SUBMISSION #10585 -
Compassion and Mindfulness:
Implications of the Buddhist Worldview for Leadership Development

SHORT TITLE: Mindfulness and Leadership

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Abstract: The aim of this symposium is to share powerful practices for the development of compassion and to portray some of the important ways that compassion, loving-kindness, and mindfulness can be used to create alternative determinants of leadership effectiveness and development. The contemplative traditions of Buddhism can be utilized to deepen ways that organizations can be improved. The panelists will offer contemplative thought experiments, a discussion of the underlying constructs, as well as descriptions of their work in leadership development and research on the impact of compassion and loving-kindness on organizational effectiveness, as measured by the triple bottom line. They will emphasize implications for organizational leadership and adaptation in an increasingly uncertain and evolving world economy, where not only cultures but also religions, their belief systems, and their values are in increasing contact and interaction. Each of the panelists will aim to provoke the audience to conceive of how organizations might benefit from leaders who seriously consider and utilize the qualities of compassion, loving-kindness, and mindfulness in their daily decision-making. The panel will show how such changes are feasible, measurable, and cost-effective in the long term.

Key Words: leadership development, mindfulness, compassion, spiritual leadership effectiveness, wisdom traditions, triple bottom line, Buddhism
Compassion, Loving-kindness, and Mindfulness:

Implications of the Buddhist Worldview for Leadership Development

*We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts.*

*With our (compassionate) thoughts, we make our world.*

Gautama Buddha

The objectives of this symposium are to:

1. illustrate how theories and views of compassion and loving-kindness can inform the ways in which organizational leadership effectiveness is conceptualized and developed;

2. facilitate dialogue on how leadership effectiveness and development can be enlarged by a deeper understanding of the Buddhist worldview.

Today’s world is laden with extreme uncertainty, suffering, and leadership that is often self-oriented rather than oriented towards the greatest good for the greatest constituency. Most organizations and their leaders are measured by criteria that explicitly, or implicitly, aim to maximize short-term profitability (ie. ROI, ROE, ROA or ROS) or efficiency. The fundamental assumption seems to be that efficiently using financial and human capital is the best tool leaders have in creating organizations to make the world function well for its inhabitants.

The events of the last two years, with the near total meltdown of the world economy and its “recovery,” should provide the motivation to consider alternative ways of measuring the effectiveness of organizations and societal institutions and their leadership. The so-called “triple bottom line” – profits, social responsibility and the environment – is an alternative which has been extensively considered and written about (Fry & Slocum, 2008).

The overall aim of this symposium is to investigate and discuss a further, more radical alternative, by considering the following questions:
1. What would organizations look like if they were measured by how much compassion and loving-kindness they generated, in addition to the usual measure of profitability? How might this impact the workplace and many of today’s societal problems?

2. What are the implications for leadership development and training if compassion and loving-kindness are included as primary measures of leadership effectiveness?

3. Can training leaders in mindfulness increase their compassion and that of the people in the organization?

4. Can training leaders in compassion shift their attitude and action in the arena of ethics?

5. Can such mindfulness, compassion, and loving-kindness enhance long-term organizational sustainability?

These questions and the perspectives that will be investigated come from a focus on Buddhism and/or spiritually-grounded leadership in which the panelists have been deeply involved for decades. Although Buddhism is often regarded as a religion, with a focus on its institutions and outer forms, it can also be regarded as a powerful array of change practices. In fact, one Tibetan Buddhist definition of spirituality focuses directly on activities and practices, describing it as “those kinds of activities that directly serve the inspiration for maturation, transformation, and ultimately, realization” (Ray, 2002: xii). As Goldman Schuyler has written (In press), many practices “are viewed by their ‘users’ as practical, effective tools, tested over centuries for understanding and changing the way people unintentionally cause problems for themselves and one another in the course of daily life and work.” Since the core of many of these practices is the development of compassion, or “a
good heart,” bringing them into the discussion of leadership development at this particular Academy meeting is highly appropriate.

**Compassion, Loving-kindness, and Mindfulness in Organizations**

There is currently a deep crisis in human affairs that is occurring at virtually all levels of human scale from the individual to the organizational to the societal. The symptoms of the crisis are numerous. At the societal level if we turn on almost any television news program we observe the breakdown of social structures occurring not only in the Middle East, in Africa, in central Asia and in South America, but also in Europe and North America. Most people are at a loss as to how to intervene in the complex of “breakdowns” that are occurring.

At the organizational level, one simply has to ask people in the workplace what sense of meaning, purpose, and, ultimately, joy they derive from their work. At the individual level one can observe the lack of enthusiasm with which many people go about their daily activities (The Dalai Lama & Cutler, 2003). Something needs to change, but the pervasiveness and complexity of the transformation that is being called for seems nearly intractable.

Over a decade ago, Fritjof Capra (1997: 6) stated the challenge very succinctly in *The Web of Life: A New Understanding of Living Systems*:

There are solutions to the major problems of our time, some of them even simple. But they require a radical shift in our perceptions, our thinking, our values . . . (However,) the recognition that a profound change of perception and thinking is needed, if we are to survive, has not yet reached most of our corporate leaders, either, or the administrators and professors or our large universities.

Given the depth of the problems we feel compelled to ask, “Why is this and how can we effect deep wisdom-inspired transformation in organizations and their leadership?” Close attention to the processes of organizations reveals the depth of the need for transformation in
the organizations we inhabit. Without compassion-inspired action and thinking we will fall short of realizing our true potential as human beings, organizationally and individually.

Leadership is often a product of subtle, often invisible feelings, thoughts and intuitions (Badaracco, 2002). Visible actions are just the tip of the iceberg of wise, effective leadership in organizations, public and private. This symposium will explore models of leadership that are implied by one of the major spiritual traditions of the world, Buddhism (Suzuki, 1970; Tanahashi & Schneider, 1994; Goldstein, 2002).

The concept of compassion-inspired action and leadership is increasingly salient in today’s organizations. There are increasing numbers of books and articles on the topic. See Kanov, Maitlis, Worline, Dutton, Frost, and Lilius (2004) for an overview of the major work on compassion in organizations, as well as Boyatzis and McKeen (2005) and Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004) for related research, with Daft and Lengel (1998), Quinn (1996) and Kouzes and Posner (2002) for representative applied works that have requisite spiritual underpinnings. Specific studies include Cayer and Baron’s (2006) mindfulness training program for leaders in Canada and Goldman Schuyler’s (2007) study of entrepreneurs who were Buddhist practitioners, discussing what they perceived as the impacts of their practice on their organizations and leadership style. Fry and Kriger (2009) addressed related topics in looking at “being-centered leadership” as a source of effectiveness. Weick and his colleagues have written fascinating discussions of the implications of mindfulness for leadership and organizations (Weick & Putnam, 2006; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006).

The panelists will creatively investigate the underlying concepts from their research knowledge base and personal experience, discuss their experience with leadership development, and emphasize the implications for organizational leadership in an increasingly uncertain and evolving global economy where not only cultures (Laurent, 1983; Adler, 1986) but also religions, their belief systems and their values, are in increasing contact and
interaction (Smith, 1991). They will describe the theory and nature of a number of specific practices honed in Buddhism over centuries in many different cultures to develop compassion, in order to give indications as to how we can further the practice of compassionate leadership in organizations. At present this is an under-discussed and under-researched, but much needed area for investigation.
Why the Symposium Should Be of Interest to Each of the Sponsors

The symposium should be of interest to members of the following divisions as sponsors, and to many other members as well. Participants will learn about what is already taking place in this arena of action.

**IMD** – The symposium panelists will suggest possibilities for a profound re-conceptualization of leadership effectiveness based on concepts that have been developed and honed in various cultures around the world and which could influence management globally.

**MSR** - The symposium is designed to integrate across the worldviews of religious and spiritual boundaries. All who attend will be encouraged to engage in a moderated discussion and exploration of major concepts of spiritually-oriented leadership and how they can be applied to improve leadership in today’s increasingly uncertain and turbulent world.

**ODC** – In addition to making a contribution to a potential re-conceptualization of leadership effectiveness across cultures, the symposium is intended to stimulate new ideas on the topic of leadership development, organizational change, and the relationship between leaders’ mindfulness and the atmosphere in the workplace.
Proposed Time Sequencing

**Introduction:** Kathryn Goldman-Schuyler and Mark Kriger - 5 minutes

**Context:** The role of spirituality in effective leadership Jody Fry – 5 minutes

**Panel Discussion:** 50 minutes

1) Kathryn Goldman-Schuyler – 10 minutes: Wisdom, Compassion, and Tacit Knowledge

2) Mark Kriger - 10 minutes: Implications of the Buddhist Perspective and Practice for Effective Leadership in 21st Century Organizations

3) Susan Skjei – 10 minutes: Outcomes of Using the Buddhist Worldview in Leadership Development – Ten Years of the Naropa Authentic Leadership Program

4) Mary Yoko Brannen – 10 minutes: Integrating Soto Zen Practice into Mindful and Compassionate International Management Research

5) Jody Fry – 10 minutes: Research Possibilities: Compassion and Measures of Leadership Effectiveness

**Dialogue** (Among panelists and with audience): 15 minutes

**Final Thoughts from Panelists:** 15 minutes

**Total Time:** 90 minutes

I have received signed statements or emails from all intended participants formally agreeing to participate in the entire symposium, AND stating that they are not in violation of the *Rule of Three + Three*. I understand that if this submission is accepted, all of the listed participants must be registered for the meeting to take part in the session.
Summary of Panelists’ Comments

Jody Fry:

Research Possibilities: Compassion and Measures of Leadership Effectiveness

One of the greatest challenges facing organizational leaders today is to develop business models that speak to the diverse business issues of ethical and spiritual leadership, employee well-being, sustainability, and social responsibility without sacrificing profitability, revenue growth, and other indicators of performance excellence. This is known as the triple bottom line or “People, Planet, and Profit.” Employees who have a sense of well-being and are committed, productive, and socially responsible will strive to continuously improve organizational processes and produce quality products and services that satisfy customers and other key stakeholders. Organizational spiritual leadership is ultimately the driver of continuous improvement in operations, as well as high quality products and services that lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction, which then leads to better financial performance - in other words, sustainable organizations that maximize the triple bottom line.

Organizational spiritual leadership involves motivating and inspiring workers through a transcendent vision of service to key stakeholders and a corporate culture based on altruistic love. For spiritual leadership, this is defined as "a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being produced through care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others.” Even though love is considered to be the single most important human experience by all major spiritual and religious traditions (as well as in the mass media and entertainment industry), the words “love” and “leadership” are rarely linked. Not a single business school in the country offers a course on leading through love. Tina Turner’s famous lyric, “What’s love got to do, got to do with it. What’s love but a secondhand emotion,” has certainly been the view of most organizations that obsessively focus on performance and short-term profit.
The dimensions of spiritual leadership and the process of satisfying spiritual needs for spiritual well-being and positively impacting key triple bottom line outcomes are shown in Figure 1. Spiritual leadership taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and followers for spiritual well-being through enhancing their sense of calling (having a sense of meaning and purpose in life) and membership (having a sense of community, belonging, and being understood and appreciated). Spiritual well-being (i.e. calling and membership) then fosters higher levels of organizational commitment, satisfaction with life, productivity, corporate social responsibility, and financial performance.

Spiritual leaders are humble, mindful, and compassionate. They create a vision of a long-term, challenging, desirable and different future based on high standards of excellence and high ideals, and have intrinsically motivated followers who are committed to meeting and exceeding the performance levels required if an organization or society is to realize the preferred future. The source of spiritual leadership is an inner life practice that seeks mindful awareness through a spiritual or mindful practice.

**Figure 1.1 Model of Spiritual Leadership**

To date, this spiritual leadership model has been extensively tested and validated in a variety of settings. Studies have been conducted in numerous organizations including schools,
military units, cities, police, and for profit organizations (sample sizes ranged from 10 to over 1000). These studies have confirmed the spiritual leadership model and the reliability and validity of its measures. Results so far support a significant positive influence of spiritual leadership on employee life satisfaction, organizational commitment and productivity, various measures of work unit performance, and sales growth. In this symposium I first present the spiritual leadership model as a context for the subsequent presenters. Then for my presentation, I will offer actual data from a six year longitudinal study of the largest CPA firm in Austin, Texas that summarizes and gives an example of our ten years of scientific research through the International Institute for Spiritual Leadership (http://www.iispiritualleadership.com/) on organizational spiritual leadership to demonstrate that it can form the foundation for a business model with an emphasis on mindfulness and compassion that maximizes the triple bottom line.

**Kathryn Goldman Schuyler:**

**Wisdom, Compassion, and Tacit Knowledge**

As I wrote in an article that is in press, I have been strongly influenced by Argyris’ repeated demonstrations that almost no one lives by the values they espouse (Argyris, 1986, 1991). This made me accord less importance to the values that my clients espouse and more to methods that might enhance their capacity to live with less of a gap between what is espoused and what is actual. After years of practice as both an internal and external organizational consultant, I began to feel that the work we did together was helpful, but did not go as deeply as needed. Executives became better leaders in their colleagues’ eyes, and many attained significant promotions. Nonetheless, something was missing. I sought to develop this missing element.
Leadership training tends to be primarily cognitive and conceptual, using language to think about actions. I seek instead to focus learners on close observation at a micro-level of movement, breathing, and their state of mind, so that they will develop the habit of paying close attention to what is taking place at a given moment, rather than being distracted by expectations based on past experience. Such coaching and training helps people to change at the level of *tacit knowledge* – it develops the kind of familiarity with a subject that lets a person act effectively without being able to fully describe how. It is from this part of human “knowing” that change in values and long-standing habits may be possible.

Tibetan Buddhist approaches to transformative learning include many different practical “techniques” for becoming more present, for paying attention to the way one is (or is not) living one’s espoused values, and for reminding oneself to be kind to all those with whom one comes in contact. They have been used consistently for over a thousand years. Only in the last few decades have people outside of Tibet had access to the teachers who embody such practices and to translations of the texts that explain them in great detail. It is also only in recent years that we have the tools to measure the impact on those using them, with regard to things like changes in brain waves.

At the heart of the Tibetan culture and of Buddhism are the twin notions of *wisdom* and *compassion*. These terms have very specific meanings that may not be what western social scientists read into them, as the meanings depend on a deep understanding of Buddhist *dharma* of practices and teachings about the way life is. While it is challenging to convey this in the short time we have as a panel, I will aim to convey these core notions, how they are embedded in a set of values and practices, and consider how some of the practices can be used to nourish leaders throughout the world.

The Tibetans have had and used for centuries several versions of very detailed practical curricula for the kind of development that we seek to provide to leaders globally.
The 14th Dalai Lama is an outstanding example of the effectiveness of such training. Only in recent years have people who don’t speak Tibetan and who are interested in leadership and management development had the opportunity to learn enough about these methods to even begin to conceptualize how they might be incorporated into leadership development.

I will help the members of the audience grasp the nature of this situation and the opportunity that exists now, for the first time in history, for these approaches to be used outside of Tibet. I hope that as a panel we will discuss the question of the context for such learning within leadership development. In other words, the methods were always used in Tibet inside of a culture with deeply shared values. It remains to be seen what may happen if they are used outside of such a context, within a culture of perhaps opposing and contradictory values.

Mark Kriger:

Implications of the Buddhist Perspective and Practice for Effective Leadership in 21st Century Organizations

Mindfulness (of sensations, feelings, thoughts and the mind itself) is the foundation for all Buddhist meditation practice. It arose first at the time of the Buddha 2500 years ago in India and in essence involves being present to whatever is arising into awareness, as it is arising, whether what is arising is perceived as positive or negative, pleasurable or unpleasurable. One interesting question for today’s organizational leaders to consider is: what would the workplace climate be like if one of the cultural norms in organizations was for all members to practice mindfulness intentionally and as often and as deeply as possible – by choice – whether alone or in groups? In addition: What would the effect of this be on overall workgroup and organizational effectiveness (see Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987; Goldstein, 2002)?
Also central to the Buddhist teachings are what are known as the *Brahmaviharas* or ‘four immeasurables’ (joy, equanimity, loving-kindness and compassion – in pali, *mudita*, *upekka*, *metta* and *karuna*). Inner practices have been known and developed and practiced for centuries to increase the presence of each of these ‘immeasurables’ in all three of the major traditions of Buddhism - the Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana lineages. A second thought experiment to be considered is to visualize the likely effects of the *Brahmaviharas*, especially compassion, on work climate and culture: intrinsic motivation, satisfaction and group effectiveness are predicted to increase with their presence and development.

However, it is further proposed that mindfulness and the four *Brahmaviharas* have intrinsic value *in and of themselves*. We hypothesize that a major source of the deep problems observed with profit-focused organizations in the recent financial market turbulence and meltdown is that organizational leaders have focused excessively on profits and short-term increase in stock market valuation, with supporting cash and stock-based reward systems, to the detriment of the deeper values and qualities engendered by the development of mindfulness and compassion towards and consideration of all relevant stakeholders. Thus, it is proposed that much of today’s leadership and upper management in organizations has been and is still deluded into believing that stock valuation and profits are the determinants of lasting happiness and value for society (Dalai Lama, 1999; Dalai Lama & Cutler, 2003, Dalai Lama, & Goleman, 2003).

This presentation will conclude with a series of alternative visualizations of how organizations might encompass a wider set of values and processes that are more likely to generate long-term individual happiness and satisfaction in the workplace, as well as lasting long-term value creation processes for the organization. This is believed to be especially important as organizations operate across geographic and cultural boundaries in increasingly fluid ways (Adler, 1986; Block, 1993).
Susan Skjei:

Outcomes of Using the Buddhist Worldview in Leadership Development –

Ten Years of the Naropa Authentic Leadership Program

Susan Skjei, the founding director of Naropa University’s Authentic Leadership Certificate Program, will discuss the program, its benefits, and the challenges involved in running it. She will describe the specific practices that are taught in the program, the ways that participants have incorporated them into their own transformative change projects at work, and the benefits they have reported for themselves and their organizations.

Inspired by Tibetan Buddhist principles and practices of mindfulness, compassion and ethical action, the semester-long program helps leaders integrate deep personal learning with practical application in the workplace. Over 300 leaders from business, government, non-profit organizations and NGOs have participated in the program since its inception.

The program integrates Western management practices with Eastern contemplative traditions. Addressing both the personal and organizational aspects of learning and change, the program balances the development of skills and the use of tools and conceptual models with contemplative practice and action learning projects. Content areas include leadership theory and practice, emotional intelligence, skillful communication (including interpersonal tools for clarifying commitments, and resolving conflicts), effective teamwork (including group dynamics, diversity, and decision making), power, influence, and empowering others, and leading and facilitating personal and organizational change. The intention is for participants to cultivate self-awareness through self-observation, contemplative and embodiment practices and feedback; to clarify their personal values, purpose and vision; to communicate more authentically and compassionately with individuals and groups; to appreciate and value diversity; to convene strategic conversations, and to facilitate systemic change using a variety of methodologies.
Mary Yoko Brannen:

Integrating Soto Zen Practice into Mindful and Compassionate

International Management Research

"Strictly speaking, there are no enlightened people, there is only enlightened activity."

Suzuki Ryoshi (1970)

In a globalizing world, more managers and professionals are required to interact with individuals from other cultures, make and maintain cross-cultural connections, work in culturally mixed environments, and perform tasks with counterparts in different countries that require an understanding and deep sensitivity to different cultural perspectives. In addition, MNC success is based more and more on the transfer of information, knowledge, and practices, of ‘soft’ or ‘people-dependent’ technologies and of whole systems of organization across cultural boundaries (Doz et al. 2001; Brannen, Doz & Santos, 2007). As a result, global business success depends increasingly not only on understanding different cultures but on being able to bridge between cultures and integrate within complex cultural organizations. For example, Brannen (2004) found that even the transfer of seemingly non-culturally dependent knowledge or practices require deep knowledge of cultural meanings in the recipient organizations. Managers engaged in such transfers need to comprehensively understand interpretations of both the sending and receiving cultures in order to facilitate processes of sense making across cultures. As collaboration, communication and trust building gain importance and as flows of knowledge and processes become increasingly more critical success factors for MNCs, the role of individuals in mediating between and within cultures becomes a vital part for MNC performance.

Soto Zen Buddhism has as its foundation the discipline of compassionate meditation developed around the simple practice of “just sitting” so that practitioners can bring mindfulness and loving kindness into their everyday encounters. In this presentation I will
I have integrated this practice of compassionate meditation coupled with learning’s from the Wisdom Teachings into research and work practice since my lay ordination in Soto Zen Buddhism in 2002 at the San Francisco Zen Center under Tenshin Zenki Roshi Reb Anderson.

I will use my current study of biculturalism as a strategic human resource as a case in point.

By 2020 America’s largest ethnic group will be culturally mixed. Already in the state of California 25% of the population is foreign born and in the Silicon Valley 53.3% of the population is already non-white. This trend is paralleled in Europe given the low birth rates of the established population and the concomitant increase in proportion of non-European born and second-generation immigrants. Such people of mixed ethnicities carry with them not only racial variation but also mixed cultural identities. Whereas the racial demographics are relatively simple to track, account for and describe, the accompanying mixed cultural identities are less obvious, relatively undocumented and not understood. In the same way as we know that people who have learned multiple languages in their childhood find it easier to keep learning new languages late in life, biculturals bring not only the obvious knowledge of their own cultures but also the latent abilities to understand and bridge between other cultures. So, the growing proportions of biculturals represent a new workplace demographic that bring an insufficiently recognized opportunity to companies operating globally. Yet, they are poorly understood.

Preliminary research has begun to provide empirical evidence of particular bridging skills or “cultural intelligence” (Thomas & Inkson, 2004) that biculturals and others of mixed cultural identity possess such as perceptual acuity, emotional resilience, as well as flexibility and openness that may enable them to be cultural brokers in global collaborative situations. However, most biculturals are unaware of possessing these skills as they have generally felt
“neither/ nor,” not fitting into either culture. Further, organizations that employ them are also unaware of their bridging skills confusing ethnicity with country specific understanding. For example, a Japanese-American might be better at learning about multiple national contexts rather than representing a Japanese cultural context that he has either not been part of in a long time or never experienced first-hand. Such typical mistakes make it impossible for bicultural employees to contribute their most precious skills and, at the same time, reinforce the personal insecurities they feel as neither/nor biculturals.

Mass migration is a defining feature of today’s world. Pressures are growing, with masses of desperate migrants willing to kill themselves trying to cross the Mediterranean or the Rio Grande. In some countries second-generation immigrants are the most alienated biculturals, accepted neither in the country of origin of their parents and of their culture (for instance Algeria or Turkey) nor in the country where they grew up and of which they are citizens (e.g., France or Germany). In the US, the workforce of leading states, California and Texas for instance, is increasingly foreign-born or second-generation immigrants. Developed economies need to learn how to integrate new immigrants. Although perhaps less visible similar tensions to those in Europe or North America exist in Asia with South to North migration. Shedding light on the complex multicultural identity processes of biculturals and the management implications for organizations as represented in the research reported here, may also help shape a better policy agenda on immigration, naturalization, education, and other social integration mechanisms. By compassionate understanding and enabling individuals access to many different ways of negotiating their multicultural identities, society can benefit from the unique skills and abilities of this important and growing demographic.
References


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