell, 2007, p. 44). By aligning ourselves to this big U path, we make life a path of least resistance, or least action, says Mindell.

Simply put, long-term awareness is what innerwork seeks to facilitate.

Coming to a particular conclusion or insight is helpful and interesting, but what usually influences symptoms the most is the awareness practice itself—your access to your own hyperspaces, your expanded sense of reality. Developing moment-to-moment awareness leads you toward an increasingly congruent life style. You become more of who you are. (Arnold Mindell, 2004, p. 57)

Having moment-to-moment awareness means not just having awareness of signals and channels, but being lucid in the different levels of experience in our day-to-day life.

In the latest development of the Process Work paradigm, the concept of the *processmind* deepens the exploration of our day-to-day experiences and life long patterns.

Processmind is the palpable, intelligent, organizing “force field” present behind our personal and large group processes and, like our deep quantum patterns behind processes of the universe. Processmind is an attempt to extend and deepen our quest to know this field and these patterns as they are understood today in physicist by connecting them to experiences studied in psychology and mysticism. (Arnold Mindell, 2010, p. xi)

Innerwork and Its Different Forms and Levels

The following table illustrates relationships among levels of reality and ways of working with one's experiences.

Table 2

Innerwork and Its Forms and Levels

Innerwork Classification	Levels of Reality (Dimensions of our experience)	Awareness / Attention	Innerwork
Classic	Dreamland	Second Attention	Signal-based channel unfolding, Mood work
Sentient	Essence level	Third attention or Lucid awareness	Unfolding Flirts, Big U, Vectors, Earth spot, Processmind

Types of Innerwork. Classic Innerwork Phases: These are adapted from the book, *Working with the Dreaming Body* (Arnold Mindell, 1985, pp. 77).

Phase 1: Self-Exploration. Feel your experience: Body symptom, dream, fantasy, self-talk, double-signal, and so forth. This means becoming aware of the signal, and by doing so, you will notice the channel you are in.

Phase 2: Amplification. Become more aware of whatever the experience is. Make it clearer, make more of it, make it bigger, more defined, louder, and so on, depending on which channel you are in.

Phase 3: Channel Changing. Follow the process of the experience into the different channels that come into play. If you were seeing something, perhaps the experience changes into a movement. Whatever happens, keep amplifying the experience. If you notice a change of channel, simply catch it and start amplifying in that channel. Keep unfolding and following the experience.

Phase 4: Edgework. If you hit an edge (blank out, feel confusion, nervousness, fear, discomfort, shyness, embarrassment, sweating) you might lose the ability to keep track of the experience. In order to go over this edge you can do some of the following:

- Picture someone how can do it (real or imaginary) and become them.
- Use a channel that you are familiar with (occupied channel).
- Picture and explore how the edge figure looks, represent it and negotiate with it; or simply become aware of the overall process, do not push yourself too much.

Phase 5: Completing the Work. Keep following until a sense of completion is reached. Each process will take you different places, some of them might include: pain relief, healing of a symptom, a sense of relief and / or insight.

Sentient Innerwork. Adapted from the book, *A Path Made by Walking* (Diamond & Sparks, 2004, pp. 108). This involves *Unfolding flickering signals in marginalized perception*.

Phase 1. Use your third attention by focusing your awareness on the periphery of your normal state of awareness. A different way to say it is, focus your attention to the unfocused awareness and notice what flashing-small signals (presignals) pop up into your awareness.

Phase 2. Meditate on what you have noticed or caught, identify its quality or energy, and unfold it until this energy becomes clearer.

Phase 3. Shape shift into this energy by feeling its atmosphere and mindset. What would be its worldview?

Phase 4. Once that the worldview of this figure or energy is clear to you, explore its relationship with your everyday worldview or the part of you that noticed the flirt. Stay with that interaction until you feel you are complete.

Why Do We Practice Innerwork?

We have explored many different aspects of process-oriented meditation or innerwork, especially those that focus on different levels (dreamland and essence), and pointed towards some of the objectives of innerwork: On one level, innerwork helps us find meaning, relief, and insight into some experiences that are affecting us. On another level, innerwork helps us, though momentarily, become more fluid and flexible, less identified with states and closer to the flow of the dreaming process, and align ourselves with the Force of Silence, the big U, or the path of least resistance. Finally, by being momentarily in these states of consciousness we become more aware of our overall process.

I will now focus on the reasons why one could choose to do innerwork, assuming that the reader is interested in developing awareness of his personal process, and in stepping into a kind of leadership / facilitating role.

Burn Our Wood: Personal history. Since Process Work is an awareness paradigm, the Process Work practitioner needs to have a certain amount of baseline detachment to metacommunicate about what is happening. Whether it is facilitating a group or in therapy, our personal history (our wood) can be a source of issues that can be triggered and cause us to lose awareness. Innerwork is a tool that we can use to work through those unprocessed issues and “burn our wood” so that our unresolved issues do not *catch fire* so easily in the middle of a session.

Learning from recent experiences. While facilitating, or during a therapy session, the Process Work practitioner can find herself confronted with either unprocessed material or unknown aspects of his or her personality (edges, prejudices, or

secondary material that is triggered by the client, etc.). Innerwork here can be a helpful tool to go back and find the different parts of the dynamic that the practitioner was not aware of, discover and explore the secondary process that got triggered. It is a good opportunity to discover new ways we can facilitate aspects of ourselves.

The more we work with our everyday experiences, whether it is a relationship conflict or world concerning issue that triggers us, the more we become more aware of our inner diversity; the more inner awareness we have as individuals, the more awareness we have to support groups and other people.

Preparation for Future Experiences. The Process Work practitioner sometimes knows the types of clients he or she will be working with, or what type of conflicts he or she will facilitate. In these particular situations, innerwork can be helpful for the facilitator to be aware of the roles, polarities, atmospheres, and personal reactions that she might be confronted with.

Personal Development. There is an aspect of personal development in all of the examples previously mentioned but I want to specifically point out the benefits of practicing innerwork for our personal development: working with our edges, developing our personal awareness, becoming aware of our life myth, staying close to our big U, developing fluidity, and gaining access to our processmind. Another important application of process-oriented innerwork is to help us work through our inner conflicts.

Prevention and World Events. It also helps us to prepare and not be shocked by conflicts we meet on the outside (while facilitating or daily life). Any conflict on the outside can only be present if it is also on the inside. We become prepared for this

external conflict by working on ourselves. It helps us work on body symptoms related to personal process, and in preventing burnout.

Meditation

The meditation style that I focused on and used for the Awareness Training Program is *Vipassana Meditation*, also known as *Mindfulness or Insight Meditation*. This meditation style originates from Buddhism. “Vipassana is a form of mental training that will teach you to experience the world in an entirely new way” (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 32). Mindfulness meditation helps us train the mind to perceive our experiences in a different way, to become aware and train awareness to notice the way we see the world. “Vipassana is translated as ‘insight meditation’ because one of the main effects of the practice is that you get deep understandings about deep universal issues such as how it is that pain turns into suffering . . .” (Young, n.d.). With training in Mindfulness we can notice how pain arises, and then how suffering arises as a reaction to pain, beyond judging whether an experience should or should not cause suffering. This type of training supports noticing that, though related, these are two separate experiences. Vipassana meditation can help the practitioner notice this relationship.

Buddhists describe mindfulness as moment-to-moment awareness. In the initial stages, when one starts to practice mindfulness, it is recommended to use your breathing as a focal point of the meditation. After some practice and concentration is developed, other focal points can also be used, such as emotions and body sensations. The practitioner develops concentration to later focus it on her experience. Besides concentration, one of the skills and attitudes that develop through the practice of mindfulness is *equanimity* which some translate as “even mind” or “balanced mind”; it is

basically an experience of spaciousness that allows the practitioner to stay close to the events that are happening without getting “hooked” on them.

Science and Meditation

In this section, I go over some of the research that has been done on meditation, including studies that have been done in fields such as neuroscience, amongst others. Richard Hanson in his book, *Buddha's Brain* (2009), quotes a saying from the work of psychologist Donald Hebb: “When neurons fire together, they wire together—mental activity actually creates new neural structures” (Hebb, 1949; LeDoux, 2003). So we could say that training your mind to notice could be translated to wiring your brain in such a way that you are more able to notice: emotions, signals, levels, and so forth. Recent studies have demonstrated that practicing mindfulness increases the ability to direct and sustain attention (Jha, Kromping, & Baime, 2007). Directing and sustaining attention translates into presence, which is a quality or a skill, some might say, that is desirable for both the therapist and the facilitator.

Shauna Shapiro and Linda Carlson wrote a book named *The Art and Science of Mindfulness* (2009), where they showed research that is being done on Mindfulness and its relationship with psychotherapy as a resource for training a therapist, as part of the therapeutic process, and as support for the therapist's well-being. Regarding the therapist's training, a couple of studies have shown an interesting discovery. When put together, on one side, a study done by Simon and Chabris (1999) documented that, “When a person attends closely to one thing it can prevent him or her to notice something else;” there is a limited amount of attention and the other stimulus just gets faded out of the picture. On the other side, the second study was done with people that attended a 3-

month mindfulness retreat. This intense training, “Increased control over the distribution of attention so less attention was devoted to the first stimulus, resulting in enough attention remaining to detect the second stimulus” (Slagter et al., 2007). When there is no training on awareness, attention can be placed only on one stimulus, but when there is such training, attention to multiple stimuli can happen. “In clinical work, this ability to attend to a rapid succession of stimuli is essential; otherwise, critical information could be missed” (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009, p. 20) Attention to multiple stimuli (events or signals) is very important in clinical work, or when facilitating a group in order to notice what is happening and how it is happening: tones of voice, body postures, verbal content, sentences’ structure, atmosphere feeling, your inner experience as a facilitator and the experiences of the group, or the therapist’s inner experience and the client’s experience.

Another interesting skill that is developed and promoted through mindfulness training is equanimity, which we defined earlier as “even mind.” In equanimity,

This state of being is not based on standard prefrontal control of emotions, in which there is inhibition and direction of limbic activity. Instead, with equanimity, it is not to reduce or channel that activation, but simply not to respond to it. (Hanson & Mendius, 2009, p. 111)

There is more research available and more to be done, but the main point is that the research hints to the CR benefits of doing mindfulness for the development of a therapist, and from my perspective of a facilitator as well.

Innerwork and Meditation: Where They Converge and Where They Diverge

Meditation and innerwork (Process-oriented meditation) seek one similar objective: awareness development. There are however, differences in the process of arriving at such awareness, the main difference being the focus on “disturbances.” For the Vipassana practice, disturbances or distractions should be noticed, but should not be

focused on nor fought against. One of the first steps of Vipassana training has to do with developing the skill of concentration. During the process you use concentration in order to stay close to whatever your point of focus, and if a distraction occurs, you notice it and return to the object of focus. If a distraction or disturbance, such as pain in the body, or extreme emotion is present, then this can become the focus of the meditation. The process is similar to when the main focus is breathing; you hold the body pain or emotion in awareness until dissolved.

Process Work uses such disturbances as the main focus of its process (cooking process). You explore this disturbance by asking yourself, “What am I experiencing?” and follow the experience through channel changing, noticing and working on edges, staying close to the interaction with the edge figure until “resolution” or insight is reached, which might be nonrational insight but also just a sense of a shift to another level. “What wants to awaken from within through this disturbance?” could be one of the questions that are implicit in innerwork. “What is preventing me from becoming more fluid?” which means less attached to a sense of “I am only this.”

Although both talk about moment-to-moment awareness, Vipassana points to “bare awareness,” which means piercing through the illusion of “reality,” and Process Work points to reaching a more fluid sense of self. One other difference is the flexibility of the form of the practice. Vipassana meditation tends to have a structure that we could almost say tends to be *the same*, so if you get stuck in your practice, you work through it; in Process Work you flow with whatever is present in a way that is organically discovered in the moment.

Yoga and Zen meditation deal with internal dialogue by passively tolerating it until it disappears but reappears again as soon one leaves meditation. If these

fantasies are worked through, they disappear as in ordinary meditation but produce insight as well. (Arnold Mindell, 1982, p. 273)

Placing their differences aside, mindfulness and innerwork, from my perspective, can be very closely related. If both seek awareness development, why not combine them in a way that the practitioner can benefit from doing both? In my opinion, Vipassana can be a very helpful first step towards training people to develop their second and third attention. Vipassana meditation develops the observer (or metacommunicator) and gives this aspect of us enough distance to notice subtle tendencies and emotional tones that might be present in the moment. I have mentioned before that developing a detached or neutral metacommunicator is a needed resource for the Process Work practitioner.

Another interesting discovery that points to the benefits of doing innerwork and meditation, is that “brain studies have shown that imagining something in vivid detail can fire the same brain cells that are actually involved in that activity” (Goleman, 2000, p. 161). By practicing going over our edges, and practice staying close to our processmind experience in the middle of a conflict, we begin to develop the brain areas that are related to these experiences, and this can be helpful for when we are in the middle of a real conflict.

Chapter 4: Aware Organizations Are Learning Organizations

Life in an organization can be a complex matter, since in its heart lay two things: humans and relationships. There are many ways of looking at the dynamic of organizations but we could identify two main polarities: on one side there is the “mechanistic” perspective, in which there is a focus on productivity, uniform performance, linearity, and in which people need to be moved or directed, and so forth; and on the other side we could say that there is the “living system” perspective in which there is a focus on self-organization, experimentation, creativity, chaos, and so on.

The way organizations do business has been evolving. Both globalization and technology have played a big part in shaping how people do business. There has been a shift from only looking at productivity and profit to listening to different voices like the customer, society, and other stakeholders. But still there is something that is being missed in this organizational evolution; more space for the full diversity, richness, and complexity of the human experience.

In the last few years, there has been more focus on the idea of organizations as living systems, and with this focus some scientific metaphors have emerged out of fields of study such as biology. Biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela coined the term *auto-poiesis*. This term points at nature’s tendency to *create itself* into diverse ways and manifestations of life, a capacity to transform itself into richer and more complex ways. Margaret Wheatley, an organizational consultant and thinker who advocates for humanizing organizations, in her book *Finding Our Way* (2005) explores this concept and adds: “Life responds not to ‘survival of the fittest’ but to the greater

space of experimentation of ‘survival of the fit.’” She goes further to say, “Many designs, many adaptations are possible, and organisms enjoy far more freedom to experiment than we humans, with our insane demand to ‘Get it right the first time.’” Wheatley brings different perspectives from different scientific fields such as biology, physics, and chaos theory. One of the main ideas she mentions is the self-organizing capacity that lies within organizations: “Self-organizing systems have the capacity to create for themselves the aspects of organization that we thought leaders had to provide. Self-organizing systems create structures and pathways, networks of communication, values and meaning, behaviors and norms” (Margaret Wheatley, 2005, p. 26).

There is hardly an organization that is completely on either side of the polarity. Most of them fall some place along this “Organizational Continuum,” this being a result of the organization’s culture.

Organizational Culture and Process-Oriented Group Work

In the first chapter I introduced the Dreambody concept as a *field-like* aspect of individuals that connects our dreams, body symptoms, our feelings, and relationship conflicts in a meaningful way. Here I will go over how this applies to groups and organizations, but first let us define what we mean by *field* when applying this concept to group and organizational work: a *field* can be described as a force that organizes and connects the different aspects of the identified *We* (group, business, families, cities, countries, etc.). “We think we manage or organize our lives and groups, but actually fields create and organize us as much as we organize them” (Arnold Mindell, 1992, p. 25). In order to participate in any organizational change process, cultural transformation attempt, or group intervention, the Process Work practitioner or leader needs to be aware

of how this field affects the culture, the organization, and how he or she is affected by the field as well. “Every feeling, thought, movement, and encounter is simultaneously an inner and outer event. Thus meditation or innerwork is a form of worldwork, just as world events are also personal ones” (Arnold Mindell, 1992, p. 26).

Although field and culture are different concepts, cultures have a very field-like nature as well. The Online Webster’s Dictionary defines culture as: “The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.” Also, “The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization (a corporate culture focused on the bottom line).” Any particular culture or belief system implies certain values and behaviors that are allowed or promoted, and anything that is not aligned with these values, goals, and attitudes is unwelcomed.

This is a good example of what we earlier called *primary* and *secondary processes*. A *primary process of an organization* is whatever the organization identifies as “us” or “we.” In the case of a company’s culture, “*our organizational culture*” would be part of the primary process, and so the secondary process would be whatever falls under the category “*not us*” or things that “*happen to us*” as an organization. “Our competition is stealing important managers from our company,” “We are not like them . . . and so forth.”

Now let us imagine an organization where a “harmonious work environment” is part of the culture or value system. Here is a description of the *process structure* (meaning the primary, secondary process, and edge) of this imagined organizational culture.

Table 3

Process Structure Information

Statement: “We have a harmonious work environment.”	
Primary Process	Secondary Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmony • Agreeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicting • Disagreeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edge: To conflict, to see things differently. • The edge figure might sound something like: “Do not say something that could start a conflict.” 	

This is an example of how a statement or a value in an organizational culture brings something to the fore in the way we act, and pushes something else into the background so it does not happen. Whatever is being pushed back does not disappear, but rather manifests as “symptoms,” such as lack of creativity to solve chronic problems, and people leaving the company for lack of passion and commitment, amongst others.

Process Work stresses the need for developing a fluid sense of self, noticing how we are always changing and transforming, but the general tendency is for people and organizations to perceive their identity as a fixed concept: “If we are this something, then we are not that other thing.” This is why developing awareness for individuals and organizations is so important. If we think we are only one aspect of ourselves, we marginalize all other aspects, which try to find a way of calling our attention, to wake us up to our full potential.

Just as your personal learning depends on how open you are to your various parts, feelings, and dream figures, an organization’s self-discovery process depends on openness to the diversity of its individual members, and the diversity of their inner and outer worlds. (Mindell, 2002, p. 3)

At the heart of Process Work lies the idea of *deep democracy*, which claims, “All people, parts, and feelings are needed” (Arnold Mindell, 2002, p. 13). Valuing all of our parts means making space for the aspects of ourselves and our organizations with which we are not familiar, we do not like, or even feel intimidated by.

Process Work is an awareness paradigm. With and through awareness of the interaction of all the sides is how we learn about the groups that we are a part of. Arnold Mindell in *The Deep Democracy of Open Forums* (2002) talks about the importance of awareness training for leaders, politicians, and whole organizations. He says in the initial chapter of this book

Most organizational and world leaders, activists, and politicians have little training in understanding people or helping groups change... the lack of conscious leadership is why troubled organizations turn against their trouble, and conflict with conflict. They assume the existing conflict is *wrong*. (Arnold Mindell, 2002, p. 4)

It is through awareness that we can find meaning and importance in something that apparently might be “bad” or “unwanted”. From the Process Work perspective, conflict is its own medicine if we have the awareness to navigate through the conflict.

An example of *fluidity* and *awareness* is when an organization identifies itself as an *expert*. Using Process Work language we could say that this is the organization’s primary process; so *not being an expert* would be connected to their secondary process, the *student* or *apprentice* aspect of the group. Awareness becomes important for the leader so he or she can notice the signals that point to the group only identifying themselves as *experts*, by noticing the signals the Leader can potentially do something about this dynamic. If there is no one to bring awareness to the group about this dynamic the possibility of learning new things is marginalized, so there is little room for

improvement, or for new things to come from inside of the organization. In this imaginary situation, we would say that the group has a belief or an *edge* to showing aspects of itself that relate to *not knowing*; small things like even asking for help might be an issue for members of this group.

Developing a fluid sense of self in this example would mean for this group to begin being able to *flow* between *knowing* and *not knowing*, between being an *expert* on a certain topic and being a student or inexperienced in another. That way there is room for speaking from their expertise when needed and feeling good about it, and also for speaking from their *inexperience* when not knowing and feeling good about that also. From the deep democracy perspective every side is welcomed and seen as a needed aspect of the system.

Organizations and Innerwork

In the last chapter we explored some of the reasons or ways innerwork can be helpful for facilitators or leaders, which include: (a) Burning your wood (or processing your personal history); (b) learning from recent experiences; (c) preparation (for a meeting, working with a particular group, etc.); (d) personal development; and (e) Prevention and world events. All these are different ways that innerwork can be of use to the development of a person in a leadership position; innerwork helps the leader develop awareness and a fluid sense of self. The more she can do it for herself, the more she could potentially support a group or an entire organization to do the same.

Let us imagine a typical situation: The manager of a group needs to prepare for a meeting knowing that in that meeting his boss will be present. He is feeling a little nervous about presenting the monthly report with him in the room. What we usually do

is that we push aside whatever we are feeling in the moment and *power through* the experience. By marginalizing this we are not getting rid of the experience, we only become unaware of it. Coming back to the imaginary situation, during the presentation, the manager is trying to impress his boss and is pretending everything is all right and is looking calm. This imaginary situation would probably end up with the manager acting out in an insensitive way with somebody. In this example, the manager is being insensitive to his situation by not acknowledging his own feelings; by doing this he finds himself unconsciously stuck in a *power through* attitude or role; this role will just *power through* everything but in an unconscious way.

In this scenario it would be helpful for the manager to use process-oriented innerwork as a way to prepare for the meeting, for two main reasons. First, from a Process Work perspective, the very thing that is disturbing us (the manager's nervousness) holds the solution, in that by going into the experience and exploring it, the manager would have not only transcended the affect, but would have found its implicit lesson; by following this experience and perhaps exploring the energy of "the boss," what is it about this energy that makes this manager nervous? By exploring this energy and accessing it as an aspect of his or her personality, this manager could be able to use this energy instead of being a victim of it. Additionally, by exploring his or her personal experiences this imaginary manager will get to know himself or herself more deeply. By working with our own experiences, we discover disavowed aspects of ourselves and develop a deeply democratic attitude at the same time.

David Whyte is an English poet who explores life in organizations in his book *The Heart Aroused*. He shares a metaphor, which from my perspective, explains this process-oriented approach to disturbances or problems.

The longer we neglect the fire, the more we are overcome by the smoke. But at least we have the comfort of remembering the old saying “no smoke without fire.” If we are suffering the consequences of asphyxiation from the smoldering fuel inside us, we are at least aware there is a fire and fuel there to find and breath on. (Whyte, 1994, p. 90)

The longer we neglect that which we marginalize and disavow, the more we are “overcome by the smoke,” so every time we feel the *asphyxiation*, we can see this as a signal that there is a *fire* that we are marginalizing somehow.

So far we have explored how a culture’s value system creates a primary and secondary process, and what could be some of the possible organizational or group dynamics that can emerge out of this process structure. We have also explored how a personal experience can affect how you perform in a meeting (or any other setting); and how process-oriented innerwork can be of help as preparation for an event not only by alleviating the problematic experience, but also by helping to integrate the power that the experience carries within itself.

Multidimensional Organizational Paradigm

The process-oriented paradigm is a multidimensional approach to working with individuals and groups. In the first chapter I mentioned some introductory concepts of this paradigm. In this section, I will describe in greater detail the application of these introductory concepts that make this paradigm a multidimensional approach to organizational work.

From chapter 1, we remember the levels of experience: Consensus reality and nonconsensus reality (dreamland level and essence level). In the business world there is a tendency to focus mainly on what in Process Work is called Consensus reality (CR). This means there is a preference to stay with the objective aspects of organizations like: machines, computers, cars, cell phones, metrics, turnover, performance, number of employees, organizational structure, products, strategies, the company's history, etc. So the non-consensus reality (NCR) aspects of the organization get pushed aside or marginalized: subjective experiences, emotions, intuitions, group atmospheres, gossip, and history of the organization or group.

Another way the Process Work approach is multidimensional is that Process Work focuses on whatever level of a system needs the attention: working with an individual, relationship work, small groups, and large group work. At the individual level, the Process Work practitioner or leader might explore a dream, personal vision, or strong feelings that are present for member of the group; at the relationship level she/he might support the interaction and watch for ghost roles that might be present; at the group level, to process a historic situation that has impacted the group (like a merger or losing a client). Process Work also can address the larger process of the world, such as, historic or current events affecting a population, even a whole country, or the world at large.

By acknowledging all these levels, the experience of each individual and the group (and organization) as a whole becomes richer and more meaningful. "Awareness . . . is the power that gives us ongoing access to new states of consciousness and as yet unborn parts of ourselves and the world" (Arnold Mindell, 1992 p. 86).

Organizations are always looking for innovation and through this way of seeing individuals and organizations, we learn that *the new* comes from the *not me*, which is the unknown territory that has not yet been explored. This is why we need to develop openness and awareness to explore the different aspects of ourselves. “*Within what we call problems are paths we have not yet explored.* The momentary awareness of signals and feelings images and motions shows the way” (Arnold Mindell, 2007, p. 8).

A Process-Oriented Perspective on Leadership

Process Work offers an interesting perspective on leadership. It stresses the need for awareness development and using this awareness to notice whatever needs to happen within the leader, the group, and organization. This approach to leadership also offers tools for the individual holding this position and includes the nonlocal quality of leadership in the group and organization.

C. Otto Scharmer in his book *Theory U* (2009) explores the meaning of the word *leadership* through its original root: “The Indo-European root of the word “lead” and “leadership” *leith*, means ‘to go forth,’ ‘to cross the threshold,’ or ‘to die.’” To be a leader sometimes means crossing a threshold for the organization, in Process Work terminology, crossing the *edge*; that which separates us from the new or the thing that wants to come in. We can say then, that *leadership* means facilitating the process of crossing a threshold or edges the organization or group might come across in order to meet their objectives; and through this crossing, become more aware of the group’s and organization’s full potential.

Innerwork and the Leader

In order to be able to support a group through the innerwork process, the leader needs to work to develop his own awareness; this means the leader's skill of noticing what is happening within him/her. This is what C. Otto Scharmer calls "*the blind spot of leadership*" (2009), knowing the inner place from which we are leading. This refers to the inner platform from which we perceive what is happening on the "outside" and relate to it, and how this inner space is usually a blind spot for most of us. An interesting aspect of Process Work that was mentioned earlier is the idea that groups have a *field-like* nature. This means that everything is connected, so personal experiences are collective and collective experiences are personal. Thus by being aware of his or her personal experience and being able to work with it and being informed by it, the leader could align his or herself to the group's natural course. The leader is therefore a role model for the group he or she is a part of. By welcoming what is on the other side of this blind spot, which many times is unknown to us, the leader is able to support the group in doing the same thing as a collective.

Innerwork is a useful resource for the leader in order to be able to handle transitions such as: changing jobs, mergers, acquisitions, new boss, going through a divorce, amongst others. "Uncertainty due to change, whether outside or inside the organization, is natural and normal, and can be relieved by some form of fluidity training focused on discovering, exploring, and walking even the troublesome vectors" (Arnold Mindell, 2007, p. 213). This means that noticing our big U, which is the unifying pattern behind every experience, can relieve these life events and the tensions experienced in

reaction to them. Every direction is needed; we can therefore say that there is no mistake or accident, but just another aspect of the big U.

The most recent development in the Process Work paradigm is the concept of the *processmind* that Arnold Mindell defines in his book *ProcessMind* (2010): “Processmind is the palpable, intelligent, organizing ‘force field’ present behind our personal and large group process and, like other deep quantum patterns, behind processes of the universe” (p. xi). Processmind is a force field, the organizing intelligence behind our life’s experiences, and a natural facilitator that makes sense of such experiences. From our everyday sense of self, many experiences just bother us, but from the processmind perspective we can make sense of it. This force field is a source of deep wisdom and compassion for our personal and professional lives, and getting to know this force field means developing a sense of familiarity with this aspect of us. By doing this, we also become more familiar with its signature presence. “The more you know about your presence, the less confusing or irritating you will be. Why? Because the more you live your presence congruently, the less it has to ‘force’ its way out” (Arnold Mindell, 2010, p. 38).

The Leader in the Field

As we have explored in this chapter, groups and organizations are force fields that hold different roles within them, meaning that every role is in some way present in each of the individuals that form the group and also all of these roles are present in the group’s interactions, at one time or another. One of those roles is *the leader*. While at the consensus reality level the leader is one particular individual, meaning that one specific person carries this role all the time, at the dreamland level, the leader is a role or spirit

that is present in every member of the group, meaning that in any given moment any member of the group can use this leadership position (dreamland position) to guide, facilitate, or support the group into going over an edge, or alleviating a tense atmosphere.

Chapter 5: Awareness Training Program

In this chapter I focus on describing the structure of the Awareness Training Program that I developed and how this training program was part of a larger organizational intervention. I also describe the organizational context where the training program was taught, the organization's and group's culture, and some aspects of Mexico's culture that I believe are important to consider.

Organizational Setting for the Awareness Training Program

The organization where I executed the training program is a business organization in the convenience stores industry. This organization has been a client of the consulting company for which I work, for the past 8 years; we, as a consulting company, have been working with different teams, different levels of the organization, and the change processes that they have gone through over the years. This client is a young organization that has a very dynamic culture and has been growing at a very fast pace, but there is a high focus on operational process and procedures to support this growth. Ever since they began working with us, a focus on the relevance of the development of the human aspect of its employees has grown, and can be seen in the different initiatives that each year the human resources department launches to continue supporting the growth of the people that form the organization.

This organization's primary process has many characteristics that relate to other organizations, such as, a focus on measurable growth and a dynamic atmosphere (always doing something, having a schedule filled with meetings, etc.). These two aspects of the organizational culture can potentially marginalize practices such as meditating or doing innerwork before a meeting, since they are related to standing still, growing in a NCR

way, or doing nothing at all. In other words, recommending to an organization like this one to begin a meditation and innerwork practice, needs to be framed in such a way that it does not get too polarized in relationship to the primary process. A way to frame such practices that I thought could be useful was through the research that is starting to come out regarding the benefits of having a meditation practice, relating and appealing to the aspect of the culture that likes *measuring* results.

We were hired to support four different teams, each one leading different regional operation offices within the company. Each region is responsible for two to three cities. The organizational chart of these regional teams is composed by: a General Manager, at least one Operations' Manager, and Staff Managers (Human Resources, Marketing, Finances, Construction & Maintenance). The intervention that was presented to the client included two levels of work. The first level was a series of workshops whose main focus was on group dynamics, teambuilding, developing communication skills; generally speaking *groupwork*. In the second level, the focus was on the Awareness Training Program. The focus of this program was to train members of the team who volunteered to become innerwork facilitators, so that they could lead innerwork sessions for the team before each meeting or whenever needed. The purpose of this intervention was that after the project was finished, the group could still continue with an innerwork practice.

Team's Setting for the Awareness Training Program

I will focus on one group to describe the process structure and cultural context they are a part of; as this will give insight into the group's field. One of the things that caught my attention in the beginning of the project's presentation, during the leader's introduction of us, the consultants, was something he said: "*When I first heard that these*

guys were coming to work with us, my first reaction was: I didn't think we were doing that bad. Corporate must think badly of us" In the organizational culture, generally speaking, asking for help or receiving help, especially in Mexico, is a difficult step to take since there is identification with the idea of competency and performance.

A second characteristic that I picked up from the group was that they described themselves as being a team that could handle strong confrontations between them. They said: *"Our communication level is great, we just say things directly and strongly and deal with the issue at hand."* At this phase the team was marginalizing their sensitivity, and later during the project the group realized that sometimes they felt hurt by the directness and strength of each other's comments, and that there was a subtle atmosphere in the meetings of revenge. Ever since they became more aware of what was happening, their power as a group has become more balanced, and trust amongst the team members has increased; there was no longer a *revenge-like* atmosphere of "I will take my revenge next time."

Table 4

Team's Process Structure

Primary Process	Edges	Secondary Process
1. Dynamic	"You need to keep yourself busy."	1. Something slow
2. Growth	"Keep growing; it is a race against the competition."	2. Staying the same
3. High value of operational process and procedures	"Things need to be structured, ordered."	3. Diversity in ways of doing things
4. Strong confrontation (tough team)	"There is only one way of doing things." "Don't show your hurt."	4. Sensitivity

Awareness Training Program Structure

The whole intervention consisted of seven sessions. The first session is the project presentation where we explain the whole project and do one-on-one interviews. After the first session, there are three teambuilding and vision development workshops; between each workshop there are three sessions that focus on the people who are being trained as innerwork facilitators.

The general goal of the training program has two main levels of focus: individual and group. At the individual level, the goals for the innerwork facilitators are to: introduce some aspects of the process-oriented paradigm to the participants of the program, develop the participant's inner awareness of their moment-to-moment experiences, develop basic skills for deepening and making meaning of such experiences, and to teach the participants basic facilitation skills to empower them to facilitate innerwork in a group setting. At the group level, the goal is to: develop group awareness around how they are affected by experiences that happen on consensual and nonconsensual dimensions, and how these experiences have an impact on their daily interactions.

The training's objectives for the innerwork facilitators are: to help the participants gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of their own personal psychology, growing edges, presence, leadership, and facilitation style. This will help them become aware of their personal power and how to use more it consciously, develop a capacity of detachment and fluidity in order to be able to take the other side, introduce them to a basic structure of conflict, and finally, to develop their facilitation skills for group innerwork practice.

Session One

Theory. The first session of the training program focuses on introducing some benefits of having a meditation practice: stress reduction, self-awareness (developing the observer or witness), empathy, and equanimity. It also focuses on how awareness development can be applied. I shared some steps to work on changing automatic behavior based on awareness.

1. Become aware (notice) of the behavior: Notice yourself having an automatic reaction that you know you want to change or that you have received feedback on.
2. Acknowledge the limit: What stops you from acting differently? What is the inner value or belief that supports that behavior?
3. Trust the process and have self-compassion: If you are not ready to change, do not push yourself too much, trust the process.

In addition I shared with them some stages of change from Hanson and Mendius (2009, p. 61).

1. Stage one: You are caught in the automatic reaction and do not even realize it.
2. Stage two: You realize you have been hijacked by the automatic reaction, but cannot help yourself.
3. Stage three: Some aspect of the reaction arises, but you do not act it out.
4. Stage four: The reaction does not even come up.

I also introduce the idea of the *field-like* nature of groups and relationships, and how we can notice what is happening in the group by sensing the group's atmosphere and being aware of our inner experiences. Finally, I introduce the idea of how anything that

disturbs or is challenging for us holds meaning, and that the solution is present within the problem.

Process structure. Framing the benefits through the research that has been done helps to pace the primary process of business organizations, which relates mostly to profitability and high performance from their employees. Another important aspect, in terms of pacing the primary process, is that as the participants have more practice, they get more comfortable with paying attention to their inner experiences, while at the same time, developing their concentration capacity. Finally, I used a structure of steps and stages to frame how they could apply their awareness for changing limiting beliefs or edges.

Practice. During the whole program the experiential aspect of the training was a primordial focus, meaning that I focused more on the participants having several different experiences than sharing all the theory. In the first session, the participants experienced two meditation sessions. I facilitated the first one and the second one was in pairs, using a meditation script so they could guide a partner through the experience. At the end of their first facilitating experience there was space for self-assessment of their performance; each of the participants wrote about how they felt as facilitators.

Homework. The participants are left with a series of tasks to deepen their experiences. They were to: (a) Start a personal meditation practice 8 to 10 minutes per day; (b) Notice automatic reactions; (c) Start a journal to log questions, comments and improvements on the meditation practice and on the automatic reactions; and (d) Start facilitating group meditation (after 2 weeks of doing just the personal practice).

Session Two

Conversation. In this session there is a section devoted to address questions related to their meditation practice and process-oriented theory. They were also invited to explore their experience facilitating a group meditation.

Theory. Here I introduce the principle of processmind as deep wisdom inherent in us, as the intelligent force field that organizes our personal process and that is the nondual aspect of ourselves, an aspect that can serve as an inner facilitator of disturbances that we experience, and how by staying close to this aspect of ourselves, we can help us to flow between events in a more sustainable way. I describe its meaning, but do not refer to it as “processmind” (for reasons of translation since I have not found a word that I feel keeps its meaning).

Practice. This session begins with a simple guided meditation exercise. The second meditation exercise focuses on channel awareness and amplification; in this exercise we focus on the first experience that the participant notices as an image, sound, or feeling, amplify it and follow the experience. The channel awareness and amplification exercise serves as a preparation for the first processmind exercise, which focuses on just being able to access that aspect of ourselves and staying close to it for a few minutes. The second processmind exercise focuses on discovering the participant’s own natural leadership style.

Homework. The tasks that follow this session are the same as the first session (personal practice, automatic reactions, and personal journal), the difference being that they continue facilitating the group meditation and they start including the processmind meditation.

Session Three

Conversation. Like in session two, there is a section devoted to address questions related to their meditation practice and process oriented theory and explore their experience facilitating a group meditation.

Theory. In this session I introduce the basic conflict structure (your side, the other side, and detached side) to support the idea of fluidity and flexibility in positions.

Practice. This session begins with a simple guided processmind meditation exercise. The second processmind meditation exercise includes working with a disturbance in order to expand the applications of processmind. Finally, the participants work in pairs to facilitate a processmind meditation and do a self-assessment to track his or her progress.

Feedback and Next Steps

The feedback I received from the participants was very enriching for the next stages of development of this training program. I first go into the benefits reported by the participants of the training program and then mention the group (team) benefits. The participants reported the following benefits of doing the training program: Increased levels of tolerance for unplanned situations and circumstances, flexibility in their conversations, developing awareness of their growing edges as leaders and facilitators and an increased capacity to manage stress. On the group level, the reported benefits relate to the group's atmosphere in their weekly meetings, *"We feel more in tune. We became harmonized in our rhythms."* On a personal level, participants reported benefits such as: *"It has helped me to feel more empowered to speak in the group."* *"This has*

helped me to manage stress and maintain emotional stability.” “It has helped me with my relationship with my wife and children, now I’m more understanding.”

The participants mentioned a few areas of opportunity for further development of the training program, one of them being that I had not taken into consideration an important aspect of their organizational culture, which relates to what they call *cascading*, which means that in the organization there is a tendency to share the best practices and relevant new information down the organizational structure. The training provided, was focused on preparing the participants to facilitate innerwork in the team that was participating in the project (the leading team of the regional office). Their feedback included that they did not feel prepared enough to share this with people outside of the team that was part of the project, and asked for more material to be provided in order to be able to do this. Eventually they crossed their edge and started to include processmind meditation practice in the groups that they lead.

Another aspect of the program where I noticed that there is a need to make some adjustments is on the resulting tasks for the participants: personal meditation practice, following your automatic reactions, and writing about it. The feedback I got from the participants was that they did this on and off throughout the program. In retrospect, it feels too demanding to ask a busy executive to start a new practice or discipline, to start noticing things that they did not pay attention to, and to develop a way of logging their experiences. So I’m thinking about exploring ways to provide enough structure to facilitate the logging of experience, such as: providing ideas on how to do this in the hand-outs, some sort of guide on how to describe their experience to develop self-reflection or self-assessment.

Finally, the participants said that they would have liked to spend more time on the topic of the basic conflict structure so they could have a deeper understanding of how to apply this awareness in dealing with a tense situation in a healthier way. I now see this as an important aspect to include in the training program, as one of the core skills to develop, giving them the ability to facilitate themselves in a relationship conflict.

Considering these inputs, I see as a next step developing a *facilitator manual* that should include exercises and recommendations on how to frame this practice when introducing it to a new group. I also plan to include a Frequently Asked Questions section about meditation and innerwork, space for logging in personal experiences of meditation and innerwork practice, as well as experiences of facilitating a guided innerwork in a group setting, and finally, including a relationship conflict section. This facilitator manual, I assume, will help “feed” the primary process of a business organization by giving the program more sense of structure. Another way of including the group’s feedback is to expand the content of the training program to talk more about the nature of conflict and how to work through it on a relationship level.

Final Thoughts

The next steps for this training program are to make this an easier, deeper, and more meaningful experience for the participants. I also need to find a way to help participants notice how they grow through the program through benchmarks or signposts that become marks of their development.

This project has been an enriching experience. It helped me integrate concepts and practices that I was familiar with, such as meditation and organizational work, and a new way to see the world which I am still familiarizing myself with, the Process Work

paradigm. It is such a blessing to be able to dance and wrestle with different paradigms and find a place where they meet. This experience of creating the training program and writing this contextual essay marks only the beginning of my journey as a process-oriented facilitator.

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Appendix A: Spanish Version Handout

PRIMERA SESIÓN

¿Por qué es importante trabajar con nuestro desarrollo interno?

Cuando trabajamos con nuestra capacidad de darnos cuenta, estamos trabajando con el espacio interior desde el cuál nos relacionamos y observamos nuestro día a día. Otto Scharmer en su libro *Theory U* (2009) le llama a este espacio interior “El punto ciego del liderazgo”, es decir la plataforma interna desde donde percibimos lo que sucede “afuera” y reaccionamos ante ello.

El enfoque natural en las organizaciones es hacia “afuera”, y con esto hago referencia hacia lo que sucede en el exterior de nosotros mismos como personas y líderes: con información, eventos, discusiones, planes, estructura organizacional, etc. Pero hay poca atención hacia lo que sucede dentro de nosotros: emociones, creencias inconscientes, ambientes que se generan en los grupos, etc. A este nivel de experiencia le ponemos poca atención y no nos damos cuenta de sus efectos sobre la forma en cómo tomamos decisiones, cómo nos reaccionamos y los efectos que tenemos hacia las personas que nos rodean. Sabemos de la importancia que es tener información para tomar decisiones, desde esta perspectiva las emociones son también información. Hay que darnos cuenta en dónde estamos para saber cómo tenemos que manejar la situación.

¿Por qué la práctica de Meditación?

La meditación es una herramienta poderosa para trabajar con nuestra capacidad de darnos cuenta, ya que durante la meditación buscamos enfocar nuestra atención en nuestra respiración. Cuando recién iniciamos esta práctica es natural que en repetidas ocasiones nos descubramos en distracciones (pensamientos en forma de imágenes o diálogo interior, emociones, reacciones, etc.), el que nos descubramos en estas distracciones no significa estemos realizando mal la práctica. Desde la perspectiva de la meditación simplemente es una oportunidad para regresar nuestra atención a nuestra respiración.

La actitud que fomenta el desarrollo de nuestra capacidad de darnos cuenta es una de *orientación al proceso* (notar qué es lo que sucede durante cada experiencia), en lugar de *orientarnos al resultado* (hacerlo bien o mal). Al tener una orientación al proceso la distracción se vuelve una oportunidad de “darnos cuenta” y regresar a nuestra respiración. Con esto, podemos ver que hay dos recursos que se están desarrollando:

1. por una parte la concentración o enfoque, es decir nuestra capacidad de estar presente en nuestra respiración de manera continua y sin distracción es cada vez mayor (como cuando alguien hace ejercicio y su capacidad aeróbica va en aumento);
2. por otra parte nuestra capacidad de “darnos cuenta” cada vez que nos descubrimos en una distracción o que vemos que emerge un pensamiento o en una emoción, estamos desarrollando esa capacidad de “notar” qué es lo que está sucediendo en nuestro interior.

Es a este espacio al que muchas veces no prestamos atención y por eso es llamado “el punto ciego del liderazgo”.

Un ejemplo de la dinámica cotidiana de nuestra actividad interna es cuando intentamos irnos a dormir. Normalmente cuando intentamos dormir, nuestro diálogo interior evita que podamos conciliar el sueño: preocupaciones, pensamientos, recuerdos, planes, etc. Vienen a la mente, podemos decir que “nuestra” intención es dormir pero la “actividad mental” no nos lo permite. Algo que sucede en nuestro interior evita realizar algo que buscamos hacer.

Beneficios de Tener una Práctica de Meditación:

Experimento:

La Universidad de Wisconsin enseñó meditación a sus científicos del departamento de Investigación y Desarrollo de una compañía de biotecnología que se estaban quejando del paso estresante de su trabajo [...] Después de solo ocho semanas, la gente del departamento de Investigación y Desarrollo reportaron una notable mejoría en los niveles de estrés, y se sintieron más creativos y entusiastas con respecto a su trabajo. Pero sobre todo, sus cerebros reportaron cambios hacia una menor actividad en el área prefrontal derecha (la cual está asociada con generar emociones estresantes) y una mayor actividad en el izquierda – que es el centro del cerebro relacionado con las emociones optimistas y alegres. (Goleman, 2002)¹

Beneficios mostrados en otras investigaciones²:

- Aumento en la activación de las regiones prefrontales izquierdas, las cuales levantan el ánimo (Davidson, 2004)
- Disminución del cortisol relacionado con el estrés (Tang et al. 2007)
- Fortalece el sistema inmune. (Davidson et al. 2003; Tang et al. 2007)
- Ayuda al manejo de enfermedades cardiovasculares, asma, diabetes tipo II, SPM y dolor crónico. (Walsh y Shapiro, 2006)

Etapas del cambio personal:

- 1) Incompetencia inconsciente: no nos damos cuenta de las reacciones que estamos teniendo.
- 2) Incompetencia consciente: Podemos darnos cuenta pero no podemos detenerlas.
- 3) Competencia consciente: Nos damos cuenta de que estamos por tener la reacción habitual, pero podemos darnos cuenta y hacer algo al respecto.
- 4) Competencia inconsciente: Nos damos cuenta de que podemos manejar la situación de una forma diferente.

¹Este estudio aparece mencionado en el libro de Daniel Goleman “Primal Leadership: Learning to lead with Emotional Intelligence. (2002)

²Este estudio aparece mencionado en el libro de Rick Hanson “Buddha’s Brain: The practical neuroscience of happiness, love and wisdom” (2009)

Trabajo sobre reacciones, patrones, creencias:

- 1) Darse cuenta.
- 2) Intentar actuar de forma deseada o explorar qué es lo que evita (frena) actuar de esa forma.
- 3) Confiar en el proceso y tener compasión de ti mismo.

“El progreso es imposible sin el cambio, y quienes no puedan cambiar su forma de pensar no pueden cambiar nada”
George Bernard Shaw

SEGUNDA SESIÓN

Canales

Un canal es una forma como percibimos cierta información a raíz de alguna experiencia (interna o externa). Para efectos de este programa nos vamos a enfocar en los canales: visual, auditivo, experiencias internas (emociones). El tener claro en qué canal está sucediendo una experiencia es de ayuda para hacer contacto de manera más profunda con la experiencia, profundizar en ella de tal forma que se vuelva más claro qué es lo que está sucediendo en nuestro interior.

Nuestro Proceso Personal y su Sabiduría Interna:

Cada uno de nosotros cuenta con una sabiduría interna que forma parte de nuestros recursos personales. Esta sabiduría interna es donde reside nuestro estilo natural para ser líderes y facilitadores, es desde este espacio que podemos manejar el cambio y podemos encontrar sentido a lo momentos difíciles de nuestras vidas de una forma creativa y sustentable.

Ejercicio de Meditación guiada sobre Estilo de Liderazgo³

1. Comienza a enfocarte en tu respiración, hasta sentirte centrado y tranquilo.
2. Desde ese estado interior, imagina una figura imaginaria o personalidad real que represente el estilo de liderazgo que admiras. Siente su ambiente, su presencia y su forma de ser.
3. Ahora intenta expresar esa “energía” en un ligero gesto o movimiento con la mano. Esa es la energía X.
4. Regresa a tu respiración y piensa en la parte de ti que es inspirada por ese estilo de liderazgo. Siente ese aspecto de ti, su energía.
5. Ahora, de busca expresar esa energía también con un gesto o movimiento con la mano. Esa es la energía u.

³Ejercicio traducido y basado en los creados por Arnold Mindell en su libro “Process Mind: A User’s Guide to Connecting to the Mind of God” (2010)

6. Nuevamente regresa a tu respiración. Comienza a hacer contacto con tu cuerpo y ubica en qué parte de ti, es donde sientes que pueda estar la sabiduría más profunda de tu ser.
7. Lleva un par de respiraciones hacia ese espacio y revisa: ¿Con qué punto en la tierra puedes relacionar ese espacio? Comienza a observar el lugar, los colores, los sonidos, comienza a rodearte de él. Date permiso de que te mueva y te respire, hasta que te conviertas en ese espacio.
8. Una vez que estás en ese espacio, revisa en qué parte del lugar puedes identificar la energía X y la energía U. Y ve de qué forma se relacionan e interactúan en ese espacio.
9. Desde ese espacio qué consejo te puedes dar para ser el líder que puedes ser.

“Creo en la intuición y en la inspiración. La imaginación es más importante que el conocimiento. Por que el conocimiento es limitado, por otra parte la imaginación abarca todo el mundo, estimulando el progreso y dando a luz a la evolución. Es, estrictamente hablando, un factor real en la investigación científica.”

Albert Einstein

TERCER SESIÓN

Estructura Básica de un Conflicto:

El desarrollar nuestra capacidad de darnos cuenta es de ayuda para aplicarlo en la facilitación de un conflicto en el que nos podemos encontrar, de manera personal o en un grupo. Existen tres posiciones básicas en un conflicto: tu lado, el lado del otro y una tercera posición neutral o de desapego.

Algo que vale la pena es recordar normalmente ¿qué es lo que hacemos cuando una interacción se torna tensa?: ¿Nos apoyamos lo suficiente a nosotros mismos? ¿Apoyamos lo suficientemente a la otra persona para exprese su experiencia? Y finalmente, ¿Logramos observar desde una perspectiva desapegada el sistema completo?

Quizá tengamos una tendencia a ser inflexibles en nuestras posiciones y al hacer eso nos desconectamos de lo que pueda estar sucediendo con la otra persona, o por el contrario podríamos estar más preocupados por lo que está sucediendo en la otra persona y olvidamos nuestras necesidades. Cualquiera de las anteriores deja una sensación incompleta que puede traer más adelante más problemas.

Algo interesante es que la investigación que se ha realizado sobre visionar e imaginar escenarios ha mostrado, es que al imaginar o visionar el hacer algo causa que las mismas células del cerebro que utilizado para realizar la actividad sean activadas (Kreiman et al 2000). De tal forma que practicar o revivir un conflicto, practicar el mantenerte cerca de tu sabiduría interna en medio de una situación difícil (aunque sea de forma imaginaria) nos prepara para poder realizar lo mismo cuando sucede en la vida “real”.

Ejercicio de Meditación guiada sobre Estilo de Liderazgo⁴

1. Comienza por recordar alguna discusión o conflicto en el que hayas participado.
2. Una vez que lo hayas hecho recuerda la interacción que hubo entre tu y los participantes. Qué era lo que querías transmitir tu, qué es lo que recuerdas que buscaba transmitir el otro lado y recuerda de qué manera se resolvió o se dio por terminada la interacción. Busca tener claro de qué manera los diferentes lados fueron representados.
3. Ahora deja de lado ese conflicto y busca enfocarte en tu respiración, hasta sentirte centrado y tranquilo.
4. Desde ese estado interior, comienza a hacer contacto con tu cuerpo y ubica en qué parte de ti, es donde sientes que pueda estar la sabiduría más profunda de tu ser.
5. Lleva un par de respiraciones hacia ese espacio y revisa: ¿Con qué punto en la tierra puedes relacionar ese espacio? Comienza a observar el lugar, los colores, los sonidos, comienza a rodearte de él. Date permiso de que te mueva y te respire, hasta que te conviertas en ese espacio.
6. Busca permanecer en ese estado de contacto profundo con tu sabiduría interior. Y desde ese estado revisa e imagina cómo podría esta sabiduría apoyar de una forma más profunda, flexible y sensible el lado que representaste tu en la discusión. Toma notas al respecto.
7. Una vez que te sientas completo con esto, revisa de qué forma esta sabiduría podría apoyar al otro lado a manifestarse de una forma más profunda, flexible y sensible. Toma notas al respecto.
8. Finalmente, explora de qué forma esta sabiduría puede apoyar a la interacción completa de ambos lados y si hay algún consejo al que te pueda dar sobre tu propio aprendizaje y desarrollo.

“Uno de los grandes problemas de la historia es que los conceptos del amor y el poder normalment han sido contrastados como opuestos, de tal forma que el amor es identificado como la renuncia al poder, y el poder con la negción del amor... Lo que se necesita es la realización de que el poder sin el amor es descuidado y abusivo, y que el amor sin poder es sentimental y anémico. El poder en su mayor manifestación es amor implementando las demandas de la justicia, y la justicia en su mayor manifestación es el poder corrigiendo y cambiando todo lo que está en el camino del amor”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

⁴Ejercicio traducido y basado en los creados por Arnold Mindell en su libro “Process Mind: A User’s Guide to Connecting to the Mind of God” (2010)

Appendix B: English Version Handout

First Session

The Importance of Innerwork

When we work on our awareness skills, we are working with the inner space from which we relate and observe our day-to-day activities. In his book *Theory U* (2009) Otto Scharmer calls this inner space “The Blind spot of leadership.” This refers to the inner platform from which we perceive what is happening on the “outside” and relate to it, and how this inner space is usually a blind spot for most of us.

The general focus of organizations is on what is happening on the “outside”; I am referring to what is happening in our exterior as people and leaders: with information, events, discussions, plans, organizational structure, etc. There is little attention towards what is happening within us, such as: emotions, dreams, expectations, unconscious beliefs, etc. We pay little attention to this level of experience and we do not notice its effects in the way we make decisions, how we react in certain situations, and the effects we have on the people that surround us. We all know the importance of having the necessary information when making decisions, and from this perspective, emotions are considered information as well. We must know where we are standing in order to know how to properly manage each situation.

Why Meditate?

Meditation is a powerful tool that helps us to work with and develop our *awareness and attention skills*, since one of the basic aspects of meditation is to focus on our breath. It is common for people who are new to this practice to find themselves distracted with inner dialog, memories, emotions and inner reactions to whatever goes through our minds, amongst others, but this does not mean we are doing it wrong. In fact, we can consider this as an opportunity to return and focus our attention on our breathing.

The attitude that truly encourages the development of our awareness skills is a *process oriented attitude* (notice the entire process of each experience), instead of a *result oriented one* (only noticing the end result or outcome). When using a process oriented attitude, a distraction becomes an opportunity to *notice* and return to our breathing. Through this we can notice that there are two resources that are developing:

1. On the one hand we find concentration or focus, meaning our ability of being continuously *present* in our breathing, continuously increasing (e.g., when you are practicing a certain sport and your cardiovascular capacity increases with each workout).
2. On the other hand, our ability to notice every time we find ourselves distracted; we are developing a skill of “noticing” what is happening inside of us.

We rarely pay attention to this inner space, hence the name “The Blind spot of leadership.”

An every-day example of the inner dynamic of our internal activity is when we are trying to fall asleep. For people who have very dynamic workplaces, some times their inner dialog prevents them from falling asleep; concerns, worries, memories, plans, all come to mind. This is an example that can illustrate how sometimes our inner experiences affect us in a way that we cannot achieve what we are trying to do.

Benefits of Having a Meditation Practice

Experiment:

The University of Wisconsin taught “mindfulness” to R&D scientists at a biotech firm who were complaining about the stressful pace of their jobs [...] After just eight weeks, the R&D people reported noticeably less stress, and they felt more creative and enthusiastic about their work. But most remarkably, their brains had shifted toward less activity in the right prefrontal areas (which generate distressing emotions) and more in the left—the brain’s center for upbeat, optimistic feelings. (Goleman, 2002)⁵

Benefit shown in other research⁶:

- Increases activation of left frontal regions, which lifts mood. (Davidson 2004)
- Decreases stress-related cortisol. (Tang et al. 2007)
- Strengthens the immune system. (Davidson et al. 2003; Tang et al. 2007)
- Helps manage cardiovascular disease, asthma, type II diabetes, PMS and chronic pain. (Walsh and Shapiro, 2006)

Phases of Personal Change

- 1) Unconscious Incompetence: We do not notice the reactions we are having.
- 2) Conscious Incompetence: We notice them, but cannot manage to stop them.
- 3) Conscious Competence: We notice we are about to have our usual reaction, but we notice on time and are able to do something about it.
- 4) Unconscious Competence: We notice that we are able to handle the situation differently.

Work on Reactions, Patterns and Beliefs

- 1) Notice what is happening.
- 2) Attempt to act in a desired way, if it is not possible explore: what is it that is holding you from acting the way you want to act.
- 3) Trust the process and be compassionate with yourself.

⁵This research is mentioned in Daniel Goleman’s book “Primal Leadership: Learning to lead with Emotional Intelligence. (2002)

⁶This research is mentioned in Rick Hanson’s book “Buddha’s Brain: The practical neuroscience of happiness, love and wisdom” (2009)

*“Progress is impossible without change,
and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything”
George Bernard Shaw*

SECOND SESSION

Channels

A channel is the way we perceive certain information derived from a specific experience (internal or external). For the purpose of this program, we will focus on the visual, auditory, and inner experiences (feelings or emotions). Being aware of the channel in which the experience is happening helps us be more in touch with the experience itself. By doing this we can deepen it to a point where the experience is clarified.

Our Personal Process and Its Inner Wisdom

Each of us has an inner wisdom that is part of our personal resources. This inner wisdom is where our natural leadership and facilitation style can be found; it is from this inner space where we can manage and facilitate change, and we can find meaning through those difficult moments in our lives, in a creative and sustainable way.

Guided Meditation Exercise: On Leadership Styles.⁷

1. Start by focusing on your breath for a few moments, until you find yourself feeling centered.
2. From that inner state, picture an image, person or dream figure that best resembles the leadership style you admire or look up to. Now feel that way of being, the atmosphere and presence.
3. Try expressing that “energy” in a light gesture or movement with your hand. Let us call it, the X energy. Make a note of it.
4. Return to your breathing, and focus on the part of you that is inspired by this leadership style. Feel that aspect in you, and its energy, also express that energy with a hand gesture or movement. We will call that, U energy. Make a note of it.
5. Once again, come back to focus on your breathing. Begin making contact with your body and locate in which part you feel your deepest wisdom.
6. Take a couple breaths and go to that space and notice, with which earth spot or place in the earth can you relate or associate this experience with. Observe the place, the colors, the sounds, and surround yourself with it. Allow it to move you, breathe you, until you transform yourself into that space.
7. Once you are in this space, observe in which part you can notice the X energy and the U energy. And see in what way they relate and interact in that space.
8. From that spot, what advice would you give yourself to be the leader you want to be.

⁷Exercise based on the ones designed and created by Arnold Mindell in his book *ProcessMind: A User’s Guide to Connecting to the Mind of God* (2010)

“I believe in intuition and inspiration. Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution. It is, strictly speaking, a real factor in scientific research”

Albert Einstein

Third Session

Conflict’s Basic Structure

Developing our awareness can be helpful for situations when we facilitate conflicts that we can be immersed in, individually or in groups. There are three basic positions in a conflict: your side, the other person’s side, and the neutral or detached position.

Something worth exploring is to be familiar with the ways we usually react when situations turn tense: Do we support ourselves enough? Do we support others so they can express their own experience? And finally, are we able to see the whole system from the third position, having a detached perspective?

By being inflexible and holding on to our positions we disconnect from what may be happening with the other person, we become out of touch; or on the contrary, we could be more concerned by what is happening with the other person and forget about our needs, so we lose touch about what is happening within us. Any of the above leaves an incomplete feeling that can bring more problems later.

Something interesting that research around envisioning scenarios has shown, is that imagining yourself doing something fires the same brain cells than doing the actual activity (Kreiman et al., 2000). So practicing going over a conflict, practicing staying close to our inner wisdom in the middle of a difficult situation (even if it is imaginary) prepares us to be able to do so when it happens in “real” life.

Guided Meditation Exercise: Learning from Past Conflict⁸

1. Begin by recalling a discussion or conflict in which you have participated.
2. Once you are done, remember the interaction between you and the other participant(s). What was it you wanted to say or transmit? Do you remember what the other person said, or was standing for? Also, remember how the interaction was left. Try to be clear on the way the different sides were represented. Looking to be clear how the different sides were represented.
3. Now let go of that conflict and try to focus on your breathing until you feel centered and calm.
4. From this inner state, begin to make contact with your body, and locate in what part of it you can find the place where your deepest wisdom can be found.

⁸Exercise based on the ones designed and created by Arnold Mindell in his book *ProcessMind: A User’s Guide to Connecting to the Mind of God* (2010)

5. Take a couple breaths and go to that space in your body and notice, with which earth spot can you relate or associate it with. Observe the place, the colors, the sounds, and surround yourself with it. Allow it to move you, breathe you, until you transform into that space itself.
6. Try to remain in that state of deep contact with your inner wisdom. And from that state review and imagine how this wisdom could support you to speak in a deeper, more flexible, and sensitive way in the side of the discussion you represented. Take notes.
7. Once you feel complete with this, check how this inner wisdom experience could support the other side to manifest itself in a deeper, flexible, and more sensitive way. Take notes.
8. Finally, explore in what way this wisdom can support the complete interaction of both sides, and ask for any advice for your own learning experience and development.

“One of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love... What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Appendic C: Feedback From Participants

- 1) ¿De que forma este programa y sus practicas te han sido de beneficio o de ayuda: en lo profesional y en lo familiar (personal)?
- (Profesional) Me ha dado seguridad para dirigirme hacia el equipo de trabajo y me permitió tener otras habilidades para mejorar mi gestión. (Personal) Me han dado momentos de paz y reflexión, saber y hacer altos en el camino, replantear mi visión y ser una mejor persona.
 - Me ayudo a manejar el estrés con mayor facilidad, sobretodo en lo laboral y eso me ayuda a mantener una estabilidad emocional en lo familiar. Combinando ambas partes a controlar mis emociones positivamente.
 - Me han ayudado en saber canalizar los problemas, presiones, preocupaciones de una mejor manera, sacando lo negativo y viendo el panorama y también adarme cuenta que no estoy sola, y es mas fácil encontrar solución y dar salida a lo negativo en conjunto.
 - En lo profesional me ha ayudado a administrar el estrés y la carga de trabajo, el ser mas comprensivo y empatito con mis compañeros. En lo personal me ha beneficiado en mi reacción con mi esposa e hijos, he comprendido que estoy y estamos mejor cuando nos dedicamos tiempo de calidad.
 - (Personal) Dificilmente me siento presionado ante un evento. (Profesional) Ayudo mas a mis colaboradores a manejar su enojo y problemas laborales y personales.
 - (Profesional) Me ha dado herramientas para poder manejar mejor el estrés, cansancio, toma de decisiones y la interacción o colaboración con mis compañeros a todos los niveles. (Personal) Estoy mejor en salud para atender a mi familia, conectarme conmigo mismo, entender algunas situaciones y que a final de cuentas hasta en mejoras materiales se ha reflejado.
 - Considero que me ha ayudado para desarrollarme elocuentemente y no impulsivamente como anteriormente era, por lo que me ha dado beneficios en los dos ámbitos. Me siento más tranquilo, disfruto sin hacer juicios.
- 2) ¿De que forma crees que este programa puede ser mejorada?
- Quizás incrementando el número de facilitadores y hacer estas sesiones de meditación para todo el personal de la plaza.
 - Que las sesiones sean un poco más largas en juntas TOPS.
 - Que nos faciliten la música.
 - Que nos ayuden a tratar de involucrar más compañeros de la plaza.
 - Visítenos más seguido.
 - De qué manera podemos bajar el material para compartirlo con los compañeros de plaza.
 - En lo personal me gustaría contar con mas practicas, en conocer más del programa para también poder compartirlo con mis compañeros de plaza, en cuanto al material contar con música para la aplicación de la

meditación. Quizá que nos dieran mas seguimiento al cumplimiento de compromisos de aplicar la meditación en unas formas para que se diera el mismo.

- Mayor seguimiento y mas sesiones con los facilitadores de plaza (locales). Reuniones mas frecuentes con los facilitadores locales y tratar temas específicos. Que nos den mas ejemplos de cómo pueden ser las reuniones de facilitadores locales. Integrar en centraciones temas de inseguridad hay mucho sentir con este tema y es generalizado.
- Hacer mas sesiones con facilitadores y personas voluntarias.
- Abriendo la invitación a mas gente, promoviendo los beneficios. (Nota: ¡Gracias a Dios le doy por la oportunidad que me da!)
- Buscar la manera de hacerlo extensivo para que se beneficie mas gente y ver técnicas relacionadas con la meditación.