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## **MINDFULNESS MEDITATION, WORKPLACE WELL- BEING AND JOB SATISFACTION: A MODEL AND AN INTEGRATIVE VISION FOR THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE FUTURE**

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## INTRODUCTION

The view on human work and its impacts on us, human beings, as an existing species on this planet, is changing and the meaning attributed to work is evolving (Araújo, Castro and Jordão, 2014).

On the other hand, the positive contemplative sciences (Cebolla et al, 2019) are displaying scientific evidence in multiple contexts and settings, including in the workplace, with yoga practices, meditation practices, gratitude interventions, optimism techniques, compassionate benevolence practices and various other secular traditions to enter organizations and stand out for the difference in business environment..

These changes are driven by several reasons including globalization, the post-Covid19 pandemic, technology and advances and multiple sciences (Araújo, 2023) but also driven by the four generations that are currently in the job market at the same time (Baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z) and that people managers are starting to see that they are motivated by different stimulations. Generation Z is now looking for a return to greater quality of life, satisfaction, happiness at work and balance in all areas of their lives.

In just two hundred years after the emergence of 'jobs' (employment) and the need to employ people and try to pin down people to functions and organizations (to attach people, in latin is *'pregare'*, which originated the word "emprego" in Portuguese and similar expressions in other languages), humans began to develop work activities in the form of jobs, legal ties, and organizations, almost completely forgetting that non-productive human behavior, has a role in our existence parallel to productive behavior and soon leisure (of whatever kind, creative, contemplative, leisure, among others) lost strength (Araújo, 2016).

In this work, using a narrative/classical literature review but also a phenomenological, qualitative and auto-ethnographically influenced view, we tread a path in which we are simultaneously researchers, meditators and workers, not forcing the division of these experiences, but integrating them and seeking to make a contribution (from these three personal perspectives) on how well-being and job satisfaction can be influenced by meditative practices at work, with particular focus on mindfulness meditation.

The paradigm of human work has been undergoing transformations with regard to the role it occupies in each individual's life, along with the transformations that have occurred in recent years with industrial and technological evolution and the globalization of markets.

The concept of productivity has shifted from a Fordist model to a multitasking capacity, which leads to high levels of work stress, the result of the conception of time measured by the ability to respond to the strength of competitiveness. This translates into an impact on the personal and family life of each employee.

At a moment when work is conceived as a component of human happiness, resulting from the satisfaction felt by each individual and with direct impacts on organizations, it is important to reconsider how organizational culture is shaped and provides the conditions for these new approaches.

Namely through observation of new work formats, (such as teleworking implemented by the pandemic, professions that until recently did not exist, e.g. linked to the digital and IT areas), which led to the opening of possibilities regarding ways of 'producing' far beyond what was already established. What previously did not seem to be possible for organizations or workers, has now led to questioning and a greater awareness of employees regarding

their quality of life, regarding the balance between personal and work life. Precisely by valuing your happiness, satisfaction, and well-being.

The level of satisfaction and well-being of workers in organizations is directly dependent on intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the worker, as well as the way in which he perceives and manages the stress inherent in his professional context. This is often the object of misunderstanding and stigmatization and should be addressed as an organizational problem and not an individual failure. It is, therefore, a joint work, focusing on joint satisfaction, that is, satisfaction with the work itself, with colleagues, with hierarchical superiors, with the feedback felt in the work environment.

In this regard, EU-OSHA (2022) considers that an integrated, preventive, and systematic approach could be more effective in managing and preventing this type of risk. This, in addition to constituting a legal imperative established in Framework Directive 89/391/EEC and transposed into national legislation (Portugal) by Law 102/2009, of September 10, which establishes the Legal Regime for the Promotion of Safety and Health at Work, as provided for in article 284 of Law 7/2009, of February 12, the Labor Code, is also a moral obligation and a strategic tool, as it can contribute to mitigating risks and reducing professional accidents, as well as for the reduction of absenteeism and presenteeism levels.

Thus, in order to understand how the practice of mindfulness meditation can positively contribute to an increase in the level of satisfaction and well-being of workers, a review of existing literature was carried out, seeking to clarify some aspects, namely: with regard to the practice itself, its origin and concept; meditative practices and its different characteristics; meditation postures; existing

assessment tools and meditation programs appropriate to the workplace; mindfulness meditation in an organizational context; the concept of workplace well-being, satisfaction at work and, finally, the contribution of meditation practices to satisfaction and workplace well-being.

## METHODOLOGY

A classic/narrative review of existing literature on the platforms “Google Scholar,” “RepositoriUM” and “Scientific Open Access Repositories of Portugal – RCAAP”, was performed. The keywords “Mindfulness,” “well-being,” “satisfaction” and “organizations” were used in the search. Articles in English and Portuguese by different authors, book chapters and specialty magazines were also included in this research.

Aware that there are other methodologies such as the systematic review that we have already used in previous works (Araújo et al, 2018; Filipe et al, 2021), we chose a narrative construction that also involves the authors and their experiences, either as workers or as meditators, and so we needed a more qualitative methodology that would allow us not to distance ourselves from the objects of study.

We thus approach a phenomenological view and assume a somewhat autoethnographic and almost autopsychographic view (Yuan & Hickman, 2016), in which, using the existing literature review, we also position ourselves and build our narrative, aware that we do not require withdraw in our self from this debate, because it is this same self that is a practitioner of mindfulness meditation and others, at the same time that he is a worker in an organization, and a researcher and writer and analyst on the phenomenon in question.

We see these experiences and this approach as an asset and not a weakness, however, we will clearly indicate whenever some position

is something experiential by the authors or, in turn, is rooted in scientific evidence.

## **MEDITATIVE SCIENCES, MINDFULNESS MEDITATION AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT**

In this section, we start by addressing Meditation and Mindfulness meditation, namely: (i) concepts and origin of meditation practices and postures, (ii) instruments and programs, in particular the MBSR, the MBCT and the ACT, (iii) then we will visit mindfulness meditation in an organizational context; (iv) and workplace well-being and happiness concepts by different authors and theories, as well as job satisfaction, (v) we will explore the correlation and contribution of this type of practices to increased levels of satisfaction and workplace well-being of workers in organizations and, finally, we will present a model of meditative practice in the workplace, reformulating a proposal presented a few years ago years (Araújo et al., 2018).

In what is undoubtedly a field undergoing enormous growth, we could not fail to mention the multiple efforts of Daniel Goleman and Richard Davidson in this field, namely the most recent work, entitled “Altered Traits: Science Reveals how meditation changes the mind, brain and body”, where hundreds of scientific evidences of these facts are presented (a large part of them are investigations carried out in organizations and the rest, although not linked to companies, are carried out in human beings who are also workers and, therefore, that deal with the advantages and disadvantages of the experience of current human work) (Goleman & Davidson, 2018).

In Table 1, we can observe that around 1970's there were only a few articles, while in 2016 there were already 1113 publications. It is important to mention that meditation

was never an instrument/practice designed to promote well-being or satisfaction, either with life or with work. This evolution is recent and marked by the scientific method and the westernization of practices. The so-called “long way” by the authors, designates the experience of this process as an important and central instrument to know oneself and to unravel our own existence. It is only in recent decades, with the emergence of the widespread idea of stress and anxiety, that meditation has gained this new role in dealing with the hardships of modern life. It is in this direction that, around the 1970s and 1980s, investigations began, with a lot of initial discredit, as the authors tell us, and with mistrust from the scientific community in general.

A quick search using google scholar brings up some interesting results in Table 2.

At the present moment, we can observe that in just 3 years, with 2023 already being a year with impacts from Covid19 (despite the end of the Pandemic State having not yet been decreed by the World Health Organization), one hundred and sixty-eight thousand scientific publications emerged on Google Scholar Databasis and the rise of research in only 3 years is massive.

The Covid19 Pandemic affected numerous areas of the lives of all human beings, but we can consider that organizations and the way of organizing work was undoubtedly one of the most radical areas of change. The successive confinements have placed human beings, both at a personal and family level, as well as professional, facing challenges never before seen, for example, dealing with loneliness, with confinement and even with the impact of news on mental health, an item that was studied by Kam et al (2022), who, in their recent study, concluded that a regular daily dose for 10 days offers a protection (Buffer effect) against the negative impact of Covid19 on mental health.

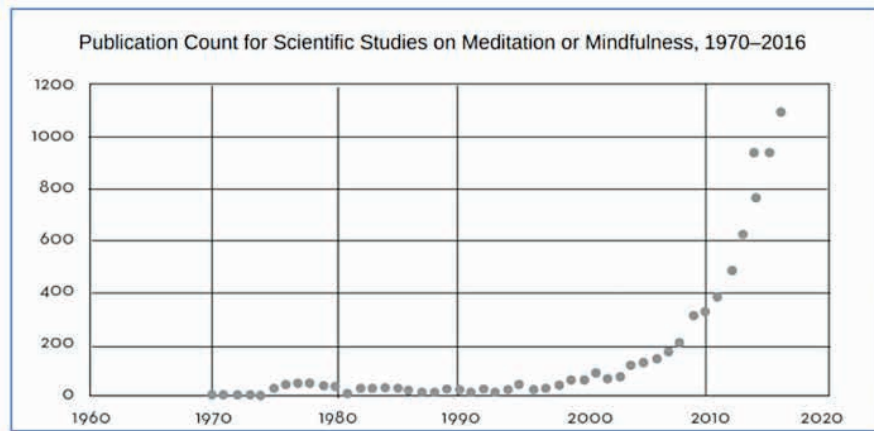


Table 1. Evolution of scientific publications on meditation and mindfulness, between 1970 and 2016 (Goleman & Davidson, 2018)

Time Interval	Key-word "mindfulness"
1990-2000 (time interval 10 years)	8,830
2000-2010 (time interval 10 years)	52,000
2010-2020 (time interval 10 years)	220,000
2020-2023 (time interval ONLY 3 years)	<b>168,000</b>

Table 2. Google Scholar database query, on April 22nd 2023, using the keyword "mindfulness", over various time intervals.

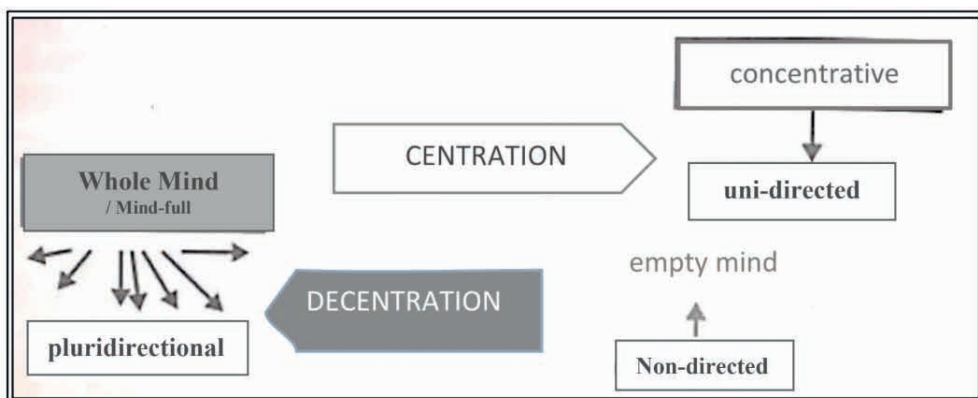


Figure 1. Types do meditation: Centrative versus decentrative meditations<sup>1</sup> (Joyce-Moniz, 2010)

<sup>1</sup> We translated freely from the portuguese original, but it is important to reflect that some details might me lost in translation, namely in the translation of "Whole mind", which in portuguese is "Mente Plena". IN English, full mind might suggest a mind full of stuff, so we translated as "Whole mind" since to point is to express a mind attentive to the whole thing around us, without shutting anything out, a mind that embraces every stimuli and so, it is pluridireccional

## MEDITATIVE PRACTICES AND MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

It would take dozens of pages to discuss all contemplative sciences and meditative practices existing since the beginning of humanity, starting with the first documented practice: yogic philosophy. For the purpose of this text, not neglecting the value and contribution of many other meditative practices, we will focus on mindfulness meditation (which occasionally, to save space, we may call just Mindfulness<sup>1</sup>).

All the authors of this text have experience in various types of meditative practice, however, it is in the practice of mindfulness meditation that most of the texts with scientific evidence published are found and, on the other hand, from the experience of the authors, it is the practice that is most easily can incorporate into the organizational context. Furthermore – and adding a personal reflective note – it is in this modality that the authors felt the most impact on their own meditative practice in the workplace, hence the choice of this approach.

### ORIGIN AND CONCEPT

The concept of mindfulness results from the translation of the word “sati,” which belongs to the Pali language, native to the Indian subcontinent. As Germer (2004) points out, it was in this language that Buddhist literature was written 2500 years ago, in which the word “sati” represented the primordial teaching, associated with remembrance, attention and awareness.

This concept came about through Siddhartha Gautama, as he discovered that the body and mind create their own suffering. This awareness allowed him to transform suffering into enlightenment, having, from that moment on, become known as Buddha.

<sup>1</sup> The ideal designation would always be mindfulness meditation, to discern from other meanings of the word mindfulness, which that designates the quality of being attentive (in opposition to a full documented and fundamental insight and discernment meditative practice), which is a necessary quality for any kind of meditative practice, while the practice of mindfulness meditation has circumscribed and well-defined frameworks, practices and principles.

The set of mental exercises that teaches how to manage what arises inside and outside became known as *Vipassanā* (Sociedade Portuguesa de Meditação e Bem-estar, 2022). As Vieira (2017) points out, the doctrine of Buddha was initially established in India, having spread through a network of monasteries and, 300 years after his death, Buddhism was already divided into 18 schools. The three main schools or traditions being *Theravāda*, *Mahayāna* and *Vajrayana*.

SN Goenka was responsible master and founder for expanding the *Vipassanā* tradition to the West, and the three types of meditations taught are the core meditations of most Buddhist schools, with differences in how each tradition practices them. This is related to the quadruple establishment of consciousness, namely the observation of the body, bodily sensations, mind and mental contents (Vieira, 2017).

According to Bennet-Goleman (2001, Sociedade Portuguesa de Meditação e Bem-estar, 2022), *Vipassanā* is known in the Western context as Mindfulness. Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990), considered responsible for bringing mindfulness meditation to the clinical area and to society in general and one of the most cited authors, defines it as a process of a psychological nature that allows experiencing the present moment with a certain quality of attention and that it requires learning to focus attention, moment by moment, with an open mind, curiosity and acceptance and that significantly affects everyday life of people. Although its foundation is based on Buddhist traditions, mindfulness meditation has no religion and can be practiced by anyone, regardless of their beliefs.

Known as mindfulness, mindfulness meditation gained prominence with the

“Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction” program, introduced by Jon Kabat-Zinn in therapeutic contexts, namely in the treatment of chronic pain, in which it had great success (Lomas, Medina, Ivtzan, Rupprecht & Eiroa-Orosa, 2017).

Mindfulness Meditation is directed towards the present moment and with an orientation towards openness to experiences, with a sense of curiosity, non-judgment, non-reactivity, decentralization and deep understanding (Lopes, 2017).

For Weare (2013), the focus of mindfulness meditation is not on what has already happened or may happen, as it trains the competence to respond appropriately to any events of the present moment, whether good or bad, assuming to be attentive to inner states, such as thoughts, emotions and physical sensations, as well as all external stimulus.

The practice of mindfulness meditation allows us to develop a mental process that helps us to deal with the problems and obstacles that we face throughout our lives, favoring awareness and inhibition of thoughts and actions that we have in an automated way and whose reaction is at the base of emotional problems and suffering (Portuguese Mindfulness Association, 2022). We understand that it is about training in self-management, self-knowledge and personal development. Focusing on the present leads to greater awareness and decision space.

## **MEDITATION PRACTICE AND POSTURES**

When we talk about meditation, the first image that comes to mind is someone sitting with their legs crossed, hands on their knees, eyes closed and looking serene (Rodrigues, 2014).

Among the various taxonomies that could be reported here, we chose to reflect using the work of Joyce-Moniz (2010) who classifies

them in two ways: (i) concentrative meditation: when the focus of attention is unidirectional, such as breathing, synchronized counting of the breath, a mantra or a sound, and should, whenever there is a distraction, return your attention to the focus and (ii) decenteration meditation/Mindfulness: when the focus of attention is multi-directed towards any and all stimuli, internal or external, allowing them to disappear in the same way they appear, without any reflection or rumination, as shown in figure 1.

A great myth that surrounds this field of contemplative sciences is the one that concerns the empty mind. As seen in the illustrative scheme, the empty mind is a phenomenon that will happen after prolonged practice, as a consequence of a non-directed mind, however, initial myths of inexperienced practitioners is that the practice itself consists of emptying the mind (which is extremely wrong!).

In these initial steps, practice in specific postures is usually a help for beginner practitioners, but it should be noted that meditating is always working with the mind, although you can use the body (using the body can mean meditating in motion, for example, with practices yoga, tai chi, qi gong and many others, or using the body as an anchor, for example in the body scan inspired by *yoga nidra* or even in relaxation techniques widely documented by the scientific method, be it Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique or Joseph Schultz's autogenic training, which are inspired by ancestral Eastern meditative practices, but which ended up being scientifically proven in the West).

Morgan (2004) mentions that there are four positions described in secular traditions, namely: standing, sitting, walking or lying down. The four positions recommended for meditation favor the adoption of an adequate mental attitude, as well as an awareness of

one's own body.

· **Standing position:**

Morgan (2004) refers that this is the easiest position and that allows the awareness of the body in a relaxed and balanced way. The author adds that, when in this meditation position, such as when one is in a ceremony or in a walking meditation, one should place the left hand with the thumb inside in a closed fist at the level of the sternum and the right-hand cover, as well as forearms level and parallel to the floor, adopting the hand position known as *sashu*.

· **Sitting position:**

Considered to be the best of positions to meditate, its main characteristic is the possibility of having the back in a suitable position, which can be performed in several ways, namely: on a chair, with legs crossed or using a meditation bench.

In position showed in Figure 3, it is possible to assume that most people can be relatively comfortable. Furthermore, we are interested here in reflecting that, for the purposes of workplace meditation programs, this is possibly the most appropriate, discreet and useful posture, and we cannot fail to reflect that, despite representing an important aspect, especially for beginners, postures are supports/structures for beginning practitioners [As Brown and Engler (1980) write in detail about the different stages of meditators] and that, in fact, experienced meditators incorporate meditative practices without having to resort to specific or rigid postures.

However, for programs in companies, it may be an advantage to explain in some detail that you should use a chair with a flat seat, which does not tilt backwards and, if it has lumbar support, you should not use it so that you can sit up straight. upright form. Many of these contributions are in line with ergonomic and occupational health interventions and, therefore, there may even be a close

relationship with interventions in the field of hygiene, health and safety at work.

You must have your heels apart and ensure that your feet land on the floor and are parallel, as well as ensure that the chair has the appropriate height, and if the chair is low, you can use a pillow or place something under your feet, if necessary. To find the proper position of the head, imagine a string attached to the nape of the neck which, when pulled upwards, lifts the neck slightly and lowers the chin slightly. With regard to the position of the hands, they should rest on the lap so that the arms are relaxed, and if necessary, you can use a pillow or something similar. Thumbs should touch lightly as if they were holding a sheet of paper. Such a posture allows, if you fall asleep or become more relaxed during meditation, your thumbs will normally drop (Figure 4).

Of the hand positions (Traditionally called *Mudras*), which in themselves contain much symbolic content that will not be covered here, this is perhaps one of the most useful, in our experience, and one that can be used at work for quick meditations in the workplace (in case of office work).

Interestingly, this mudra closes in a kind of circle that many masters said helps to think more clearly, as we close the circle of our mind. In a brief history, it is also said that this is the ideal position, in contrast to the other two: if the thumbs drop, it becomes a valley, if they are too tense, the composition will look like and feel like a mountain and what you really want to achieve... is the calm of a Plains/Lowlands<sup>2</sup>. This illustration helps beginning meditators to focus more on this meditative element of the body.

· **Cross legs: With cushion or bench**

For this meditation position it is necessary to use a Zafu or round meditation cushion, although you can improvise and use a folded blanket. In this case, you should try to sit on the edge so as not to obstruct blood circulation

2 Original, in portuguese: *Não se quer um vale, nem se quer uma montanha, mas sim uma planície.*



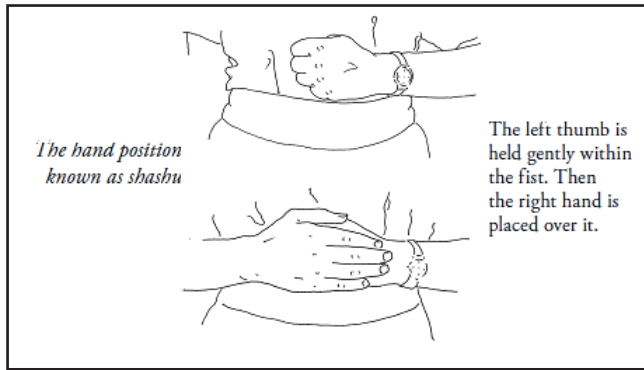


Figure 2. Examples of hand positions during meditation practices

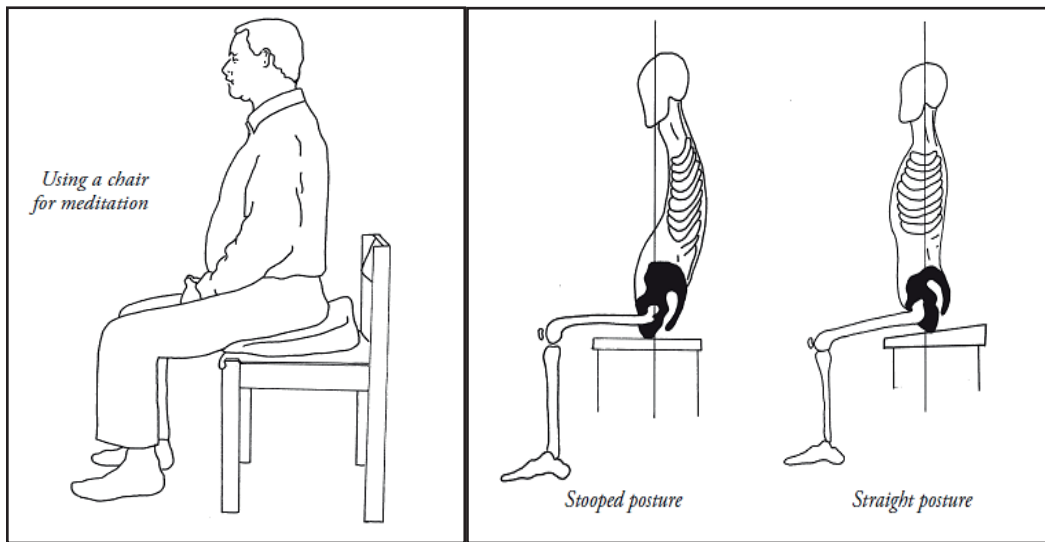


Figure 3. First image: Meditative posture in the chair; Second Image: Proper/Not Proper Lumbar Postures (Morgan, 2004)

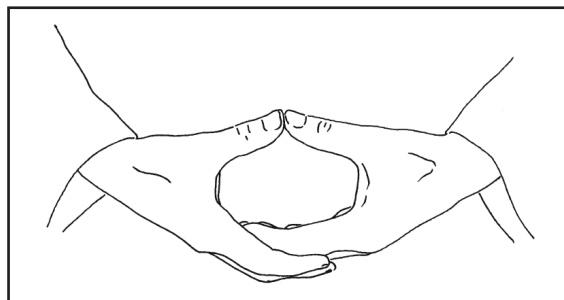


Figure 4. Hand position in sitting meditation

in the legs. In this way, Zafu leans forward and favors the adoption of a proper lumbar posture and the necessary pelvic support. The use of the meditation bench implies that the individual is kneeling. For this purpose, the bench should be as low as possible so that only the heels facing upwards can pass through (Figure 6).

Although it may be less common, many companies already offer formal meditation moments, in their own spaces, using these positions and these accessories.

· **Walk (Kinhin):**

When doing more than one period of meditation, it is advised to intersperse with walking meditation or, commonly known as Kinhin, for a period of usually ten minutes. After the period of sitting meditation, the practitioner should slowly stand up and, after standing, start walking in small steps, approximately the length of the foot, keeping the eyes open and focused, just as you do in the sitting position. The pace set must not be less than one stride per breath.

Just as ergonomic guidelines and occupational health programs already guide sedentary workers, who spend a lot of time sitting, to occasionally get up and move, the logic of walking practice goes in the same direction. Preventing a sedentary lifestyle can thus be incorporated into a more intentional meditative practice. It is said that, while practice this variant, image your feet kissing the earth and focus on the sensations of landing every millimeter of the foot on the ground (other mind states include, e.g., practice gratitude for something in each step).

· **Lying position:**

Daishin Morgan (2004) states that this position should only be used by those who are sick or suffer from any pathology that does not allow them to meditate in a sitting position. In this case, there are two positions that can be considered: on your back and with your knees

raised or supported, keeping your feet three to four fists apart, with your hands on your lower abdomen and in an oval position as in a sitting position, or, alternatively, in *sashu* (indicated in the standing position).

This yogic asana (Figure 7), traditionally called Savasana (Corpse Pose) may not be the most useful in work contexts, however, thousands of companies that provide training in stress management and relaxation techniques have already opened doors to this practice.

Lying on the right side (*parinivarna*), with the knees bent and the head supported by the right hand. The author adds that the latter is excellent for meditating in bed before falling asleep. Interestingly, the side-lying posture is also the so-called PLS-Safety Lateral Posture, used in first aid and basic life support training, currently mandatory in many countries in organizations. Possibly not being the most useful for work contexts, it can be useful to teach relaxation techniques to improve the quality of sleep-in employees, which will impact the quality of work and, therefore, organizational success.

In short, despite the postures being a kind of first level and first line of learning, offering this education to corporate employees can provide the necessary framework for further evolutions in meditative practice.

## **MEASURES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR MEASURING MINDFULNESS PRACTICES**

There are several measurement scales that, although with the same purpose of validating the individual level of mindfulness, were created taking into account different approaches and techniques (Lopes, 2013).

Bergomi et al. (2013) list eight scales that have been developed and applied by the scientific community:

- (1) Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory –

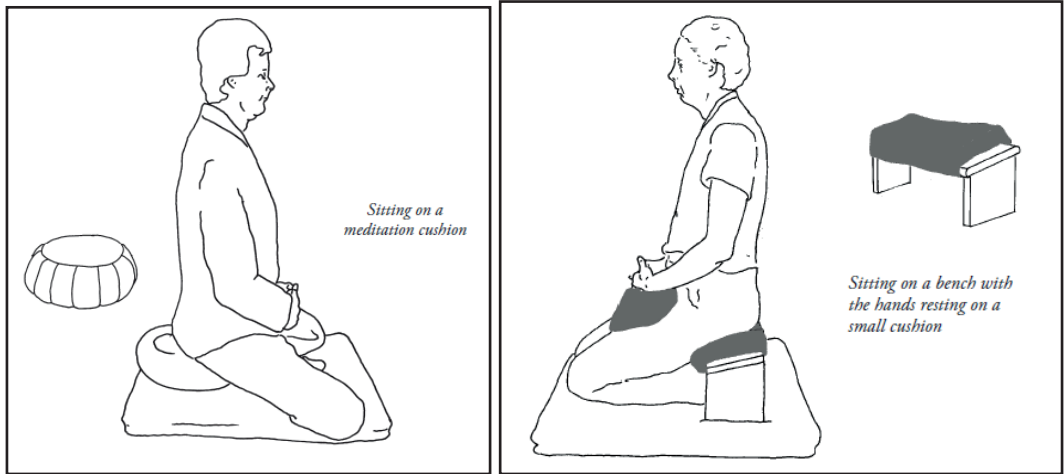


Figure 5. Illustration of meditative postures: First image with Zafu/Pillow and Second image with wooden bench

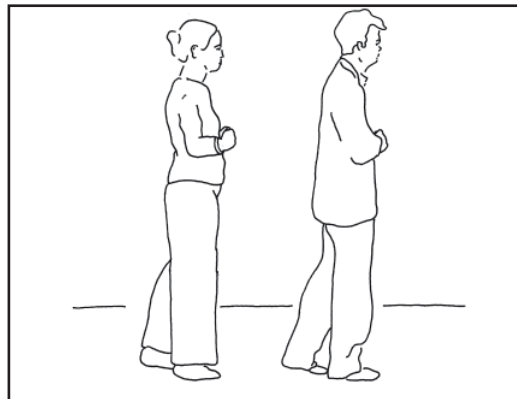


Figure 6. Illustration of Walking meditation or Kinhin

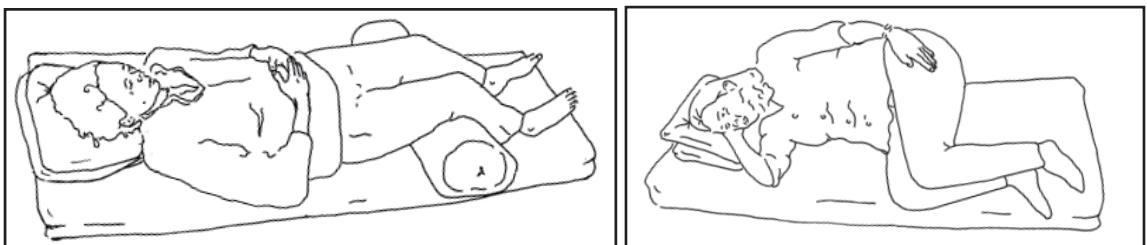


Figure 7. First Image, Savasana (Backward); Second Image, Lying on the Right

FMI by Buchheld et al., 2001 and Walach et al., 2006;

(2) Mindful Attention Awareness Scale-MAAS by Brown and Ryan, 2003;

(3) Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised -CAMS-R by Feldman et al. 2007 and Hayes and Feldman, 2004;

(4) Southampton Mindfulness Questionnaire -SMQ by Chadwick et al. 2008;

(5) Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Scale -KIMS by Baer et al. 2004;

(6) Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire -FFMQ by Baer et al. 2006;

(7) Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale -PHLMS by Cardaciotto et al. 2008;

(8) and, finally, the Toronto Mindfulness Scale -TMS by Lau et al. 2006.

Bergomi et al. (2013) perform a careful analysis of these 8 scales and the elements of mindfulness practice that are constant or absent from them, and it is possible to observe in Table 3. The various functionalities of each scale and facets that they measure.

Sutcliffe, Vogus and Dane (2016) reinforce the importance of choosing the scales to be used in the assessment of the individual level of mindfulness, taking into account the research questions or the target population. In this perspective, Bergomi et al., (2013) argue that, eventually, of the scales they evaluated, none is fully adequate to measure mindfulness meditation since they all have advantages and disadvantages, in particular the fact that none is able to provide a clear assessment of all aspects associated with this practice.

In addition to scales and inventories, it is always important to remember that there are other measurement methods, namely imaging techniques, HRV-Heart Rate variability and other heart rate measurements, measurement of other body data such as electrical activity of the skin and others, qualitative self-report, in interviews, focus groups and other

techniques, that even though sometimes these data collection techniques have difficulty asserting themselves in scientific production, whether in research on meditation or in other fields related to the human sciences.

### ***MINDFULNESS MEDITATION PROGRAMS***

There is scientific evidence that demonstrates that it is possible to reduce the stress perceived by professionals, as well as improve attention levels and emotional regulation through mindfulness-based programs (Pires, 2020). Structured programs have 'populated' and some have achieved more media coverage than others, however they are all based on the same principle: homogenizing practices in order to measure results with more scientific rigor. This is a requirement of the scientific method; however, it is worth reflecting that meditative practice has existed for at least 3000 years (the first being Yogic Philosophy) and despite not being called by the designation 'programs', all practices contained in themselves some sort of guidelines or structure to support practitioners.

Only the two programs that bring together the largest number of scientific publications are presented here, according to what Goleman & Davidson (2018) found.

#### **MBSR - Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction**

Developed with the purpose of dealing with chronic pain, it has been adapted over time to other contexts (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). It also began to be applied in cases related to stress, anxiety and illness, with a growing interest from medical centers, hospitals and health institutions. The program consists of 8 sessions, with groups of up to 30 participants, who should be encouraged to practice daily, guided and individually, aimed at mind and body awareness, using techniques focused on

Scale/ dimensions	Observe	act consciously	non- judgment	self acceptance	no avoidance	non- reaction	non- identification	Insight	To describe
MAAS		X							
IMF	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
KMIS	X	X	X						X
FFMQ	X	X	X			X			X
CAMS	X	X	X		X	X			
SMQ			X		X	X	X		
PHLMS	X				X				
TMS					X		X		

Table 3. Systematic summary of Bergomi et al. (2013) of mindfulness facets measured by 8 scales referenced above.

Effects on the level of consciousness/ Mindfulness	Physical Effects	Psychological Effects	Work-related effects
<p><b>Increase:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conscience</li> <li>• level of mindfulness</li> <li>• levels of mindfulness while working and improved mindfulness skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>increment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relaxation</li> <li>• energy</li> <li>• sleep quality</li> <li>• Physical health</li> <li>• vigor levels</li> <li>• sleep duration</li> <li>• mindfulness serves as a meditating factor in the resting process, in which the intensity of mindfulness practice is positively correlated with recovery and level of vigor.</li> </ul> <p><b>decrease:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breathing rates</li> <li>• fatigue</li> <li>• exhaustion</li> <li>• self-reported somatic distress</li> </ul>	<p><b>increment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self perception</li> <li>• empathy</li> <li>• emotional regulation</li> <li>• quality of life</li> </ul> <p><b>decrease:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological stress</li> <li>• negative affect</li> <li>• anxiety levels</li> <li>• depression levels</li> <li>• fatigue</li> <li>• emotional exhaustion</li> <li>• stress</li> <li>• Psychological stress,</li> <li>• perceived stress</li> <li>• mental illness risks</li> <li>• self-reported anxiety</li> <li>• self-reported depression</li> <li>• anxiety</li> </ul>	<p><b>increment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• job satisfaction</li> <li>• work productivity</li> <li>• engagement at work</li> <li>• resilience at work</li> </ul> <p><b>decrease:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• occupational hazards have decreased</li> <li>• burnout levels</li> <li>• sick leave days</li> <li>• Perceived work pressure</li> <li>• demotivation at work</li> <li>• scores on “handling problems badly” at work</li> </ul>

Table 4. Summary of the results of the systematic review by Araújo et al (2018) reporting effects of mediation programs at work

the current moment and without judgment.

Germer (2004) refers that the program is empirically validated and is based on meditation, body exercises, observation practices and mindfulness, being structured according to procedures that aim to focus on the present moment of the person's experience. While MBSR should not be viewed as a 'cure', studies show that mindfulness practice can have a significant therapeutic effect for stress, anxiety, high blood pressure, depression, chronic pain, migraines, heart problems, diabetes, among others. In fact, program participants generally report feeling more alive, more "syntonised" with themselves and with others (Palouse Mindfulness, 2022).

Initially Jon Kabat-Zinn called it a stress reduction program when he presented it in 1979, not having used the expression Mindfulness for fear of not being well received, given the Zeitgeist and the myths that still persisted about meditation in general (Goleman & Davidson, 2018). It should be noted that Kabat-Zinn himself, in addition to being a researcher and working in the clinical area, was a practitioner of yoga and meditation.

### **MBCT - Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy and ACT - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy**

The MBCT program is adapted from MBSR and combines the practice of mindfulness meditation with cognitive therapy, with the aim of reducing the rate of relapses in individuals with recurrent depression, seeking to prevent the depressive thinking patterns present in previous episodes. MBCT is a group therapy, with 10 to 15 participants and carried out between six and eight weeks. This therapy was created with the aim of helping to manage stress and different depressive symptoms and is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in the United Kingdom. The same author adds that

regular practice leads to an increase in the thickness of the cortex in the somatosensory area and that there is a positive correlation with an increase in body awareness (Pires, 2020). MBCT promotes the reduction of depressive symptoms when compared to other treatments, improves anxiety levels and contributes to positive thoughts and words.

ACT- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy includes acceptance, mindfulness meditation and clarification of behavioral values, in which participants are encouraged to accept internal events while seeking to work on new goals (Lopes, 2017). Despite being a psychotherapeutic approach, its use in the work context is already widely discussed (Bonde *et al*, 2016)

### **MINDFULNESS MEDITATION, WORKPLACE WELL-BEING AND JOB SATISFACTION**

Mindfulness meditation practice programs in organizations have been approached in two ways: more generally, through the basic practice of mindfulness, namely through exercises focusing attention on breathing and on the body; in a more targeted and specific way, such as mindfulness when sending emails, communicating, leading, taking breaks or meetings (Hülshager *et al.*, 2012). The practice of mindfulness has scientifically proven benefits, listed by Taddei (2016), with evidence in terms of impacts on well-being, performance, emotional balance and job satisfaction, attention and memory, incrementing positive perception, and in the ability to manage situations of injustice.

The competence to perform a given task without getting distracted brings several benefits to the work context, all of which are closely linked, since they are related to this type of new cognitive behavior (Taddei, 2016).

Matt Killingsworth (2011), a researcher at the Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society

who studies the nature and cause of human happiness, mentions that with his study it was possible to prove that distraction makes us unhappy: people who indicated that they were more often doing a task thinking about others, showed more levels of dissatisfaction and unhappiness.

Aristotle already defended that happiness is the greatest good that can be obtained and that, when achieved, nothing else is desired. Some researchers point out that happiness and well-being are usually considered synonymous in the academic world (Lopes, 2017), in which case the term “happiness” is commonly replaced by the notion of well-being, in particular subjective well-being (BES), associated with positive and negative affect, satisfaction with life, hedonic balance, as well as a sense of accomplishment and stress (Lopes, 2017).

On the other hand, psychological well-being (BEP), proposed by Ryff (1989), is more related to a eudaemonic perspective of happiness, which is the result of the development and personal realization of human potential and not just of hedonic happiness, which limits, and it reduces the human being to his own desires and pleasures, as Aristotle said.

Psychological well-being can be considered taking into account a set of six dimensions or areas related to the potential for human development, namely: autonomy, more related to self-determination, independence and self-regulation; self-acceptance, related to self-acceptance; personal growth, associated with continuous growth and development as a person and openness to new experiences; positive relationships with others, for example, may be associated with genuine concern for the health and well-being of others; life goals, related to the conviction that life has purpose and meaning; mastery of the environment, related to the ability to effectively manage one's

life and surroundings. From the perspective of Seligman (2018), happiness can be considered taking into account all dimensions: pleasure or its absence, satisfaction with life, meaning.

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF MEDITATIVE PRACTICES TO SATISFACTION AND WELL-BEING AT WORK**

Gomes, Ramos and Galvão (2021) define job satisfaction as how workers feel in their professional contexts. Job satisfaction can be defined as the perception which results from the evaluation that the individual has about his own professional context, as well as the extent to which his values are realized and are in line with your activity. Levels of work satisfaction influence not only the worker himself, but also the organization, involving behavioral aspects and the worker's physical and mental health (Pires, 2020).

Job satisfaction is something personal, dynamic, subjective and changeable that is directly dependent on intrinsic and extrinsic conditions of the work and the worker.

Job satisfaction is a set of emotions, feelings or behaviors related to the individual's work environment and described as a positive feeling related to the person's job search and values (Pires, 2020). Job satisfaction is one of the organizational variables that can affect physical, psychological and spiritual health, improve quality of life and contribute to the efficiency of any organization. Asgari, Mezginejad, & Taherpour (2019) consider that the empirical results show that a high level of job satisfaction is an important factor with organizational implications such as the dynamics of the labor market, talent retention, as well as the improvement of organizational performance and productivity. However, job satisfaction is also a construct in constant evolution, which changes with generations, history and the time in which we live, and

which is related to other constructs.

For example, a recent study by Khaskheli et al. (2020) revealed that the employees's perception of the organization's corporate social responsibility had a significant positive relationship with organizational citizenship behavior, commitment and intrinsic job satisfaction and a negative relationship with extrinsic job satisfaction.

Currently, job satisfaction and well-being are being frequently studied as dimensions of organizational happiness, not least because of the integration carried out by Cynthia Fisher (2010), who defined organizational happiness as an umbrella construct that integrates several dimensions (also including mood, flourishing, emotions and affections, motivation, commitment, engagement and others).

In this work, we chose to address only the constructs of satisfaction and well-being at work, firstly for reasons of limited space, secondly, because they are topics of great current relevance, and thirdly, because, from the experience of the authors, are one of the dimensions most impacted by meditative practice at work.

Brown and Ryan (2003, as cited in Taddei, 2016) consider that the benefits in terms of well-being can be considered in two ways: indirect, because once the practitioner is trained in observing their own behaviors, it is easier to identify that are considered undesirable (self-regulation); direct, more related to the promotion of well-being through the practice of moments of focus in his life, experiencing the moments of concentration and comparing them with the moments when he was more distracted, allowing him to have a perception of control over himself.

The author comment that one of the attributes of consciousness that has been discussed and related to well-being is mindfulness, since this, when considering the

quality of consciousness, is characterized by an experience of the moment with greater clarity and vivacity, contrasts with mindlessness, which refers to a state of less attention or greater reactivity.

In this case, still reflecting with the authors, mindfulness meditation allows people to free themselves from automatic thoughts and habits, less healthy behavior patterns and, thus, play an important role in the adequacy of their own behavior, which may be associated with an increase in well-being. There is empirical evidence that associates mindfulness meditation and well-being, as it has a predictive quality about positive emotional states, favors stress management (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and contributes to increased self-awareness and, consequently, to emotional regulation (Arch & Craske, 2006).

As science advances (and quickly), it is possible to realize the positive effects that the practice of mindfulness meditation has on our brain. In fact, imaging allows us to prove that, as people meditate, the areas of the brain associated with positive effects such as happiness, empathy and compassion, become stronger and more active (Lopes, 2017).

Sara Lazar and colleagues (2005) found that if people meditated for several years, the positive changes had the ability to alter the very structure of the brain.

About job satisfaction, the Theory of Affects by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) indicates that there is a positive relationship between mindfulness meditation and job satisfaction, since it allows developing the competence to deal with negatively charged events and, according to the authors, events in the workplace are the cause of the worker's affective reaction.

According to Gomes et al. (2021), in their quantitative, cross-sectional, qualitative, and correlational study, with a sample of 272 respondents, found that the practice of



meditation and/or mindfulness exercises in daily activities has a positive contribution to satisfaction with life and well-being, as well as job satisfaction, with significant differences between those who practice and those who do not. The authors add that an MBSR could contribute to worker satisfaction and well-being.

Viana and De Sousa (2011) refer that this type of program has positive physical and psychological effects and that, considering the high costs that stress-related illnesses entail for Organizations and individuals, it can be an effective and inexpensive means of to face them.

In Portugal, research has also grown. For example, Sousa (2020), in a sample of 160 Portuguese workers from different sectors of activity, concludes that: (i) the practice of mindfulness has a positive impact on employee performance; (ii), and that burnout has a negative association with the variables mindfulness and performance and (iii) that the relationship between the variables mindfulness and performance are mediated by the variable burnout.

Scientific research has evolved and grown in this area, and it would be impossible to report all studies here. In a summary logic, Table 1 presents the results of an integrative systematic review of articles published until the year 2017 carried out by (Araújo et al, 2018) where articles were reviewed that described programs implemented in workplaces with scientific evidence and found four major categories of effects/impacts of the practice on workers.

Finally, Goleman and Davidson suggest that there are strong indicators that the prolonged practice of meditation (in its various typologies, given that one of the great difficulties of this field of study is the immense variants of existing and little studied practices) will lead to altered personality

traits. As we indicated at the beginning of the article, we occasionally adopt a more personal and phenomenological perspective and we feel, based on the empirical experience of the authors of this text, who already have several years of meditative practice, that this statement will soon be proven. Thus, personality traits that we took for granted and fixed in adulthood will change, so this will probably also happen in the experience of work.

With this statement, we do not fall into the fallacy of dividing traits into binary categories, such as, for example, traits that will be positive for the work context and others negative (also because one of the great areas of change in meditators is precisely to stop seeing the world as binary). However, worker-meditators may find in meditation a practice with which to organize their work and its loads and pressures in a healthier way and even intentionally reorganize their self in order to capitalize on personalistic aspects at work more effectively and efficient, with benefit both for himself and in the long term for the organization.

However, it seems to us that there is still some way to go for this to happen. Therefore, we went to revisit a previous work by some authors of this team, where a program of meditation at work was proposed, based on several scientific evidence found, and we now present an improved and expanded version.

## **PROPOSAL FOR A MODEL OF MEDITATIVE PRACTICE AT WORK**

Between 2018 and 2022, organizations evolved in multiple directions, largely due to the experience of the covid19 Pandemic. Thus, in this paper, and after long reflections both as people, as meditators, workers and also as researchers, we present here a new proposal for a model previously presented (Araújo et al, 2018) taking the opportunity to include lessons drawn from programs implemented by the research team who writes this text

(Araújo, 2019).

This model presented in Table 5, does not intend to be the solution to all the difficulties and constraints experienced when people managers or external professionals try to implement meditation programs at work, however, an attempt was made to integrate multiple ideas and give more form and robustness to the previously presented model (several years ago, however, above all, before the experience of the covid 19 pandemic).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present work aimed to better understand the contribution of the practice of mindfulness meditation to the satisfaction and workplace well-being, and to propose a reformulation of the model of meditation at work previously proposed by members of this team of researchers (Araújo et al, 2018; Araújo, 2019) and other mixed elements of other teams and contributors like the team from the gratitude and satisfaction study in Portugal (Ataíde et al, 2023) and detailed research about meditative practices in schools (Filipe et al., 2021) among others.

Throughout this chapter it was possible to know the origin of the concept, clarify the difference between concentrative and decentralizing meditation, identify some of the meditative postures and respective accessories, some of the various tools for assessing the level of mindfulness, as well as existing programs, in particular the MBSR and the MBCT.

To this end, a survey of some existing literature was carried out in order to identify the main concepts, studies and correlations already carried out. It is possible to understand that the Mindfulness practice is not only about reactive action, but mainly preventive. In addition to mindfulness in the moment, a practice that fosters greater self-awareness is necessary and advisable, based, for example,

on a daily practice (beyond the institutional environment) to open up space for practice in the moments of day-to-day life. Therefore, reporting only the Mindfulness practice for the moments that arise in work challenges may in fact not be enough by itself.

From the in-depth analysis of the construct, it is possible to perceive that, conceptually, mindfulness meditation is a state of full attention, directed to the present moment, with an open mind, a sense of curiosity and non-judgment, which favors awareness and inhibition of automated thoughts and actions.

However, it is important to reinforce that there is no 'inhibition of thought' *per se*, or an inertia when dealing with less good challenges, rather there is, based on practice, a cultivation of the space of choice, enhanced by meditative practice and mindfulness. A space that allows to choose with greater awareness and that inevitably leads to a sense of self-responsibility. Therefore, awareness regarding the automation or repetition of behaviors, thoughts, and emotions, allows transformation as to how they are managed by the individual, which leads to greater wellbeing.

Regarding meditative practice, as we have seen, it can be carried out in four positions: standing, sitting, lying down or walking. Although it is pertinent to number them according to what has already been studied, reducing meditative practice to formal postures can lead to a limitation of its scope. There is indeed a formal posture, important in its intention, but in everyday life it is necessary for each one to find "their posture", bearing in mind that the practice of mindfulness, in its epistemological basis, concentrates the idea and the goal on the individual's way of being. In other words, formal practice is not the ultimate goal, it is the tool that enhances the transformation of the mindfulness experience, which is indeed the intended goal as a deep understanding of human nature.

program design	hours	Contents
Phase 1	7/8h (2 to 3 times a year)	<b>Face-to-face training<sup>1</sup></b> Training action, supported by slides and other dynamic instruments on the following topics: emotional intelligence and the use of emotions, stress management, coping strategies, somatic mind-body connection, yoga and relationship techniques (Schultz and Jacobson), Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008), Gratitude, Stages of Mindfulness (Brown, & Engler, 1980), Emotional intelligence, learned optimism, self-coaching and self-leadership, compassionate benevolence, and structured meditation practice in at least two to three modalities (e.g. silent Zen meditation, voice-guided mindfulness meditation, self-guided mindfulness meditation, and Kihin-walking meditation, so participants are able to see and feel the difference). Lunch should be included in the Mindful Eating approach. Organizations can take advantage of this moment to implement internal marketing and branding initiatives, celebrate a business event, promote team building and see this as an opportunity for employee development.
Level 2	<b>Minimum: 2 hours per month</b>	<b>Face-to-face sessions of meditative practices:</b> Alternating all the techniques mentioned above with others that can be introduced again, such as yoga, expansion of consciousness, respiratory awareness and other breathing techniques (Pranayama); sitting and walking Zen meditation; music; group dynamics (sharing thoughts), Zen stories/stories (insight-oriented storytelling techniques); Observation of sensations, etc. Sharing and discussion in the group of practice statistics (recorded in the application) and Journalling/mindfulness diary (see next phase).
phase 3	<b>Minimum: 45min. per week</b>	<b>Individual online meditative practice:</b> Use an app/Smartphone App. For example, the 'Insight Timer App' offers over 1 billion meditations and relationship techniques in multiple languages, free of charge. You also have the possibility to start a Meditation Group and keep records and activity statistics (in parallel with the meditation diary). In addition, it is possible to create specific groups with the company name using the Insight@work option, free of charge.

NOTE: Officially incorporate the program into the organization's values; promoting interdepartmental articulation with the Marketing, HR, Hygiene, Health and Safety at Work departments, as well as articulation with existing initiatives in terms of ergonomics, occupational health, well-being and others.

Table 5. Proposal for a model of meditative practice at work (reformulated from Araújo et al, 2018)

<sup>1</sup> In most countries, continuing professional development training is already mandatory and provided for in the labor codes of each country. In the case of Portugal, the number of mandatory hours is 40 hours per year and therefore this training can fit into that measure.

As for the measurement/evaluation instruments, there are several scales available, with the MAAS and FFMQ being the most used in an organizational context. As far as mindfulness meditation-based programs are concerned, Jon Kabat-Zinn's MBSR, MBCT, which is based on MBSR, and ACT, which adds acceptance and clarification of behavioural values, were discussed.

At the organizational level, this type of meditative practice, by allowing people to free themselves from automated thoughts and habits and/or less healthy behaviors, contributes to self-regulation, and there is even scientific evidence that meditative practice in daily activity contributes positively to satisfaction with life and well-being, as well as job satisfaction, showing significant differences between those who practice and those who do not. It is mentioned to combat "unwanted behavior", however it is considered not to be the same thing as self-regulation.

Mindfulness practice enhances positive acceptance, non-judgment, self-responsibility and, therefore, greater awareness of the transformation of experience. We cannot say that there is an absence of thoughts, there is indeed a healthier way of dealing with them with individual practice, which is the result of preventive practice and not merely reactive. It is understandable that, in the face of events and ways of acting, mindfulness, moment by moment, allows a conscious choice of action to follow.

It is important to emphasize that job satisfaction is not entirely up to the employee. Here, the responsibility of the organization to be able to provide the opening and space for this cannot be ruled out. In fact, the employer's responsibility to provide the well-being of each employee is in the labor code. It's a joint effort.

Each side has its share, and if on the one hand we are talking about self-responsibility,

on the other hand we are talking about organizational awareness. Mindfulness practice and all the benefits associated with it, such as a greater ability to deal with stress, depressive states or anxiety, must be present in the institutional culture of job satisfaction itself, and, therefore, provide conditions for each person can develop. Considering the high costs that diseases associated with work stress have on organizations and individuals, as well as the physical and psychologically positive effects that programs based on this type of practice have, it can be a strategic and important tool in mitigating these risks. As we have seen, the application of programs to different types of groups of professionals proved to be beneficial and had positive impacts.

It should be distinguished that, despite the well-being and job satisfaction being a theme of the organization, this is not at all, of its exclusive responsibility, that is, both employees and the strategic tops, have the duty to incorporate elements in the corporate culture, mission, vision and other practices that encourage happiness at work and meditative practice as a well-being enhancer and therefore success of the organization. An organization that offers but obliges will not be successful, just as a worker-mediator, without organizational support, will possibly have difficulties in incorporating his meditative practice at work.

We know that these reflections are a little futuristic and that in the current world of work there is still a long way to go before we reach a happy and meditative organization.

By the way, to end on a personal note, a little story: A few weeks ago, the first author of this chapter met with a renowned publisher of scientific books and proposed a work called "Meditative Organizations". This book will contain the foundations for a successful organization of the future that incorporates

the values of contemplative sciences and therefore general happiness at work in its values and would provide guidelines, practical programs and invite various facilitators and field researchers to share their experiences in real organizations or studies with scientific evidence. The Editor, a person with decades of experience and vast culture, replied... “, but are we going to work or meditate?” And so, the author understood not even to continue the meeting and leave.

Working on focus, training the muscle of attention, knowing how to manage your stress, dealing with your body and your thoughts, are almost synonymous with the list of requirements for any job in today's world marked by 'knowledge workers' as would call them and predicted Peter Drucker for over 6 decades (Drucker, 1959).

Being a worker means being a person first, so why not make room for BEING? We want workers in a state of flow. We want the worker to be productive and happy. Working is a type or kind of meditative practice, because we want the person to carry out their work in full attention, with a WHOLE MIND... so, why don't we give employees mindfulness training right after welcoming them? People managers or human resource managers, as it is still called in many places (although the expression no longer gathers consensus because organizations are people and people are not mere resources) are evolving as professionals and have challenges ahead for which meditative practices can contribute enormously. In our opinion, as defended in recent research (Araújo, 2023), as humans, as workers-meditators and as researchers in this field, we believe that day will come soon.

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