



# From Organizational Oneness to Organizational Wellness: The Role of Individuals, Teams, and Organizations from a Whole Systems Framework

*Duysal Askun*

Oneness as a concept is not new. However, it's been overlooked as a subject of scientific and practical exploration therefore expression and action for millennia. The world today is not suffering from the climate change, political unrest, famine, draught, wars, or viruses. It is suffering from the lack of understanding therefore acting on Oneness.

As a term, Oneness has been defined as healthy, whole, or holy (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2005). As a hypothesis, it reflects our interrelationships with all others around us. This not only includes human beings, but all living and non-living beings, including all types of creatures, and so forth (Ivanhoe, 2017). This sense of being interrelated connotes 'belongingness' in terms of multi-levels of existence where each level of existence connects to a larger whole (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In essence, there are two main attributes that identify oneness: *being related and being whole*.

## ORGANIZATIONS FROM A LENS OF ONENESS

Today, with a few exceptions, organizations still operate on the principle of give and take where the social exchange mechanisms bring financial returns. As a means to survive and thrive, organizations recruit, train, lead, and direct their employees for meeting their end goals which usually center around

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profit-making and market share expansion overall. Although in 2019, nearly 200 companies have declared that shareholder value will no longer be their main focus (<https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/19/the-ceos-of-nearly-two-hundred-companies-say-shareholder-value-is-no-longer-their-main-objective.html>), employee engagement therefore commitment still poses a significant portion of their problems. The most recent Gallup statistics revealed that globally, employee engagement is at 21% (State of the Global Workplace 2022 report). When we think of the reasons for this considerably low number, we surely could identify multi-factors, starting with the individual level (employees), later on team and departmental levels, and finally the ones at the organizational level. Why is employee engagement so important? Well, employee engagement is argued to be one of the strongest predictors of work performance (Anitha, 2014; Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Motyka, 2018). When we look at the determinants of employee engagement, they also entail a multi-factorial essence. There is individual as well as a social context-related determinants of employee engagement which is a widely explored area in the Organizational Behavior field (Gautam & Kothari, 2021; Mokaya & Kipyegon, 2014; Meswantri & Awaludin, 2018; Sharma Baldev & Anupama, 2010). For the purposes of this chapter and the book, we will focus mostly on the determinants that relate to the oneness principle. The categorization will be the same: Individual, Team/Work unit/Departmental, and Organizational.

### ORGANIZATIONAL WELLNESS AS AN ALTERNATE OUTCOME

As the world economy has made a shift from being industrial to the digital, there is less of a physical threat in terms of health and safety, but chronic stress is here to stay (Lieberman, 2019). As Lieberman (2019) argues, today, more employers are stressing the importance of mental health which are also reported to be the leading cause of illness and disability. Since the 2019 declaration related to change of focus and shift from shareholders to all stakeholders, we see more companies getting involved in wellness-related programs that target employees' physical and mental health altogether. Sometimes even defined as 'zeitgeist of our age', wellness has gained high popularity among businesses (Jack & Brewis, 2005) working either at the BtoB/BtoC, or CtoC capacities, or all.

Wellness as a term has been equated mostly with 'being healthy'. Therefore, organizational wellness was translated into 'healthy organizations' (Young & Lambie, 2007). Healthy organizations should be made up of healthy individuals and related systems. By definition, healthy individuals should remind us of both physical and emotional health while healthy organizations could be made up of healthy beings and their interrelationships with one another (Maslach, 2001; as cited in Young & Lambie, 2007). Similar to the concept of oneness we have described above, overall organizational health and wellness require healthy players and systems.

### *Individual Oneness and Wellness Relationship*

As any entity, being large or small, individuals are also made up of certain parts. The most visible part is the body, and the less so would be the mind and the soul. Starting with the most visible part, body is an entity also made up of parts. As long as those parts work in harmony, we do not get sick. However, any type of separation or disharmonious operation in and through the body might most likely bring problems, acute or chronic in nature. As an example, if there is an insulin-based imbalance, you most likely become vulnerable to diabetes. Alternatively, if you have a problematic detoxification system concerning your liver, you can start to develop long-term illnesses such as organ failures, immunity problems, or metabolism issues. In either case, separation, and therefore dissonant nature of those relationships between either part of the body, results in illness with changing intensity and duration.

As less visible parts, mind and soul operate similarly but in a less obvious way. As we are still illiterate in terms of the mind and soul's operating mechanisms, here we will rely mostly on analogies for the sake of simplicity and practicality. According to Freud, human mind is made up of the conscious and the unconscious. According to trait theories, personality is made up of several traits. The most recent trait theory is the Big Five which purports that our personalities are made up of 5 distinct traits, starting with Extraversion-Introversion, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (McCrae & Costa, 1985). According to cognitive approaches, our mind is composed of several cognitive systems, such as memory, perception, thinking, and intelligence, etc. Whatever our approach to human psyche might be, and however they are being defined, each theory or approach talks about a system of things made up of distinct but related parts. We already know that unconscious and conscious are always related, we know that personality traits co-exist with varying degrees, and we also know that our cognitive systems always relate and benefit from each other such as our perceptions help our memory systems through sensory memory storage, and so on. This all means that whatever the nature of our individual existence, there are distinct parts, and those parts have relationships with one another.

What defines illness/sickness and imbalance is the break of those relationships somehow for some reason. The disconnection therefore separation of any part within the human system results in different types of issues, physical, emotional, or cognitive in nature. When something goes wrong especially in terms of our physical existence, it is more straightforward solution to do something about it. At least we might go and ask a doctor. However, when something goes wrong in our cognitive/emotional or spiritual existence, the solutions somehow lose their visibility therefore accessibility so there is less and less likelihood that we might go and seek help. In any case, imbalance being invisible vs. being visible still brings a lot of discomfort and varying degrees of unrest. This way it might be useful to highlight the importance of our individual selves (physical and non-physical) whatever part they might be

composed of, to stay and act in harmony. This state and therefore existence could also be termed as ‘individual wellness’.

Given the factors that might relate to individual wellness from oneness perspective, one might naturally ask if it is truly possible to stay in wellness state no matter what. Given life’s intricacies, and the fact that the world we live in today is full of turmoil and chaos, it might be bit of a rosy view to expect things to stay healthy as long as they remain in harmony. However, without a critical ingredient of our existence, we are not able to maintain let alone sustain our individual health, therefore wellness. First of all, how do we know everything is working well? How do we also detect if there is a problem? On top of all that, where can we find a way out?

### THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Consciousness is defined as the quality or state of being aware especially of something within oneself. It is also defined as the totality of conscious states of an individual (Merriam-Webster online dictionary). This way, consciousness seems to have the following functions for human beings to operate in oneness therefore wellness:

- *Observing function* (conscious person is able to look at, see, and make observations on his or her mind, conscious and unconscious processes, thoughts, emotions, and actions)
- *Perceiving function* (conscious person is able to use his/her five and additional senses to perceive what is taking place inside and outside of one’s physical self-boundaries)
- *Reflecting function* (conscious person is able to reflect upon his/her perceptions, external and internal experiences)
- *Understanding function* (conscious person is able to make sense of therefore make connections and relationships around whatever he or she observes, perceives, and reflects upon)
- *Analyzing function* (conscious person is able to further analyze what has been taking place in and out of his/her physical self-boundaries therefore is able to create new meanings therefore solutions out of what is being observed and made sense of)

For an individual to be able to operate on his or her consciousness therefore to attain health and well-being in a sustainable way, certain tools are being offered. One of those tools is widely researched in the literature of both psychology and organizational behavior. It is called mindfulness practice. According to Brown et al. (2007), it is being attentive to what is going on inside and outside, with a more mindful manner that involves an active, rather than a passive state (Askun, 2019).

Another way in which one might become more conscious is through an ongoing pursuit of self-knowledge (Ghorbani et al., 2008) which entails: (1) An ongoing sense of self-awareness and (2) Stable mental representations. The definition of self-knowledge is made through one's reflective action concerning both past and present experiences. Ghorbani et al. (2008) therefore coined two terms having different time perspectives: Experiential self-knowledge which represented being aware of what is taking place in the present moment vs. Reflective self-knowledge that encompassed a more stable self-representations (our awareness of what took place before now).

Whatever our tools for becoming more self-conscious might be, it is more important to discuss the relationship of consciousness with healthy and whole selves. If the first step is always to be aware (Wholey, 2017) of what is taking place in both the present and the previous moments, the second step would be to reflect therefore make sense of what is taking place. While the third step would be having an actionable nature that directs toward change if necessary for the maintenance and/or sustainability of one's whole and healthy self. According to Wholey (2017), awareness is always the first step toward living a life in oneness. She contends that acceptance of what is, is a necessary precursor to the action step. The whole catalyst for transformation should happen between those three steps if we are aiming a life of oneness.

As humans are physical, emotional, and cognitive systems, being aware therefore self-conscious at the following levels are deemed most crucial:

- Physical self-awareness (what is going on in our bodies: being hungry vs being full, feeling tired vs energetic, feeling sick vs feeling healthy, etc.)
- Emotional self-awareness (what is going on in terms of our feelings: feeling sad or happy, feeling depressed or the opposite, feeling guilty vs pain-free, etc.)
- Cognitive self-awareness (what is going on in our mind processes: negative vs. positive thought patterns, self-blame vs. the opposite, remembering events and connections to one's conscious being, being aware of our own conscious state (fully conscious, semi-conscious, unconscious, etc.)
- Spiritual self-awareness (what is going on spiritually, feeling a physical vs. non-physical state, feeling one's energy zone vs feeling lack of it, feeling detached from one's spiritual essence vs. feeling connected, etc.).

This way, it can be said that the role of individual consciousness in health and well-being requires a complex but interrelated consciousness processes determined by one's self with varying degrees of intensity and effectiveness. As nobody's consciousness is the same or works the same, the functionality and the degrees differ with so many consequences related to physical, emotional, and cognitive health.

In terms of organizational health and wellness, what this means is that it is the responsibility of each employee/individual partaking in any organization to fulfill the necessary (but may not be sufficient) consciousness-related actions (observing, perceiving, reflecting, understanding, and analyzing) so as to take the first step toward wellness at the individual and organizational level altogether.

### THE ROLE OF TEAM CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE IDEA OF CONSCIOUSNESS GAP

Team consciousness as a term should not be too different from how we define individual consciousness. Similarly, we are expecting team members to do their necessary consciousness work (observing, perceiving, reflecting, etc.) as part of their self-consciousness practice. However, we also require them to be attentive to something else which might not be always within their personal self-boundaries but between each other. In other words, we are talking about consciousness and awareness of what is taking place in between one another. And to our disappointment, it may not be always as straightforward and visible and even obvious as our work within. Otherwise, there would be no divorces, breakups, or wars, correct? Here, if we dig deep, we find one important competency or skill, however you might name it. It is called Relational Consciousness and it is coined by Hay and Nye (1998). It is the ability to perceive the environment in relational terms. The consciousness here is relational, which exists at both intra- and interpersonal domains (Askun, 2019).

Whoever wrote about team consciousness earlier did so by referring to its practical aspects. As an example, Bennett (2018) talks about an 8-hr training program where employees and managers separately study modules related to policy awareness, stress management, communication, dealing with difficult employees and when to refer a peer to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Rather than the content, the process of this training seems to be interactional in scope with many interactive scenarios, games, and role plays being incorporated into the program.

Here, we are mostly referring to the ways in which we can attain more consciousness at the team level. This may mean and require that team members become self-conscious both individually and interpersonally. We have already described and gave some examples of individual consciousness and how it is carried out. In terms of interpersonal consciousness, we do the following in the interpersonal context or arena in which actual relationships take place:

- *Observing function* (both parties are willing and able to observe what is taking place in between one another in terms of action, communication, conflict, feelings, etc.)

- *Perceiving function* (both parties are willing and able to perceive what is taking place in between one another in terms of action, etc. but also are willing to accept the fact that their individual perceptions are only one side of the story or the truth)
- *Reflecting function* (both parties are willing and able to reflect upon what is taking place in addition to being willing and able to listen to the others' reflections which they may or may not agree with)
- *Understanding function* (both parties are willing to understand what is taking place even though they may not be able to understand what is happening. As an example, willing to understand why a conflict might be occurring, what the other feels, etc.)
- *Analyzing function* (Both parties are willing to analyze what is taking place in both the present and the past. They mutually agree on working together on this while willing to join forces and capabilities/competencies in a complementary way to make sense of their relationship and to make it work in a healthy way).

Very similar to individual consciousness, team consciousness operates with the same principles and steps. However, our world is far away from acts that reflect team consciousness. Most of the time, we only widen our gaps in consciousness (Askun, 2020).

As a term, *consciousness gap* forms when we as individuals do not take responsibility for what is taking place in between each other. This is when we are working or living in groups, teams, and communities. According to Askun (2020), consciousness gap widens when our individual consciousness does not expand toward a more interpersonal consciousness; or sometimes a personal need/interest/problem gets in the way of interpersonal consciousness; or a selfish orientation that stems from fear, anxiety or a desire for getting more from the other might lead the individual to contract or become self-protective, reserved, silent, aggressive, or uncooperative. Let alone impaired teamwork and cooperation, many negative consequences might follow because of this. Askun (2020) exemplifies those as follows: reported feelings of being hurt, being misunderstood, and feeling resentful, demotivation, disengagement, mobbing, turnover intention and actual turnover, workplace rumors, project failures, escalating dysfunctional conflict that adds to the negative downward spiral. Depicted as a figure, the consciousness gap in an interpersonal arena looks like this (Fig. 9.1).

### *Tools for Team Consciousness*

Given the importance of team consciousness for both short- and long-term goals and outcomes, it might be useful to talk about some already available tools to enhance consciousness at the team level. Because it requires consciousness at both individual and interpersonal areas, tools that help with team

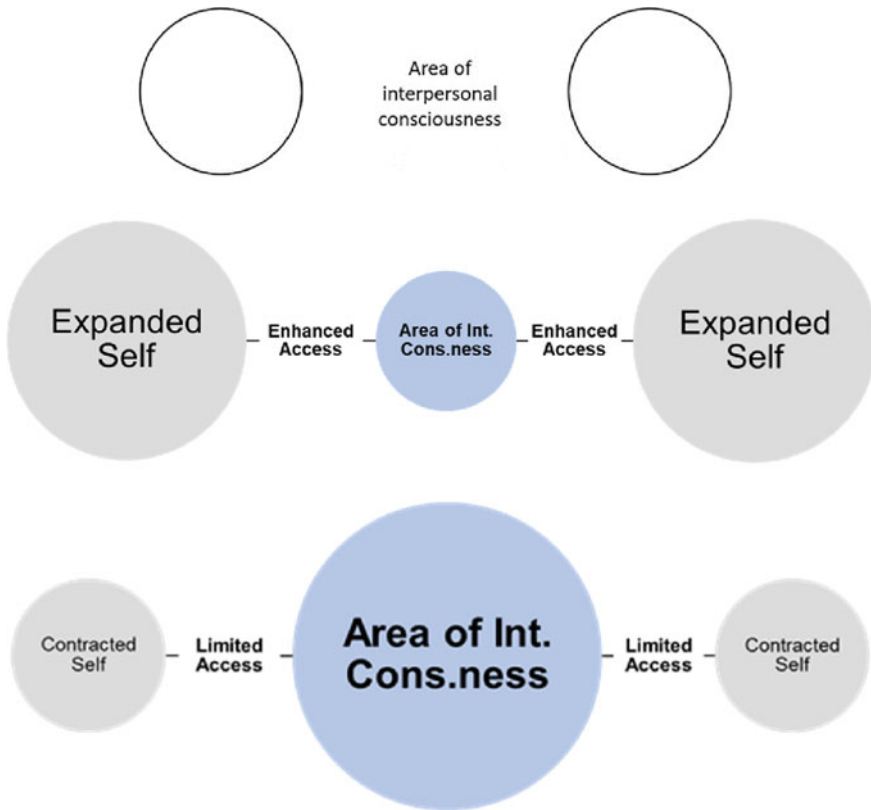


Fig. 9.1 Consciousness gap in an interpersonal arena (Adopted from Askun, 2020)

consciousness could target both levels, although more stress could be given to the interpersonal processes that take place.

- a. *Appreciative Inquiry*: Coined by Krahnke & Cooperrider in 2008, appreciative inquiry is a technique that builds on the idea that the reality is being re-created all the time. The space that we share through our relationships are co-created therefore there is no linear approach to whatever is taking place in a relationship. It is unique to the space being formed and to those who create it together. In terms of conversations, discussion and debate are terms to be replaced by dialogue through which there is no competitive nature of relationships but rather, a cooperative one where a new reality is being formed, there is no winner or a loser, and there is a third alternative being explored as part of this mutual exploration.
- b. *Awareness of Conversational Styles*: In her analysis of conversational styles which are called overlapping vs. turn-taking, Rehling (2004) suggests



that both self and other-awareness practices would help individuals to analyze what is taking place in the interpersonal arena. As an example, as part of self-awareness practice, she recommends that the individual could be invited to recognize the sources of their own conversational style habits, monitor themselves to avoid the downsides of the conversational style that they habitually use with their project teams, apply everyday ethics to their conversational behaviors, and flex their own style to adopt more to others. As part of other-awareness, Rehling (2004) suggests that one should recognize how others, too, express their backgrounds through their conversational styles, recognize others' preferred conversational styles without judging, identify how others define the group or occasion to choose between conversational styles and practice actively listening to others.

- c. *We-Awareness based on Shared Intentionality*. According to Tennenberg, Roth, and Socha (2016), communication, as well as its design and interpretation related to the objects and events in the environment, depend on the presumptions that individuals have their own intentions as well as of others, plus, *we-intentions* that they share in that space. Through a computer-supported cooperative work (CSCW), Tennenberg et al. (2016) create case study scenarios to help turn I-Awareness to We-Awareness. In their study, they used a pair programming methodology which is common to software developers. In this methodology, two software developers sit side-by-side to work together to program the same computer, sharing the same input and output streams. Through this practice, they were able to observe the structure of the communicative work that participants carried out. As a result, they concluded that We-Awareness goes beyond an aggregated version of I-Awareness and that there are tools that could be provided through the CSCW methodology to help participants engage more in We-Awareness.

Teams could start with as few as 2 individuals. Understanding the importance of consciousness at the team level could also imply acceptance of the following as inherent nature of teams:

- Formed by interdependent parties
- Share a common/overarching goal
- Perform tasks to reach a goal
- Have a mission/higher objective that they work toward altogether.

As organizations are made up of teams and work units/departments, their consciousness type and levels are imperative for working toward any organizational goal including organizational wellness.

While many organizations try to adopt wellness programs to their day-to-day practices, many of those programs were also reported to fail or at least do

not help the organizations reach their end goals. Before we go deep into the realm of organizational wellness, it might be best to first look at some studies that put organizational wellness practices into their focus.

## ORGANIZATIONAL WELLNESS PROGRAMS RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Before outlining the organizational wellness from a consciousness and oneness paradigms, it might be useful to talk about some examples of jobs and workplace that apply wellness principles to their day-to-day practices including wellness programs, wellness-oriented work designs, and outcomes of organizational wellness programs.

### *Physical Environment of the World of Work*

Anthony C. Klotz (2020), in his article on creating jobs and workspaces that energize people, talks about the tremendous importance of work designs which are said to be ‘biophilic’. Those types of workplace designs might involve what is called a ‘direct immersion in natural elements’ such as providing employees an outdoor space to take care of their work-related activities including meetings, phone calls, work-related scheduled activities, etc. On the other hand, there might be designs which could include an indirect exposure to nature through large windows, large TV screens with incredible views of nature, etc. In addition, green rooftop terraces for outdoor breaks were also listed. Some of the companies which applied these types of biophilic designs were many multinationals including but not limited to Samsung, Etsy, Salesforce.com, Amazon, and many others. These types of designs are said to promise many benefits while tapping into all domains for human functioning, as emotional, physical, cognitive, social, including prosocial. This might mean that the more people feel connected to whatever surrounds them, the more they feel energized to help others. In other words, these types of biophilic work environments could lead employees to feel more interconnected with all beings around them.

### *The Range and Scope of Organizational Wellness Programs*

In their meta-analysis study where they explored the impacts of organizational wellness programs, Parks and Steelman (2008) classified those programs into two: fitness-oriented vs. being comprehensive. Fitness-oriented programs are said to provide membership to health clubs. Comprehensive programs include both fitness and educational modalities. Examples could be listed as stress management and nutrition courses.

Parks and Steelman (2008), in their analysis, talk about the reasons underlying the wellness program offerings by the employers. One of the first reasons has been listed as improving employee health therefore decreasing absenteeism

due to illnesses. However, they concluded that the research has mixed findings in terms of the relationship between the wellness programs and absenteeism rates.

Another reason was listed as job satisfaction which seems to increase after certain wellness programs are put into place. The main reason underlying this link was that the wellness program could instill a positive attitude which might lead employees to be happier with the organization and therefore to feel more satisfied with their jobs (Gronningsaeter et al., 1992, cited in Parks & Steelman, 2008).

As a result of their meta-analysis of related studies that explored the link between wellness programs and job satisfaction and absenteeism, Parks and Steelman (2008) have found positive links. As a result of their takeaway from the meta-analysis, they also concluded that both individual and organizational factors are at play when we talk about the participation as well as the positive outcomes of the organizational wellness programs. As part of the individual factors they list motivation to exercise, past experience with similar wellness programs, dispositional characteristics. And for the organizational factors, supervisor support, coworker perceptions, and organizational climate are said to play important roles.

Similar to what Parks and Steelman (2008) have found in their meta-analysis study, Berry et al. (2011) contended that fewer absences, improved productivity, worker satisfaction and retention could be promising goals of the organizational wellness programs. She added by stressing the importance of workplace culture as a healthy starting point for all those programs. As an example, she talked about a workplace culture in which high competitiveness is fiercely practiced where no one is literally taking any breaks or hides his or her sickness from others, the first step should be to change that culture.

In their analysis of employee wellness programs, from a return on investment framework, Berry, Mirabito, and Baun (2011) outlined the following pillars of an effective workplace wellness program:

- Multi-level leadership
- Alignment: the program as a natural extension of a firm's identity and goals.
- Scope, Relevance, and Quality
- Accessibility: low or no-cost services to be a priority.
- Partnerships: with internal and external stakeholders.
- Communications: wellness also as a message to be delivered with sensitivity, creativity, etc.

After an extensive research on workplace wellness, Berry et al. (2011) has defined the workplace wellness as 'an organized, employer-sponsored program that is designed to support employees (and sometimes their families) as they adopt and sustain behaviors that reduce health risks, improve quality of life, enhance personal effectiveness, and benefit the organization's bottom line' (p. 4).

## ORGANIZATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS TOWARD ORGANIZATIONAL WELLNESS

When we talk about organizations, we usually understand the following systems:

- Organizational Structures
- Organizational Processes
- Organizational Culture

To be able to enable organizational wellness, all of the above systems need to be supportive. First, let us define what each means from a wellness perspective and then maybe we can offer some alternative methods, approaches for organizational wellness to become a reality.

### *Organizational Structures Which Support Organizational Wellness*

In today's world of work, more and more organizations are organized around non-traditional structures. With the increased importance of Digital Economy and the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) that come with it, we see more of network, flat, matrix, virtual and related organizational structure types rather than the traditional hierarchical ones where there is one top management made up of a C-suite, functional departments that usually work as silos, and managers leading a group of employees.

As the nature of work becomes more digital and cloud-based, we see fewer rigid structures but mostly structures shaped around projects rather than strict roles or role formations. This does not mean we do not have specialization or function; it mostly means working across specializations and functions (cross-functional work structures). This also means that some teams could be working more autonomously rather than being depending on a manager/leader. This type of organizing around tasks mostly emerged out of necessity rather than a change in consciousness all of a sudden since employees are still seeking a role model, somebody to look up to and to learn from and somebody to teach them the ropes.

As the world of work became flatter and more virtual, the older types of human resources practices such as hiring, training, promoting, evaluating performance, etc. also needed to change. It is this period of change we might be going through at this moment in time. And this is where wellness and related discussion could find a way to express itself.

Since the workplace became more independent, more autonomous, more self-directed, and even more self-paced, the mentality is also shifting toward the types of practices that could support this change in nature. The independence not only came through the use of more technology, but also came as a result of the remote work becoming more common and widespread. This led to changes in how employees spent the whole day, how they carried out

their tasks, how they reported information, and how they interacted with one another. Even companies who went back to being fully in-person, still hold many hybrid work formats. Therefore, it is needless to say that remote work is here to stay, it has become our new reality.

Given this new reality, what types of organizational structures or related factors could be helping us to create more wellness at the workplace? We already listed the types of new work structures with an increasing number cutting across many industries and geographic horizons. And it is no coincidence that the new generation fully equipped with technology orientation (if not savviness) are seeking more of those structures which have few or 0 hierarchies, which enable flexible work modalities (remote, in-person, or hybrid could change depending on the nature of the task or the project at the time being), and which do not necessarily require a managerial supervision but rather, leadership that could prove facilitation and guidance from time to time. In addition, the nature of the task is changing. We see more people taking several part-time jobs in the virtual world as compared to those who are seeking permanent roles in some established institution. This new type of work preferences is also called the ‘gig economy’ where the players and the game change constantly. As the majority of the workforce is shifting in terms of needs and goals, it is time for larger organizations to reconsider their organizing structures, their task/work designs, their physical space, and their performance and reward systems. With the changing trends, no matter what type of work the organization carries out, organizing in more flat structures, with less hierarchy, with less supervision but with more self-directed pace, with more cross-functional project scopes, and with more adaptable rewarding and performance mechanisms seems to be the new requirement when we include wellness into the picture.

### *Organizational Processes that Support Organizational Wellness*

Next to structures, organizational processes also need to be reconsidered with the enormous shift that is taking place in the world of work. The organizational processes need to change with regard to hiring practices, performance appraisals, promotion criteria, managerial inputs and exchanges, meeting times and modalities, KPIs, and departmental or work unit-based evaluations and communication.

Starting with hiring, the new world of work seeks talent everywhere. You can be a candidate for any organization as long as you are able to work with the help of technology. This increased flexibility therefore access to talent also brings with it challenges in terms of deciding whom to hire for best results. Right now, it is not only more important to make the best choice, but also important to create and execute a hiring practice which is fair, free from bias, and carried out with as much objectivity as possible. With the ample opportunities that come with technological solutions provided for the Human Resources, there comes a greater responsibility to act and to select applicants

with the best process fairness (Brockner, 2006) that reflects an attitude free from bias, discrimination or all sorts of subjective factors which would blur the hiring process.

Similarly, concerning performance appraisals, responsible authorities need to use the help of technology to collect more data about employee behavior and performance outcomes as well as refrain from explicit or implicit biases when making an evaluation decision. As a manager or a leader doing the evaluation, one has to be aware of his/her stereotypes, subtle biases, and psychological tendencies so as to eliminate any type of subject PA process. As an example, because managers/leaders often overlook the importance of collecting behavioral data, they end up relying on their first impressions or use very recent events (recency effect) to make the performance evaluation of the employee. However, this ends up being faulty and leads to many defensive attitudes by the employee as well as might lead to unfair outcomes leading to turnover and many layoffs.

Again, with the help of today's technology, managers could be spending more quality time with their employees to empower them in their roles. Managers could be doing less, delegating more and training more. In addition to training, managers in their roles could dedicate some time for coaching others. Since the new world of work organizes around more flexible work structures and modalities, managers could find opportunities to carve out more time to spend with their employees, instead of doing more work. The quality of the relationships has a chance to increase such as when a lunch time could be dedicated to human-to-human conversations between two parties rather than being organized around tasks to be done in between. If the majority of work is carried out online for example, more meaningful therefore more valuable activities could be created when the parties come physically together.

Usage of online communication tools such as Zoom, or Microsoft Teams are also part of organizational processes. These tools are sometimes being criticized as leading to more structure, result in less human connection therefore less synergy created. However, some also argues that these tools led to meetings to be held more efficiently and in a more organized fashion. Since the online communication tools do not very much allow for side conversations or it is not as easy to go off the topic, they could be creating a high potential for making the time especially for social purposes. The employees also come to work for social support. Young and Lambie (2007) argued that social support was found to be related to wellness behaviors (Granello, 2001). And they could be strongly yearning for that type of support while working remotely. It might be a helpful organizational process to use the additional time being saved for social connections to go deeper by making them even more enjoyable and even exciting. This practice not only would help toward individual wellness but wellness at the collective level as well.

As for the KPIs, the process fairness should be the ruling factor. When the organizations and departmental units create certain performance indicators for

success, they need to make sure it reflects diverse capabilities, cultures, and competencies as much as possible. When an organization decides on a KPI, it has to rely on objective standards and outcomes such as revenue, profits, customer satisfaction rates, employee satisfaction rates, customer engagement measures (now more measurable than ever with the use of enhanced data management tools), peer-to-peer support, and organizational growth metrics, etc. Here the use of traditional tools could still be of value, such as making Balanced Score Sheet as one tool to create KPIs and their timeline with regard to certain long- or short-term goals.

In any case, it is not possible to talk about processes without how the employees see them. The importance of employee perceptions of processes needs to be stressed. This means that consistent and regular assessment of how the employee perceives a current organizational practice is beyond necessity.

This all might mean that the new organizational processes that aim to reflect wellness need to be reconsidered, revisited, or revised to reflect more process fairness, more social interaction, more quality communication, more objective evaluation, and more inclusion of diverse individuals, their viewpoints, personalities, cultures, and capabilities.

### *Organizational Culture that Supports Organizational Wellness*

Organizations start with some beliefs, assumptions, and most importantly, value systems. An organization that does not include idea of ‘Wellness’ into its core culture principles may not ever realize its wellness-related goals. There are many organizations today which apply various wellness programs, and which try to help employee turnover and absenteeism by providing more programs that reflect wellness. But many also fail the evidence shows. The reason they might fail is not because the programs are useless or do not help employees, in fact they are useful, and they are helpful. However, unless wellness becomes a natural part of an organization, more and more money and effort will be spent on wellness, but less and less long-term outcomes will be achieved. In other words, the organizations need to walk the walk, talk the talk, and walk the talk (Frei & Moriss, 2012). They should not be vacuous (O’Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000) or inconsistent in terms of their wellness-related practices and values. While clarity, consistency, and comprehensiveness are being listed as very important pillars for strong cultures, on a more practical level, how would an organizational culture aimed at wellness look like? What would be some assumptions, values, and practices that could enable and later sustain wellness at the organizational level?

According to Lieberman (2019), organizational culture is the biggest road-block for employees to feel healthier and happier in their workplace. Edgar Schein (1986) defined culture which is formed as a result of problem-solving approach adopted by a group when it tried to externally adapt while remaining internally integrated. This answers so many questions when we think of wellness also from a oneness perspective. Being one requires interconnectedness

with all around us and inside us. While trying to connect, every organism goes through a relational process which might be very transformative. As interconnection requires exchanges and communication between parties, each party will feel the challenge of adaptation while trying to remain integrated or whole, in other words. It is like an individual trying to stay healthy and whole in the face of life's challenges ranging from personal to career or health-related, etc. Similarly, in their journey of existence, organizations also face the task of adaptation and integration. That's why some of them end up failing even in the very beginning. They cannot adapt and/or remain integrated in the face of industrial forces so they die or go out of business too early. On the other hand, some of them continue growing and integrating with some healthy adaptation, but rather stay behind in their mature years. This is also mostly due to their ways of solving problems rather than the adversities surround them. Otherwise, all organizations would come to an end in the face of similar challenges happening at the same time. Thinking of COVID-19 outbreak, and the period would give us an idea. The culture therefore is deemed crucial. It is like the air we breathe, the ocean/sea we swim in, the inside and the outside, the alpha, and the beta... It is all that there is surrounding and filling in the organization. It is beyond structures and processes; it is what creates all of them.

What are some of the characteristics that we could use to define a wellness-oriented culture? With the help of Schein (1986)'s culture triangle, we can use the practices, values, and assumptions framework to categorize some factors. Starting with the assumptions, since they are mostly unconscious and implied, rather than being expressed or being explicit, for a wellness-oriented culture, it might be helpful to bring awareness into the picture. Since they are mostly unrecognized, hard to change, and even understand, some awareness work especially with the most tenured employees would be critical. Without an understanding therefore realization of what types of assumptions are helping the organization remain healthy and balanced vs. which ones hinder its capabilities, it might be impossible to unveil the hidden road to integration, wholeness therefore wellness.

For the values that should reflect wellness, organizations first need to stay away from 'profit first shareholder first' mentality. Whatever they produce and whomever they serve, they need to incorporate wellness into it. When listing their values in their websites, brochures, or whatever platform they use to define themselves, they need to insert keywords associated with wellness such as:

- Physical and Mental Health
- Well-being
- Happiness
- Collaboration
- Positive communication
- Violence-free workplace
- Wholeness



- Productivity
- Satisfaction
- Fulfillment
- Engagement
- Consciousness
- Joy
- Healthy functioning
- Integrated

These keywords could be inside their value framework or also represented in their organizational mottos.

In terms of practices, there are zillion ways in which organizations could incorporate wellness into their practices. But research shows some practices could even be more urgent than others to make the place a wellness-oriented one. We will try to list some of them below.

- *How the employees are being treated.* The treatment of employees is crucial starting with the hiring practices. Fair, objective, inclusive hiring practices help employees adjust easily and stay with their organization longer while showing high performance. In addition to hiring, when the organization spends money, time, and effort on their employees in terms of their self and career development always pays off with less and less absenteeism and turnover and with high performance potential. Including the organization, the managerial style when dealing with employees is invaluable. As an example, if the manager is considerate, respectful, supportive, and empathetic, the employees feel much better with their jobs, and they also yield positive outcomes as listed above. Treating employees with process fairness (see Brockner, 2006) is also an important part of creating wellness as it leads to less burnout, less stress, and more engagement (see also Young & Lambie, 2007).
- *How the decisions are being made.* Decisions as simple as where to conduct the meeting vs what kinds of resources should be spent for the work unit, need to be taken with the inclusion of the employees as much as possible. When employees feel they are being included in the decision-making, minor or major, they become less stressed, more engaged, and more motivated (see also Young & Lambie, 2007).
- *Approaching the task.* When there is enough time to spend on to discuss how the tasks should be approached, with what kinds of resources and budget, with what kinds of information flow and process, there would be less workload imbalance or social loafing, less turnover intentions, less burnout, and more engagement and performance. The way the task is being approached is not only imperative from a performance standpoint, but also from a wellness perspective. If the employees feel they have full control and understanding of their task from start to finish, they

will feel less burdened and happier. The whole demands-resources model talks about the importance of the balance between job demands and job control (see also Young & Lambie, 2007). Another evidence is through research by Worline and Dutton (2017) in which employee performance and well-being increased in environments where there is flexibility around the place and time of work (Lieberman, 2019).

- *Determining the criteria for success.* There are many ways in which the criteria for success could be determined. The KPIs are there for this purpose. However, usually they are given for any employee joining the organization. Unless the employee understands the mentality and the rationale behind those KPIs, they might feel very much like an outsider when it comes to PA talks. If they feel they are being part of the whole process, and that their views are also taken into consideration, then it is more fulfilling for them to complete and perform on a task. Similarly, Young and Lambie (2007) argued that employees experience role stress when they have conflicting or uncertain job expectations, too many responsibilities, or too many different roles. This might lead us to reconsider those roles and their criteria for success if we'd like to talk about wellness-focused organizational practices.
- *Providing opportunities to excel.* Most employees leave jobs and seek employment elsewhere not just because they get bored with their current jobs but mostly because they do not see alternate opportunities for further growth. If today's organizations solely rely on promotion as a way to motivate their workforce, it remains vulnerable to turnover and loss of investment because of the limited number of promotional opportunities available. However, if the organizations allow room for growth around competencies and projects and not necessarily around roles, then the alternatives would be numerous. As an example, if an employee would like additional training programs on leadership, communication skills, or strategic thinking, it would have an additional motivating power to give the training to them. This way, the organization is not just helping the employee on his or her self-development, but also creating opportunities for more commitment and engagement. In addition, if the employee would have alternate opportunities to take part in separate projects that tap into their needs to belong, to self-actualize and to generate ideas, then this would also be an additional step toward wellness-oriented workplace. Through providing more opportunities for employees to express and improve themselves, organizations also benefit from the enhanced well-being of their employees as a result.
- *Presence of Psychological Safety.* Do the employees feel it is ok to express themselves, their feelings, thoughts, and decisions? Is it safe to be 'me' or is it risky? Would an opinion about an issue be open for discussion? Would it be ok to disagree with a managerial decision? Is it ok to express

how one feels with regard to a social exchange? All of the above questions are important to make sure there is felt psychological safety in an organization that is wellness-oriented.

Overall, with all factors included, many effort could be spent to make the workplace a wellness-oriented one. As Lieberman (2019) concluded, we need workplaces of humanity and compassion in which individuals can be present and contribute with their whole selves, including any challenges at the mental or physical level. Employee relationships should center around trust and this way wellness programs can gain power to transform from being unhealthy toward being an integrated human system.

### BEYOND ORGANIZATIONS: SOCIALLY INSPIRED WELL-BEING FROM AN INTEGRAL ORGANIZATIONAL WELLNESS FRAMEWORK

According to Bennett (2018), well-being is influenced by a nest of contexts ranging from being national, developmental, social, environmental, and economic. In this type of framework, one's family, social networks, ethnic culture, religious communities, etc. are also important factors at play. And workplaces also operate as part of larger contexts including industry, size, location, etc. In this complex interlocking structures and processes, both individuals and organizations derive influence from multi-factors, stakeholders and all of the surrounding environment. According to Bennett (2018), people thrive in learning environments which are supportive of their well-being. This way, well-being happens within individuals (intrapersonal), their organization (transpersonal), and through coworker relationships which are positive (interpersonal), trustworthy, and triggering a sense of belongingness. Relying on the integral model of health and well-being, Bennett (2018) stresses that wellness is a multi-dimensional construct with physical, spiritual, intellectual, psychological, social, and emotional dimensions having various levels of influential factors operating on them. This model builds on the term *wholeness* to refer to all constructs that represent an individual's health across multiple dimensions, body, mind, and spirit altogether as a whole. Therefore, basic thriving practices are said to be built on three pillars: individual wellness, organizational development and learning, and behavioral health.

#### *Wellness from a Consciousness Perspective with All Quadrants/All Levels Approach*

Borrowing Ken Wilber (2001)'s integral model, Bennett (2018) argued that the way individuals and organizations could be helped would be through mutual supportive relationships between those entities. In terms of the role of

human consciousness and its derivatives (societal, civilization-based, and technological), it can be viewed from two perspectives, interior (subjective) vs. exterior (objective), and individual (experiential) vs. social (cultural) to make up the four quadrants in the model. Within each, evolution would occur across six levels:

1. I-Subjective experience-What's in it for me? Approach to a more altruistic approach (Organizational citizenship)
2. It-Objective manifestations-from behaviors which are automatic and reactive to those which are synchronized with others
3. We-Intersubjective experience-from experiencing the group as being a place to conform to a community of practice which is promoting health across all levels
4. Its-Cultural/Interobjective manifestations-from data in silos to a broader use of data for the future good of humanity as a whole.

Overall, we tried to discuss and propose a model which encompasses the individual-work unit (teams)-organizations and the surrounding environmental contexts altogether. It seems that consciousness could be both the ingredient and the glue which is irreplaceable. Unless systems operate in consciousness at all levels of existing, organizational wellness would only remain as an oxymoron.

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