

From *Workplace* to *Worthplace*:
Employee Disengagement in the Light of the Rule of Benedict

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Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Theology, Saint Paul University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Doctorate degree in Theology

Ottawa, Canada
April 21, 2016

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Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DTU	Dominion Travelogics Unlimited
EI	Emotional intelligence
EQ- <i>i</i> TM	Emotional Quotient- <i>Inventory</i> TM
ESI	Emotional-social intelligence
HRD	Human resource development
HRM	Human resource management
MSCEIT	Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test
OB	Organizational behaviour
RB	Rule of Benedict
RB Prol.	Prologue to the Rule of Benedict
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
SI	Spiritual intelligence
SQ	Spiritual quotient

Dedication

UIOGD

(Ut in Omnia Glorificetur Deus)

“... so that in all things God may be glorified” (1 Pet 4:11)

Rule of Benedict 57.9

Introduction

The earning of money within the modern economic order is, so long as it is done legally, the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling . . . one's duty in a calling, is what is most characteristic of the social ethic of capitalist culture, and is in a sense the fundamental basis of it. It is an obligation which the individual is supposed to feel . . .¹

Spirituality is . . . existential rather than creedal. It grows out of the individual person from an inward source, is intensely intimate and transformative, and is not imposed upon the person from an outside authority or force.²

The opening quotes reflect succinctly the spirit and guiding thinking behind this thesis: first, that in spite of many shortfalls with the system called capitalism and how work has been understood, there is in work, though it may not be apparent always, something with life-giving potentiality. Secondly, there has generally been a desire to work well (again often not apparent), a desire within workers to be the best.

This is an important study. It is important for two reasons: it reflects the Vatican II injunction in *Gaudium et Spes* (1.4) about the need to study the “signs of the times.” It specifically studies the very contemporary sign of workplace disengagement and the increasing sense that here spirituality can have a major impact. Both of these factors concern the real lives of vast numbers of ordinary individuals who spend a great deal of time in a variety of workplaces but who often experience a sense of unease or even dysfunctionality.

This study will eventually address the issue of *feeling called* to one's work. Through a personalist and spiritual lens, it will also address a major and global problem

¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (Seattle: CreateSpace, 2010), 14.

² David Tacey, *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality* (New York: Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), 2004), 8.

that employees experience: that of workplace disengagement. This lack of *feeling engaged* in their work is often both the result of and a further contributor to what can be called relationship toxicity. While the inevitability of emotional pain is a normal part of the individual human condition, it is all too often an inevitable product of work in basically mechanistic settings that affect human interaction. Because, as we shall see, employees need to feel—both emotionally and spiritually—a sense of calling, of mission, and of purpose to the work they do, any relational pain which is not managed well on the individual level can significantly contribute in turn to organizational pain and organizational toxicity.

This notion of emotional contagion has long been studied by researchers.³ When employees feel that their sense of self-worth has been attacked and devalued, the net result is lack of commitment to their work, or a disengagement from work. This disengagement, as the research points out, has a key emotional piece in its core. Rather than being engaged in what they feel called to do, or what they have to do in order to earn income, workers experience a more or less profound sense of *dis-engagement*, a *distancing* from feeling emotionally *there* or present in and for the work they do.

Still, toxic workplaces, for example, place special constraints on employees' abilities to overcome disen through the means of personal emotional understanding and spiritual enrichment. Here, we must also envisage workplace responses to disengagement that are not simply initiatives of employees but also those initiatives that employers must employ to help correct toxic workplace situations. Such initiatives would, demand a more

³ Janice R. Kelly and Sigal G. Barsade, "Mood and Emotions in Small Groups and Work Teams," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 86, no. 1 (2001): 99–130.

enlightened self-awareness on the part of employers possibly by way of leadership training and development. Although workplace disengagement is experienced by the ordinary worker, the conditions that cause it are often beyond his or her control.

While this thesis focuses on spirituality, it should be noted that spirituality should not be regarded as a problem solver for life's - or work's - problems. Instead, it proposes ways of engaging ourselves so as to live with integrity and dignity in all situations, including those that present us with problems, even those beyond our ability to correct. In such situations spirituality helps us retain hope and personal well-being. In other words, spirituality can become a way of engaging in life that Hadot refers to as "an existential option which demands from the individual a total change of lifestyle, a conversion of one's entire being, and ultimately a certain desire to be and to live in a certain way."⁴ Spirituality is not instrumental. While it always has an impact on how life is lived, it is its own good.

It is clear that disengagement is currently a major workplace problem. This thesis will ask at what levels can disengagement fruitfully be addressed, and with what kinds of approaches, practically speaking, can the dysfunctionality of the contemporary workplace be improved. Even a cursory examination of disengagement that appreciates its breadth indicates that it reflects not a minor or passing problem, but a *root* one, and one that consequently has to be situated within the broader human questions of the very nature of work and the needs and aspirations of workers.

In terms of its overall methodology, this thesis will employ a standard problem-response approach that is commonly used in theological presentations. Chapter 1 will

⁴ Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* Trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 3.

diagnose the problem of disengagement, considering its nature and its extent. Once it has been recognized that disengagement clearly includes an emotional component, chapter 2 will consider the application of emotional intelligence (EI) theory to the workplace. Having accepted both EI's contributions and its limitations, the chapter will lead to the conclusion that "something more," a spiritual dimension, needs also to be a factor in any solution to the overall problem. Chapter 3 will then offer an overview and critical analysis of the literature on workplace spirituality, but at the same time identify its limitations. Recognizing that the human and emotional underpinnings of the practical spirituality of the Rule of Benedict may offer some potential new responses, chapter 4 will see what might be transposed from that tradition to the contemporary workplace. Chapter 5 will further identify and then apply these combined emotional and spiritual principles to a particular workplace situation where the two problems of disengagement chosen for particular examination may be clearly observed. The conclusion of the thesis summarizes its results and suggests the directions for further research.

It is noted that chapter 4 deals with the sixth-century Rule of Benedict, while attempting to transpose the spiritual principles found there to a contemporary and usually secular workplace setting. For this, it will require an appropriate methodological subset that will allow the key principles of the Rule to be transferred in some consistent fashion from an ancient Christian monastic setting to address today's context. The root metaphor chosen here is that of personalism, as the counterpoint to the mechanistic metaphor so prevalent in today's society. Employing the concepts of a personalist approach (uniqueness, dignity, subjectivity, self-determination, and relationality), this study will examine the Rule for those spiritual and emotional elements that are sufficiently timeless and universal to be

usefully brought into today's workplace context, and it will use this metaphor as its guide as it further identifies and applies these principles in chapter 5.

In this thesis, a very precise meaning of "personalism" is being used.⁵ It is an emphasis on human persons as spiritual, as oriented towards transcendence. It is opposed to individualism in that it recognizes the sociality of the person. Most important, however, it stands in contrast to a mechanistic understanding of persons, and it is this aspect that links this precise understanding of personalism with Gibson Winter's "root metaphor" methodology and his call for an artistic metaphor of human dwelling.⁶

The personalist metaphor used in these chapters, therefore, will allow us to dig deeply into the Rule of Benedict to identify from a personalist perspective those key liberating features that will enable us to transpose and best apply the Rule to different contexts, in particular, the modern workplace. In so doing, these liberating features of personalism will be analyzed and contrasted with the now evident consequences of the mechanistic metaphor that operates "on a linear, mathematical time line that often has little to do with personal or biological rhythms."⁷ It will be recognized that instead of providing real coherence, a mechanistic root metaphor can become demonic by damaging the dignity of human persons and the environment. This seems particularly evident in the contemporary workplace, where an instrumentalist approach is prevalent. Taking this

⁵ Judith Merkle, "Personalism," *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 737–873.

⁶ Gibson Winter, *Liberating Creation: Foundations of Religious Social Ethics* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 6–10.

⁷ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 12.

personalist approach can allow us to focus on those elements in Benedict's Rule that because of their inherent humanity transcend the constraints of time and situation.

The research that will be examined in chapter 1 strongly suggests that the problem of disengagement is global in scope, and is so pervasive as to affect almost every kind of workplace, large or small, in both the private and public sectors. For the purpose of this thesis, however, it was thought helpful to consider the example of a particular, but representative, North American workplace. Here, the problem of disengagement could be observed in an actual setting and the application of the principles drawn from the research undertaken here could be examined in a concrete situation. The thesis was fortunate enough to have a detailed case study of a mid-size Canadian company, including six smaller units, that would reflect a workplace situation fairly typical of many public and private sector environments. The particular company was no less typical of contemporary situations in that it had recently suffered considerable downsizing.

It should be noted that while the research data regarding disengagement that is analyzed in this thesis covers a very broad spectrum of employment situations, for the purposes of this thesis the workplace to be considered, particularly when practical applications are considered, is far narrower. I focus on very specific types of contemporary North American workplaces and workers: the ordinary 'on the floor' employees in industrial situations and technology corporations, financial institutions, public service employment, educational organizations, wholesale distribution networks, and large- and mid-sized retail chains. My analysis of the DTU situation in chapter 5 reflects this focus.

Chapter 1 begins with a presentation of employee disengagement, an increasing global phenomenon. With a range of 75 percent of workers in Canada and 74 percent in the

United States actively or passively disengaged (2010 levels), and comparable or worse figures elsewhere, the numbers are staggering.⁸ In the United States alone, it is estimated that employee disengagement cost \$300 billion annually. “Actively or passively” means that one should visualize a continuum whereby the “best” of the disengaged employees are disengaged but not as intensely as someone who is at the costliest end of the continuum. Employees who are actively disengaged are actually destructive, since their work habits, whether intentionally or otherwise, effectively hamper or destroy the business. Contrariwise, to be engaged in the workplace means that one is cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally present in the work role that is expected. An especially critical piece is the emotional factor since one can know the role quite well (cognitive factor) and can do what is expected (behavioural factor); however, it is the emotional willingness (emotional factor) upon which employee engagement fundamentally rests.

Employee disengagement, therefore, can be seen as the emotional disconnection or uncoupling by the employee from their work role. Such a state of affairs can have numerous causes, such as lack of organizational support, lack of procedural justice, or a lack of feeling valued or worthwhile. As this study will indicate, it can also come from a lack of existential meaning and purpose within the employee himself or herself. Disengagement soon becomes an *employment gap*, the expression used when employees,

⁸ In its 2013 *State of the Global Workplace*, Gallup reports, “Currently, 13% of employees across 142 countries worldwide are engaged in their jobs—that is, they are emotionally invested in and focused on creating value for their organizations every day,” 6. In this same 2013 Report, it states that in the United States, 30 percent are engaged, 52 percent not engaged, and 18 percent actively disengaged. In Canada, 16 percent are engaged, 70 percent not engaged, and 14 percent actively disengaged. States Gallup: “. . . employees in Canada are about half as likely as those in the U.S. to be fully engaged at work—16 percent vs. 30 percent, respectively. However, a strong majority (70 percent) of Canadian employees are simply not engaged, with 14 percent falling into the actively disengaged category,” 83.

from internal or external causes, can no longer identify with and find value in the work they are expected to perform.

While there are numerous symptoms of employee disengagement, in this thesis two somewhat dissimilar ones are selected: presenteeism/absenteeism and declining innovation. Presenteeism/absenteeism are simply flipsides of each other: presenteeism means that an employee is physically present in the workplace but emotionally absent; absenteeism involves physical absence. With both symptoms, there is an inertia, a lack of care, and a disconnection of oneself emotionally (presenteeism) and eventually physically (absenteeism). Declining innovation, a major current concern, also reflects an inattentiveness, but it particularly reflects the unwillingness of employees to “go that extra mile,” to invest energy in what they are working at, and to feel free enough emotionally to be creative and envision new ideas and applications to their current work that could benefit the organization and be self-rewarding.

Since employee disengagement is clearly to lack an emotional connectedness of the employee to their work, chapter 2 then will draw upon the existing literature on emotional intelligence, specifically the Bar-On Model of Emotional Intelligence.⁹ This model and approach were chosen because of its common use and general acceptance; other models of EI study could also be of value. More generally, the introduction of the concept of emotional intelligence speaks to people’s experiences in such a way that it could provide them with an emotional architecture. EI applications have become a way for people to get scientific insight into their emotionality, into their emotional selves, not only in a simple,

⁹ The Emotional Quotient-*Inventory*TM (or EQ-iTM).

straightforward manner, but also in a practical manner that provides them with measurements of their emotional competencies and tips to better themselves. Drawing upon the literature, this chapter will suggest that a more comprehensive use of EI could remedy much that is ailing employee disengagement. Still, few studies speak of the direct relationship between EI and employee engagement, and then only obliquely. Interestingly though, this chapter shows that employees who reflect on their EI profiles often come face-to-face with additional concerns and questions that go *beyond* the emotional aspects. Such questions and concerns begin to become a *spiritual* outreach, into such areas as *meaning*, *purpose*, and *mission* in life, a search for “something more.”

After the presentation of emotional intelligence in chapter 2, the discussion turns to the nascent contemporary research on workplace spirituality. Chapter 3 is an overview and synthesis of current workplace spirituality research, to search out any contribution it might make to the area of employee disengagement. Social and economic turmoil, combined with greater accountability and the effects of globalization, have contributed significantly to the attempted application of the principles of spirituality to the workplace and a growing literature on the subject. Especially when employees feel that they may be seen as cogs of a different order—either as machine cogs or intellectual cogs—an analogous reaction, there develops both a resistance and a deeper search for what can be more meaningful. The threat or actuality of downsizing, lower income levels, and a deep insecurity about what truly matters make work increasingly challenging. As a result, there has been an emphasis in the literature on the internal, especially respect for the employee’s ‘inner self.’ At the same time, there has also been the sense of a keener awareness of corporate social responsibility and the employee’s place within this. Value-based elements (the inner life, spiritual

leadership, community, meaning, and ethics) increasingly became woven into both the language and the applications put forth by workplace literature, giving rise to a new workplace spirituality although this usually has little connection to traditional religion.

Almost inexplicably, however, the literature of workplace spirituality has been slow to deal with the problem of employee disengagement. A detailed study of the literature indicates only rare direct comments, and usually not particularly enlightening ones. However, the literature does address patterns of dysfunctional workplace behaviour that indirectly touch on these same symptoms. It seems evident that sensitivity to and the presence of workplace spirituality could at least be helpful in minimizing such symptoms, providing managers and employees with a workplace environment that has real meaning and purpose. It is unfortunate that this line of research has not been pursued in more concrete terms to address the problem of disengagement.¹⁰

This is a gap in the literature that the present study seeks to address. In particular, it seeks on the one hand to recognize the emotional factors that are at the root of disengagement, and on the other to suggest that these same emotional factors are closely linked to the development of human spirituality. This becomes especially apparent when EI use leads to increasing questions about life's meaning and purpose.

Drawing from the workplace spirituality literature, this thesis suggests that while there have been numerous attempts to categorize spirituality, it can for the present purposes best be described as *a deeply personal outlook that shapes one's thoughts and actions according to what one perceives as ultimately important (transcendent) and that connects*

¹⁰ One very recent article is Alan M. Saks, "Workplace Spirituality and Employee Engagement," *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* 8, no. 4 (December 2011): 317–340.

*the individual to other persons and to the broader universe, enabling one to live in a meaningful and purposeful way.*¹¹

This description is a general one that can encompass the place of spirituality within the whole of life, and it is both substantive and functional. Moreover, it includes the three dimensions that are essential to any notion of spirituality: the *intra*-personal, the *inter*-personal, and the *trans*-personal. At the same time, it fits a workplace context. It captures the inner self-confidence and personal enthusiasm an employee can bring to their work. It recognizes that relationships and community are vital, as is the healthy connection to the totality of the universe. Finally, it acknowledges the significance of meaning and purpose in work itself. Although this description tries to be as specific as possible, it is sufficiently broad to cover both the religious and non-religious spiritual traditions of workers.

Where can one find the spiritual principles that can give meaning and purpose to work today, and at the same time respect the emotional footings that are at the heart of contemporary workplace disengagement? Here, the writer was drawn to the sixth-century Rule of Benedict. At first sight this could seem highly unusual, since the Rule is monastic, very dated, and has deeply Christian roots. At the same time, it has endured as an instrument of organization, it provides a spiritual approach that specifically recognizes the place of work in life, and above all, it provides a spirituality that does not seek to ignore human emotions, but rather to integrate them. For that matter, in his notion of *acedia*, Benedict comes remarkably close to an explicit recognition of disengagement. The universal and timeless nature of Benedict's principles, based as they are on human nature,

¹¹ "For Christian spirituality, the unique perspective brought to the table is that of Jesus Christ." In David B. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 87.

has been recognized.¹² But for all the Rule's positive features, to be applicable to the contemporary secular workplace these principles need to be transposed to a new setting.

Chapter Four deals with the key principles of Benedict's Rule. But, as mentioned, it first needed to find the appropriate methodological optic that could allow these to be transposed in some consistent fashion from an ancient Christian monastic setting to address today's workplace realities. The particular root metaphor chosen for this purpose was personalism, something suggested by Gibson Winter's discussion of the idea of "human dwelling" as the offset to the mechanistic metaphor prevailing in today's Western society, "a vehicle of transcendence and freedom."¹³ Retaining the central concepts of a human personalist approach (uniqueness, dignity, subjectivity, self-determination and relationality) this study examines the Rule in some detail for the spiritual and emotional elements that were sufficiently timeless and universal that they could be usefully brought into today's workplace situation. This analysis is greatly assisted by the vast bulk of classical and contemporary literature dealing with Benedict's Rule, but with the corresponding recognition that this literature often has a Christian and monastic optic.

In chapter 5, the task at hand is to apply these same approaches to the contemporary world of work. The chapter begins by attempting to distill from Benedict's key spiritual principles a personalist view of the workplace that could provide a template for assessing the deeper issues involved in employee disengagement and that could offer some "liberation" from the mechanistic metaphor that seems to engender them. It seems clear that

¹² In 1896, Edmund Ford described them as being "as universal as is the human race." Quoted in Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1924), 311.

¹³ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 8.

in the vision of Benedict the factors of transcendence, the subjective value of work, a broad sense of community, and fundamental human dignity are of particular importance.

It is suggested that a concrete example to which such a Benedictine-derived approach could be applied could be useful in making it clearer how such an application might truly be helpful. A well-documented case study was found dealing with the Canadian company Dominion Travelogics Unlimited (DTU), which had suffered severe downsizing and in which the signs of disengagement were particularly evident. Drawn from the Rule, a number of practices there are suggested in chapter 5 that could be applied to the workplace situation itself, as well as some complementary personal practices that might be helpful to individuals who have to deal with difficult workplace situations. Finally, returning to the problem this study identified at the outset, this chapter looks at how such a personalist spiritual outlook drawn from Benedict's Rule and founded on a healthy respect for human emotionality could address the specific disengagement symptoms of presenteeism/absenteeism and declining innovation.

DTU provides, in fact, a very concrete example of a North American workplace situation that would be typical of numerous public and private-sector settings, especially given the size of its smaller units. Because it was recently downsized, it also provides a situation in which the particular symptoms of disengagement chosen for study here and the rationale for the application of the principles suggested by this study could be seen more clearly in a very concrete situation, even while they may be of more general application.

The study concludes that the great spiritual insights from the Rule of Benedict, when applied to both leaders and to ordinary employees and when conjoined to a healthy use of emotional intelligence theory, offers real possibilities to address, at least in part, the

pervasive sense of employee disengagement that have evoked the present thesis. In doing this, the author of this study finds some comfort in the awareness that he is following the classic spiritual principle that both nature and grace are gift, and that the second builds upon and perfects the first.¹⁴ With this combination, the workplace can truly become a worthplace, a place where both the worker and his or her work is truly valued.

¹⁴ As one Benedictine commentator recently expressed it: “. . . the human person could become oriented to relationship with the Divine, that by this grace one could be transformed to more fully embody the Spirit of God, and that an understanding of the human soul or psyche could assist them towards this end.” James Tomlinson, “A Relational Human Development Perspective on Benedictine Spirituality,” *The American Benedictine Review* 67, no. 1 (March, 2016): 81.

Chapter One

Disengagement in the Workplace

I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections.
 And it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly,
 that I am ill.
 I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional
 self . . .¹

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by discussing the changing workplace and how it adapts itself to the current social character or dominant economic and socio-political structure of its society. Within this society and in the workplace, those who are dominant impose their values which employees internalize in order to fit in. Unlike the situation of centuries past, a major feature of the workplace in the post-Industrial Age is the shift from one of personal achievement to a more impersonal sense. Work has become a productive relationship: one works for someone else with no guarantee of ever seeing the final product. This state of affairs fosters a sense of alienation, disconnection and emotional distress. The chapter addresses the resulting major problem of disengagement that fosters a distinct sense of alienation—a lack of meaning, a lack of control over work processes, powerlessness, working in isolation, a lack of a sense of purpose and involvement in the employee's work and their lack of social interaction with co-workers. Researchers view disengagement as having an emotional disconnection at its core. Survey data from three different survey data

¹ D. H. Lawrence, "Healing," in *The Collected Poems of D.H. Lawrence* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Edition Limited, 1994), 513.

organizations—Gallup, Towers Perrin, and BlessingWhite—are identified; the problem of disengagement is massive globally. Work and a positive sense of oneself go together because work can give a person a sense of significance, of value, of worth, and of being a “somebody.” Work becomes an essential part of the fibre of total well-being; it contributes to the broader society, and gives the individual a social dignity. Worker disengagement erodes or destroys these positive values.

1.1.1 A changing workplace

The first section of this chapter begins by defining the notions of work and workplace and putting them into an evolving context. Michael Maccoby describes the new social and economic environment of the business context in terms of “social character.”² The term *social character* comes from Erich Fromm and describes how a person’s psyche embraces the dominant pattern inherent in the conscious and unconscious values of the economic, political and social nature of the society, which in turn shapes the behaviour of a person or group.³ An individual internalizes social character through the culture of family, school, workplace, or other institutions. This idea underscores the fact that people adopt a social character so they can fit in and prosper in their particular environment, including the workplace. Those who exhibit the prevailing social character normally end up leading institutions and implementing ideals. Managers have almost always fitted into this controlling category. Often they were participants in the shaping of the social character in

² Michael Maccoby, “The Self in Transition: From Bureaucratic to Interactive Social Character,” in *The Firm as a Collaborative Community*, ed. Charles Heckscher and Paul S. Adler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 157, 159.

³ Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart, 1941), 298. See also *The Sane Society* (New York: Rinehart, 1955).

the first place. In any event, they tend to impose in the workplace whatever is the dominant social character at the time. Employees must fit in, perhaps because they, too, share this social character, but in any case, out of economic necessity.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, according to Maccoby, the value of peasants working independently throughout the world gave a sense of the dominant social character.⁴ Work was crafted with a sense of independence, integrity, and autonomy; work was typically ordered.⁵ Actually Maccoby's timeline is perhaps more properly taken back to the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, when workers began to lose a connection with their own handiwork. In the twentieth century, work and bureaucracy joined forces. In doing so, a new social character emerged. Competence to work in the bureaucracy became important. Schools and institutions began reshaping the rugged individualist of the nineteenth century into the person who sought economic security by climbing the bureaucratic corporate ladder and who believed that autonomy came with being higher on the organizational chart. As a result, identification with the company or organization became strong.⁶ Mobility was often low. The company man was born; one could be a lifetime IBMer, for example.

Maccoby notes that this sense of identity with the organization began to change with younger workers in the 1960s and 1970s. Little by little, manufacturing came to be less important and the service industry grew (80 percent of all workers in 2001).⁷ This

⁴ Maccoby, "The Self in Transition," 159.

⁵ "The original importance of people working steadily in a profession came from the fact that they thereby placed themselves in 'settled courses,' to use the Puritan expression." Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 73.

⁶ Maccoby, "The Self in Transition," 159.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 161.

required interpersonal skills, innovation, teamwork, customer responsiveness, flexibility, and the need for workers to cope with change by learning and unlearning. Because of the increasing layoffs that often resulted—companies becoming “lean and mean”—workers learned to distrust business, and worker loyalty disintegrated significantly. One now had to look after oneself; there were no longer paternal employers. This led to increased emotional distress.⁸ Business learned to rationalize this new way of doing things. In so doing, it embedded a fresh and a more fluid social character. Business would now be impacted by what Baumann calls “liquid modernity” with the disappearance of the customary social glue that held together the traditional political, ethical, and cultural bonds that had been in place.⁹

1.2 New realities

1.2.1 The changing nature of work

To understand how the notion of work evolved, a glance back to the Middle Ages is helpful. There we find two senses of the word *work*: (1) doing or *achievement* of something (what one did), and (2) the *effort* one put into doing what one did (the pain and trouble one put into the work). A shift in the notion of work went from this basic sense of effort and achievement to what one now does because of “imposed conditions, such as working for a

⁸ Oliver James has argued, “Industrialization and urbanization are arguably the fundamental causes of high rates of emotional distress.” *The Selfish Capitalist: Origins of Affluenza* (London: Vermillion, 2008), 36.

⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2000), 4. Bauman points out that such a state of affairs, however, leaves the complexity of social relations already in place but without anchor, exposed, unprotected, and powerless against the onslaught of the new, and now rationalized, ways of doing business.

wage or salary: being hired.”¹⁰ This shift produced a fundamentally different understanding of work. Work became not so much what one produced by one’s own toil or labour, but shifted to a more abstract notion. One’s productivity resulted from one’s *relationship* of being employed by someone else. Only in that sense could it be said that the housewife, or the monk, or the artist were “unemployed,” that is, not workers. The idea of work began to evolve: work became a *productive relationship* which removed the individual worker from direct *personal* achievement to a commodity resulting from a relationship with capital and materials. One’s work still depended on toil and achievement, but it was now primarily influenced by these new relational realities, the employer’s demands and expectations.

The emphasis on productive relationships has continued to the present day and continues to deemphasize the workers’ concrete link to the fruit of their toil. Today employment is viewed even more narrowly, with work being equated with a “job,” or a specialized task, that is, one goes to their job. What is now considered normal employment becomes having a job. Confusing and mixed messages confront the modern person when an instrumentalist purpose is continually being attached to work: one works not for its own sake, but in order to do something else.¹¹

1.2.2 Definition of the workplace

¹⁰ Raymond Williams, *Keyword: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 5th ed. (London: Fontana, 1979), 282.

¹¹ “In contemporary Western culture, . . . [w]ork is defined as physical or mental effort exerted to do or make something; as purposeful activity; as an occupation, business, trade, craft, or profession in which one’s knowledge and skills are utilized. It is also defined as simply a means of employment or as labor or toil done in order to pay bills or meet expenses – in other words, as a ‘job’ which, as necessary as it may be, a person often does with the hope of ‘moving on’ to something else.” Edward C. Sellner, *Finding the Monk Within: Great Monastic Values for Today* (Mahwah, NJ: HiddenSpring (an imprint of Paulist Press), 2008), 104.

Webster's English Dictionary defines *workplace* as “a place (as a shop or factory) where work is done.”¹² Such a definition, commonly understood by many people, is simply too narrow and too physical an image of today's workplace. There is also no mention of what work is. The National Joint Council of the Public Service of Canada (NJC) defines the workplace in a static and legalistic form as the “location at or from which an employee ordinarily performs the duties of his or her position and, in the case of an employee whose duties are of an itinerant nature, the actual building to which the employee returns to prepare and/or submit reports, etc., and where other administrative matters pertaining to the employee's employment are conducted.”¹³ When Work Works (WWW), a U.S. national initiative led by the partnership of the Families and Work Institute (FWI) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), describes an effective workplace as one that recognizes employees as their greatest resource. Being effective means that an organization's design, practices, and policies must be beneficial both to the organization and to the individual employee.¹⁴ Tactically, to meet such effectiveness, WWW identified six effective workplace criteria such as: Opportunities for Learning, Culture of Trust, Work-Life Fit, Supervisor Support for Work Success, Satisfaction with Earnings, and Benefits and Advancement Opportunities.¹⁵ Workers often do indeed meet in a specific building with an office space or spaces, but the notion of space is becoming less and less important. This thesis adopts the concept of the workplace as *the environment where*

¹² Accessed April 17, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/workplace>.

¹³ “Worksite,” National Joint Council of the Public Service of Canada, last modified April 1, 2005, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.njc-cnm.gc.ca/directive/index.php?sid=4&lang=eng>.

¹⁴ “Be Effective,” accessed April 17, 2016, <http://www.whenworkworks.org/be-effective/guides-tools/what-is-an-effective-workplace>.

¹⁵ “What Is an Effective Workplace?” accessed April 17, 2016, <http://www.whenworkworks.org/downloads/EffectiveWorkplace-1pager.pdf>.

workers, with their rights and responsibilities, in relationship with others, interact in order to meet the objectives and implement the agreed-upon strategy of the department or organization. Such a notion acknowledges that workers (those who have the ability to process and interpret information specific to the organization) often carry the business in their heads; that workers have rights and responsibilities; that work is usually done in relationship with and for others; that workers may meet in a specific building with physical spaces or otherwise; and that the focus is usually on such knowledge workers “downloading their brains” (or contributing what they know) so that the organization can implement its strategies. This thesis offers a critical look at *how* such work is contextualized and completed as it pertains to employees (including managers) because, while the numbers and percentages of engaged versus disengaged employees globally may change somewhat, the enormity, gravity, and global nature of employee disengagement is horrendous. Such a global and enormous workplace problem merits investigation not only because of the millions of employees involved but especially because of the emotional and spiritual call to arms, as we shall see, that it evokes and requires.

1.3 The problem of disengagement

Like any social situation that has its own dynamics, the workplace has dynamics that are problematic. What is evident, and indeed startling, is the enormous amount of current employee disengagement—over three-quarters of the workforce globally—and also

called the “disconnect.”¹⁶ Employees of all ranks have pulled back from what Kirdahy calls “developing an intimate connection with their companies.”¹⁷ The bond of loyalty to the organization, even in 2007, was being badly frayed. The problem has become massive over the years. It is not surprising, therefore, that as employees began to feel more and more that they were more or less cogs in the organizational machine, that they pulled away from investing themselves emotionally in their organizations. Being replaced by technology or a machine over these past few years has fostered an increasing sense of alienation and emotional withdrawal or disengagement by employees.¹⁸

In 1964 Blauner explored the alienating effects of social systems.¹⁹ With American manual workers (for example, printers, textile and auto workers, etc.) he showed that the sense of alienation was evident in their attitudes when there was a lack of meaning, control over their work, powerlessness, working in isolation, little purpose and involvement in what they did, and a lack of social interaction with co-workers. He concluded that assembly lines created a narrow perception of the meaning of work. Subsequently, in 1983

¹⁶ Peter J. Frost, “Handling the Hurt: A Critical Skill for Leaders,” *Ivey Business Journal* (January–February 2004): 1, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/handling-the-hurt-a-critical-skill-for-leaders/>.

¹⁷ Matthew Kirdahy, “Wooing The Workforce,” *Forbes*, October 31, 2007, accessed March 13, 2016, http://www.forbes.com/2007/10/31/towers-perrin-survey-lead-manage-cx_mk_1031workforce.html.

¹⁸ Currently (2016) the comment is sometimes overheard by patrons in McDonald’s restaurants where new self-serving kiosks have been installed that the company is doing away with employees in favour of these new order machines. McDonald’s Canada CEO John Betts says the company is overhauling its way of doing business and will be hiring 15,000 new people. “It used to be uniformity, reliability, consistency, now everybody’s got their own way of connecting with the world,” he said. He goes on: “We’re basically blowing up the front counter. . . . each restaurant will need to hire 10 to 15 people to fill new roles, including a greeter who will guide customers through the ordering process and new chefs to make the more complex made-to-order meals.” The future will tell. See Peter Henderson, “McDonald’s Canada Introducing New Self-Serve Options, Table Service,” *CTV News*, aired September 30, 2015, accessed March 13, 2016, <http://www.ctvnews.ca/business/mcdonald-s-canada-introducing-new-self-serve-options-table-service-1.2588733>.

¹⁹ Robert Blauner, *Alienation and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

Hochschild observed that employees can disconnect emotionally from their expected role at work and that emotions can be commercialized and performed in a set way.²⁰ Hochschild referred to the expected role of the flight attendant as emotional labour or deep acting; for some flight attendants this meant creating the *illusion* of good service. In 1990 Kahn, building on Blauner's work, investigated the conditions for people that engaged or disengaged them personally at work.²¹ Disengagement involved an absence of connections, lack of energy, and a defensive withdrawal of the person's self, so that a worker becomes in a sense automatic or robotic. He viewed disengagement as the result of the loss of three psychological conditions: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Underscoring these psychological conditions is the varying degree of oneself that a person feels they can use physically, cognitively, and emotionally in the workplace. Of particular importance since the work of Kahn is that the different surveys on workplace engagement have come to see disengagement primarily as an *emotional* disconnect by the employee in relation to their work.

1.3.1 Research data: Towers Perrin Global Workforce Study (2007–2008)²²

There are relatively few large-scale surveys of employee disengagement, but two in particular stand out because of their extensive databases, and the fact that their results have been broadly accepted—those done by Towers Perrin and Gallup. The results of these two

²⁰ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 134–35.

²¹ William A. Kahn, "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work," *Academy of Management Journal* 33, no. 4 (December 1990): 692–724.

²² The firm merged with Watson Wyatt to form Towers Watson in January 2010.

studies will be examined in some detail, and then complemented with the results of a North American survey by BlessingWhite.

The Towers Perrin Global Workforce Study for 2007–2008 indicated that 79 percent of the world’s workforce is not engaged in what they do at work.²³ This is the most detailed global workforce study in the world, with every region of the world represented.²⁴ While figures vary somewhat depending on the survey, they show a remarkable consensus: workers are simply not engaged. The Towers Perrin survey contained over one hundred questions and polled almost 90,000 employees in eighteen countries.²⁵ Only 21 percent of them were engaged, or willing to give full discretionary effort in their workplace. The rest (79 percent) were to varying degrees less and less engaged in their work. These include enrolled employees, who are capable but not living up to what they can do (41 percent), the disenchanted (30 percent or almost a third), and the completely disengaged (8 percent). But a full 79 percent fall within the range of not being fully *and emotionally engaged to being fully and emotionally disengaged*. Towers Perrin’s conclusion was that the global workforce is not engaged.²⁶

In fact, globally, the figure of 79 percent may be too low. Almost one-half of those surveyed (42,486) by Towers Perrin were from the United States, where the percentage of

²³ Towers Perrin, “Closing the Engagement Gap: A Road Map for Driving Superior Business Performance, 2007–2008” Towers Perrin Global Workforce Study, 3, 4, accessed March 26, 2016, https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.simnet.org/resource/group/066D79D1-E2A8-4AB5-B621-60E58640FF7B/leadership_workshop_2010/towers_perrin_global_workfor.pdf. The 2014 Global Workforce Study stated that only “four in 10 employees are highly engaged, so there is room for improvement.”

²⁴ Nick Tatchell and Jim Crawley, “Towers Perrin Global Workforce Study,” Executive Briefing: Economist Intelligence Unit, November 13, 2007, accessed March 13, 2016, http://viewswire.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=EBArticleVW3&article_id=1572772542&rf=0.

²⁵ It should be noted that in addition Towers Perrin used a database that had 2 million employees, updated annually, and more than forty companies.

²⁶ Towers Perrin, “Closing the Engagement Gap,” 3.

those engaged at that time was significantly higher (26 percent) than the global percentage (21 percent), which would somewhat skew the global results. The figures from Development Dimensions Inc. showed that 19 percent of employees worldwide are engaged.²⁷ Even more disturbing is the statistic from the Corporate Executive Board, whose global engagement research with 50,000 employees showed that only 11 percent are in what they termed the “true believer” (or engaged) category.²⁸

When we examine individual countries where a Towers Perrin survey in 2007 was administered,²⁹ we find that in Japan, for example, only 3 percent of employees were engaged! This meant that for Japan 97 percent of those employees surveyed go from being emotionally unavailable to completely disengaged while at work.³⁰ Actively disengaged or disenchanted employees (a full 72 percent in Japan) *work against* the organization destructively and become an even more serious problem.³¹ Hong Kong displayed similar results with a 5 percent figure for engaged employees.³² Korea had only 8 percent of the workforce engaged.³³ Other countries had minimal numbers of engaged employees as well:

²⁷ Richard S. Wellins et al., “Employee Engagement: The Key to Realizing Competitive Advantage,” DDI (Development Dimensions International, Inc., MMV), 3, accessed April 17, 2016, http://www.ddiworld.com/ddi/media/monographs/employeeengagement_mg_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf.

²⁸ Richard S. Wellins et al., “Employee Engagement: The Key to Realizing Competitive Advantage,” DDI (Development Dimensions International, Inc., MMV), 1, no date, accessed March 13, 2016, http://www.ddiworld.com/ddi/media/monographs/employeeengagement_mg_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf.

²⁹ Andrea Coombes, “Show Me You Care,” *MarketWatch*, October 21, 2007, accessed March 13, 2016, <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/few-workers-are-engaged-at-work-and-most-want-more-from-execs>.

³⁰ Towers Perrin, “Closing the Engagement Gap,” 22.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

³² *Ibid.*, 23.

³³ *Ibid.*, 25.

Poland (9 percent), Italy (11 percent), France (12 percent), the United Kingdom (14 percent), and Germany (17 percent).³⁴

The figures for Canada showed that 23 percent of the employees were engaged (of the 5,070 employees in the survey). While its engagement level of 23 percent looks somewhat higher compared to other countries, Canada still had 76 percent who are *more or less emotionally disengaged*.³⁵ The survey also showed that for Canada only 32 percent of employees would stay where they work and not look for new work somewhere else. Michel Tougas, Managing Principal for Towers Perrin in Montreal, said that these mobility numbers “sound an alarm for employers.”³⁶

Towers Perrin showed that much human talent is either wasted or not engaged at all. Some employees are even *deliberately* not engaging themselves in their work. The survey showed several disconnects in what is happening. One of the disconnects showed that 54 percent of respondents did not endorse the organization’s reputation as a great place to work.³⁷ Still another indicated that 58 percent of the 90,000 employees said that they did

³⁴ Ibid., 26, 22, 28, 24 respectively. Mexico, with an unusual 54 percent number, showed more than half its workforce engaged, although the number of Mexican employees surveyed was only 1,044. In Towers Perrin HR Services, “2007 Global Workforce Study: Key Facts and Figures,” 24, accessed March 13, 2016, <http://www.peterdavison.ca/Downloads/2007percent20Globalpercent20Workforcepercent20Study.pdf>.

³⁵ As we saw in the introduction, Gallup’s 2013 “State of the Global Workplace,” showed that only 13 percent of employees across 142 countries worldwide were engaged in their jobs. In Canada, only 16 percent were engaged, 70 percent not engaged, and 14 percent actively disengaged. See p. 83, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/services/178517/state-global-workplace.aspx>. This report can be downloaded.

³⁶ “Largest Ever Study of Global Workforce Finds Senior Management Holds Trigger to Unleash Talent Potential,” CNW, October 22, 2007, accessed October 26, 2016, <http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/largest-ever-study-of-global-workforce-finds-senior-management-holds-trigger-to-unleash-talent-potential-534506251.html>.

³⁷ Towers Perrin, *Closing the Engagement Gap*, 15. The Towers Watson *Global Workforce Study 2012, Engagement at Risk: Driving Strong Performance In a Volatile Global Environment*, comments, “Perhaps surprising to some employers, the organization’s image ranks among the top drivers of sustainable engagement,” 16, accessed April 18, 2012, <https://www.towerswatson.com/Insights/IC-Types/Survey-Research-Results/2012/07/2012-Towers-Watson-Global-Workforce-Study>.

not know what skills they needed in order to advance.³⁸ Further, only 41 percent of employees admitted that their company allowed for flexible work schedules, 59 percent of employees globally still said that they were frustrated in their efforts to balance their personal and work lives.³⁹ Julie Gebauer, Towers Perrin Managing Director who leads the firm's Workforce Effectiveness practice, stated that engagement must include "head" and "heart."⁴⁰ This description is remarkably similar to a Danish survey done by TMI between 1990 and 2000 that found 80 percent of employees "indifferent" to their companies. TMI concluded that "they were committed with body and brain, at best, but not with their hearts."⁴¹

In summary, conservatively, only about 20 percent of the world's employees are engaged emotionally in their work. Gallup, pegged it at 13 percent of employees in 2013 across 142 countries worldwide.⁴² Four out of five workers worldwide are emotionally disengaged and not living up to their full potential. This is in spite of the fact that 86 percent of employees stated in the language of the survey that technology was not a

³⁸ Towers Perrin, *Closing the Engagement Gap*, 15.

³⁹ "Towers Perrin Study Debunks Common Workforce Myths: Stress, Technology and Bosses Not Always the Enemy," February 20, 2008, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20080220005172/en/Towers-Perrin-Study-Debunks-Common-Workforce-Myths>.

⁴⁰ "Engagement measures the level of connection employees feel with their employer as demonstrated by their willingness and ability to help their company succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustained basis. . . . the 'heart' is the emotional connection between employee and employer, such as the employee's pride in the organization." In "Key Findings: An Interview with Julie Gebauer on Towers Perrin's Just Released Global Workforce Study, Part 2," Towers Perrin International Survey Research, 2007, accessed October 1, 2010, http://www.towersperrin.com/tp/showhtml.jsp?url=global/publications/gws/key-findings_2.htm&country=global.

⁴¹ TMI (Corporate), "European Culture Survey," accessed October 26, 2010, http://www.tmiworld.com/tmi/site/Research/Summaries/European_Culture_Survey/.

⁴² Steve Crabtree, "Worldwide, 13% of Employees Are Engaged at Work," October 8, 2013, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/165269/worldwide-employees-engaged-work.aspx>.

problem for them, and 56 percent stated that work uplifted their spirits somewhat. The Towers Perrin people recognize that the real problem lies deeper: “Engagement is about the work environment and nature—even texture—of the work experience.”⁴³ Similar surveys indicate the same.

1.3.2 Research data: Gallup Organization Workplace Surveys⁴⁴

The Gallup Organization, for more than 30 years, has conducted employee engagement surveys that have involved more than 17 million employees. Although they have published no global figures, there is a substantial congruence between their findings and those of Towers Perrin. Gallup has developed the Engagement Index, a measure of “how large a proportion of the employed population were uncommitted to their jobs, that is ‘emotionally unemployed’”⁴⁵ and has a national benchmark for different countries. To measure an employee’s engagement in the workplace, it used its Q^{12®} questionnaire that comprises 12 simple questions. Two questions illustrate the type of question used: (1) Do you know what is expected of you at work? (2) Does your supervisor, or someone at work,

⁴³ Towers Perrin, *Closing the Engagement Gap*, 9.

⁴⁴ Jim Clifton, Chairman and CEO of Gallup, in “Extraordinary Impact Through Analytics and Advice,” states: “We change the world one client at a time through extraordinary analytics and advice on everything important facing humankind,” accessed March 13, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/corporate/177680/gallup.aspx>. Gallup’s corporate home page states, “Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world. . . . Gallup works with leaders and organizations to achieve breakthroughs in customer engagement, employee engagement, organizational culture and identity, leadership development, talent-based assessments, entrepreneurship and well-being,” accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/corporate/177680/gallup.aspx>.

⁴⁵ Curt Coffman and Gabriel Gonzalez-Molina, *Follow This Path: How the World’s Greatest Organizations Drive Growth by Unleashing Human Potential* (NY: Warner Books, 2002), 128.

seem to care about you as a person? Gallup's research illustrated how such simple questions scientifically predict employee engagement and workgroup performance.

When Gallup uses the term *engaged*, it means employees who work with passion and have a “profound connection” to their organization,⁴⁶ and thereby drive innovation forward. The employee who is “not engaged” is one who has “checked-out,” as they refer to it, simply putting in time but not passion or energy into their work. Finally, the “actively disengaged” are not only in the situation of not giving of themselves to their work but are actually taking away, emotionally, from their work and from the work of others.⁴⁷

Gallup's research has shown that with average organizations, only 33 percent of employees are engaged, 49 percent are not engaged, and 18 percent are actively disengaged. This means that the majority of organizations have 67 percent of their employees more or less emotionally disconnected from their work.

Although approached from a different perspective and using slightly different categories, these figures are relatively close to the figures already cited in the Towers Perrin study. For example, in Canadian polling Gallup found similar percentages (74 percent to 79 percent respectively) of partially to fully disengaged employees as compared to the Towers Perrin Canadian results (77 percent): only 24 percent of Canadian employees were engaged, 60 percent were not engaged, and 16 percent were actively disengaged or

⁴⁶ Gallup, *State Of The American Workplace: Employee Engagement Insights For U.S. Business Leaders*, 2013, 21, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/services/178514/state-american-workplace.aspx>.

⁴⁷ “Gallup Study: Engaged Employees Inspire Company Innovation,” *Gallup Management Journal*, October 12, 2006, 12, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://missionfacilitators.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Engaged-Employees-Drive-Organizations-Forward.pdf>.

emotionally unemployed.⁴⁸ In Singapore, 6 percent of employees were engaged. In Japan, the numbers were quite similar to those in the Towers Perrin study: 9 percent of employees were engaged and 19 percent were actively disengaged (employees who are not only disengaged emotionally, but actively working *against* the organization). In 2005, Gallup conducted a survey in Thailand that showed that 82 percent of employees were not engaged and 6 percent completely disengaged.⁴⁹ Other countries showed similarly low levels of engagement as well: Australia (18 percent), China (12 percent), and New Zealand (17 percent).

1.3.3 BlessingWhite⁵⁰

BlessingWhite is a global employee engagement and leadership development research consulting company. BlessingWhite describes disengaged employees as those who stay with the organization to see what they can *get*, whereas engaged employees stay with the organization to see what they can *give*.⁵¹ Of the 11,000 surveyed, female-male percentages vary according to country: Australia-New Zealand respondent profile (N = 837, 56 percent female, 44 percent male), Chinese respondent profile (N = 715, 46 percent

⁴⁸ Jason Krausert and Donna Tosky, "Employee Engagement: A Fresh Approach to A Critical Problem," *Corporate Wellness Magazine*, January 29, 2014, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.corporatewellnessmagazine.com/others/employee-engagement-a-fresh/>.

⁴⁹ Sultan Zafar, "Gallup Study Reveals Workplace Disengagement in Thailand," LinkedIn, October 18, 2015, accessed March 26, 2016, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/gallup-study-reveals-workplace-disengagement-thailand-sultan-zafar>.

⁵⁰ BlessingWhite, *Employee Engagement Report 2011: Beyond the Numbers: A Practical Approach for Individuals, Managers, and Executives*, "reflects interviews with HR and line leaders as well as online survey responses of nearly 11,000 individuals from North America, India, Europe, Southeast Asia, Australia/New Zealand, and China," 1, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://www.nine-dots.org/documents/Blessing%20White%202011%20%20Employee%20Engagement%20Report.pdf>.

⁵¹ In their words, "The Engaged stay for what they can give, the Disengaged stay for what they can get." "Employee Engagement Research Update: January 2013," 9, accessed April 18, 2016, <https://blessingwhite.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Employee-Engagement-Research-Report-2013.pdf>.

female, 54 percent male), European respondent profile (N = 677, 43 percent female, 57 percent male), Indian respondent profile (N = 2247, 18 percent female, 82 percent male), North America overall (N = 2895, 51 percent female, 49 percent male), South Asian respondent profile N = 3401, 18 percent female, 82 percent male), and the Global respondent profile (N = 10,914, 45 percent female, 55 percent male).⁵²

Interestingly, in BlessingWhite's 2008 research on engagement percentages, the organizations that had the very lowest engagement levels were academia/higher education (23 percent), followed by technology (24 percent), chemicals (24 percent), retail (24 percent), and government (25 percent).⁵³ When it came to the size of the organization, disengagement unsurprisingly *increased* as the size of the workforce increased. Age differences were noted as well, with the youngest members being most engaged (20 percent) but *also* the most disengaged (25 percent). BlessingWhite attributes these findings to the fact that young employees are typically working at entry-level positions.⁵⁴ The survey recognized that disengagement is not related just to money. The survey quoted one respondent who wrote, "No amount of money will make it okay to sacrifice more time with my family for my job, which is what it has become . . . just a job."⁵⁵

It is evident from these survey findings that the problem of disengagement is very real. It is *local* in that it is found in almost every workplace, and its extent makes it very much a *global* problem. These surveys cover numerous countries with many employees. A

⁵² BlessingWhite, "Employee Engagement Report 2011," <http://www.nine-dots.org/documents/Blessing%20White%202011%20%20Employee%20Engagement%20Report.pdf>.

⁵³ BlessingWhite, "*The State of Employee Engagement: North American Survey: 2008*," 12, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.slideshare.net/PingElizabeth/2008-employee-engagement-overview>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.slideshare.net/PingElizabeth/2008-employee-engagement-overview>.

consistent picture has emerged and shows little improvement—and perhaps even a deterioration—over the years. It can be concluded that there is a massive problem of disengagement in the workplace.

1.3.4 The workplace of the surveys

Gallup's 2011 Q²[®] Client Database includes data from 2008, 2009, and 2010, included data from 7.4 million respondents, 955,000 workgroups, and 491 clients in 180 countries and 16 major industries.⁵⁶ such as accommodation and food services, construction, healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing, retail trade, transportation, and warehousing. Six additional major industries were included as well, but were not large enough for industry-wide benchmarking: for example, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, and mining. Benchmarking for thirty-one sub-industries and custom-defined industries is also available from Gallup, such as life sciences and heavy manufacturing. According to Gallup, the data captured demographic information on such things as length of service, the employee's job function and level, as well as salary, job, and union/non-union status. In 2012 Gallup conducted its eighth meta-analysis with their proprietary Q²[®] using 263 research studies across 192 organizations, 49,928 business/work units with employee populations of nearly 1.4 million in 49 industries and 34 countries.⁵⁷ Gallup measured employees at all levels and within numerous work industries and sub-industries.

⁵⁶ Gallup, "State Of The American Workplace," 109, accessed April 18, 2016, <https://nicolascordier.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/gallup-worldwide-report-on-engagement-2013.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Gallup Inc., "The Global Workplace: Employee Engagement Insights for Business Leaders Worldwide," 21, accessed April 17, 2016, <https://nicolascordier.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/gallup-worldwide-report-on-engagement-2013.pdf>.

In short, when it came to seeing the differences between engaged employees and those disengaged, the former scored in the top half on employee engagement, with a success rate doubled what disengaged employees produce. Even more dramatic, those at the 99th percentile had a success rate four times those employees who scored at the first percentile.

Key median-differences between the two groupings factors measured were:

Median differences between top-quartile and bottom-quartile units were 10% in customer ratings, 22% in profitability, 21% in productivity, 25% in turnover (high-turnover organizations), 65% in turnover (low-turnover organizations), 48% in safety incidents, 28% in shrinkage, 37% in absenteeism, 41% in patient safety incidents, and 41% in quality (defects). In short, the 2012 meta-analysis once again verified that employee engagement relates to each of the nine performance outcomes studied.⁵⁸

Towers Watson's 2014 Global Workforce Study that included over 32,000 full-time employees in a range of industries around the world in 26 markets, contained as well a detailed view about attitudes and concerns of workers around the globe.⁵⁹ Their numbers on the engagement-disengagement scale and global results also provide an important window into today's global workplace. They identify three measurable and essential elements for sustainable engagement: Traditional engagement—employees' willingness to expend discretionary effort on their job; Enablement—having the tools, resources and support (typically through direct-line supervisors) to do their job effectively; and Energy—having a work environment that actively supports physical, emotional and interpersonal well-being.⁶⁰ When we turn now to their four kinds of employees, we find the following:

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Towers Watson, "2014 Global Workforce Study at a Glance," accessed April 18, 2016, <https://www.towerswatson.com/en-CA/Insights/IC-Types/Survey-Research-Results/2014/08/the-2014-global-workforce-study>.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 3. Capitals on the names are in the text, e.g., "Highly engaged," etc.

“Highly engaged” (40%) who score high on their three measurable and essential elements for sustainable engagement; “Unsupported” (19%) who are typically engaged but lack the enablement and/or energy for sustainable engagement; “Detached” (17%) who experience a sense of feeling supported but lack its traditional sense; and finally, “Disengaged” (24%) whose scores on the three aspects of sustainable development are low. Towers Watson conclusion? “In today’s global workplace, leadership is a driver of not only sustainable engagement overall, as revealed in our 2012 research, but also all the components of sustainable engagement.”⁶¹

The BlessingWhite survey results showed, as we saw above, that 55 percent of the respondents held management or supervisory positions and that 8 percent were vice-presidents or held a more senior position. One case example from BlessingWhite even involved the electronics company Best Buy.⁶²

To gain a greater sense of what the surveys have documented, it is important to go into greater detail about the problem of disengagement. While there may not be a consensus on the elements that contribute to engagement, there is a common core of significant factors. Lockwood, for example, characterizes employee engagement as involving the following: vigour, or “high levels of energy and mental resilience on the job, persistence in the face of difficulties and a willingness to invest effort in one’s work”;⁶³ dedication, or the “sense of inspiration, pride, significance, enthusiasm and challenge at work”;⁶⁴ and

⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

⁶² Mark Attridge, “Measuring and Managing Employee Work Engagement: A Review of the Research and Business Literature,” *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health* 24, no. 4 (December 2009): 390.

⁶³ Nancy R. Lockwood, “Leveraging Employee Engagement for a Competitive Advantage,” *2007 SHRM Research Quarterly*, Alexandria, VA: The SHRM Foundation (March 2007), 4, accessed April 18, 2016, <https://www.shrm.org/Research/Articles/Articles/Documents/07MarResearchQuarterly.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.

absorption, or “being happy, fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work so that time passes quickly, with difficulty detaching from work.”⁶⁵ Fundamentally, engagement involves at a minimum a physical, a cognitive, and an emotional commitment to the organization. In his ground-breaking 1990 research article, Kahn defined engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles” where “people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.”⁶⁶ Personal disengagement, on the other hand, uncouples employees from their work roles in that they “withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally.”⁶⁷

Towers Perrin defines engagement as “employees’ willingness and ability to contribute to company success. Put another way, engagement is the extent to which employees “go the extra mile”⁶⁸ and put discretionary effort into their work—contributing more of their energy, creativity and passion on the job.”⁶⁹ They determine an employee’s engagement level based on responses that measure an employee’s connection in three ways:⁷⁰ (1) the rational or thinking part of what an employee does (How well does an employee understand their roles and responsibilities?);⁷¹ (2) the emotional or feeling part of what an employee does (To what extent does an employee bring enthusiasm and energy to

⁶⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁶ Kahn, “Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work,” 694.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ D. Robinson et al., “The Drivers of Employee Engagement,” *Institute for Employment Studies (UK), Report 408* (April 2004), ix: accessed April 18, 2016, <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/408.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Towers Perrin, *Closing the Engagement Gap*, 3, accessed April 9, 2016, https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.simnet.org/resource/group/066D79D1-E2A8-4AB5-B621-60E58640FF7B/leadership_workshop_2010/towers_perrin_global_workfor.pdf.

⁷⁰ That is, the responses to questions that measure their connections to the organization across the three dimensions. Ibid.

⁷¹ That is, the employee’s understanding of what their work involves. Ibid.

their work?);⁷² and (3) the motivational or acting part of what an employee does (How well is an employee motivated to perform in a role?).⁷³

Based on these responses, Towers Perrin used their three-part engagement model (thinking, or the rational component; feeling, or the emotional component; and acting, or the motivational component) and identified four categories of employees: (1) *Engaged*, or those who give “full discretionary effort, with high scores on all three dimensions” (rational, emotional and motivational); (2) *Enrolled*, or those who are “partly engaged, with higher scores on the rational and motivational dimensions, but less connected emotionally”; (3) *Disenchanted*, or those who are “the partly disengaged with lower scores on all three components of engagement, especially the emotional connection”; and the (4) *Disengaged*, or those employees “who have disconnected rationally, emotionally and motivationally.”⁷⁴

Louise Anderson, President of Anderson Performance Improvement based in Hastings, Minnesota, aligns with Gallup's thinking, saying that “engagement is more than a human resources initiative. It is, in fact, a sound strategic foundation for the way they do business.”⁷⁵ She found that in her own company, engaged employees are more productive, profitable, customer-focused, safer and “more likely to withstand temptations to leave.”⁷⁶

Gallup identified three types of employees:⁷⁷ (1) *Engaged* employees who “work with

⁷² That is, if one has the “right feelings,” then such a state will lead to the “right behaviors,” and these right behaviors in turn will fuel higher levels of business performance. Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., accessed April 9, 2016, https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.simnet.org/resource/group/066D79D1-E2A8-4AB5-B621-60E58640FF7B/leadership_workshop_2010/towers_perrin_global_workfor.pdf.

⁷⁵ Rick Dandes, “How High Performing Companies Optimize Engagement,” *Premium Incentive Products* (March/April 2011): 30, accessed March 26, 2016, http://www.madisonpg.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Premium-Incentive-Mar_Apr-2011.pdf.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Jerry Krueger and Emily Killham, “At Work, Feeling Good Matters,” *Gallup Business Journal*, December 8, 2005, 1, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/20311/work-feeling->

passion and feel a profound connection to the company”; (2) *Not-engaged* employees who, according to Gallup, have “essentially checked out. They’re sleepwalking through their workday, putting in time – but not energy or passion” into their work; (3) *Actively disengaged* employees who are not just unhappy at work but actually act out their unhappiness and undermine the remainder of the workforce.

Others have developed some of these notions of engagement.⁷⁸ For example, one study described engagement as “the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work,”⁷⁹ which underlines the aspect of meaningfulness, and brings in the notion of job satisfaction. Development Dimensions International (DDI), a firm devoted to developing talent capability for organizations, defines engagement as the “extent to which people value, enjoy and believe in what they do”⁸⁰ as well as “having meaningful work, feeling that one’s work is appreciated and having opportunities to develop new skills.”⁸¹ For DDI, engagement means that employees *enjoy* what they are doing because it matches their skills and interest. They *believe* in what they are doing and make a meaningful contribution not only to their work, but also to the organization, as well as society at large.

good-matters.aspx. Bold and CAPS are in the original. See also Shaley McKeever, “3 Types of Employees: How to Spot the Silent Killer,” *Recruiter*, January 31, 2014, accessed March 26, 2016, <https://www.recruiter.com/i/3-types-of-employees-how-to-spot-the-silent-killer/>.

⁷⁸ Selected notions and references for other scholars are taken from Beverly Little and Philip Little, “Employee Engagement: Conceptual Issues,” *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict* 10, no. 1 (2006): 111–120, accessed March 26, 2016, http://embanet.vo.llnwd.net/o18/USC/CMGT502/Week04/docs/CMGT502_w04_EmployeeEngagement.pdf.

⁷⁹ J.K. Harter, et al., “Business Unit-level Relationship Between Employee Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, and Business Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87, no. 2 (2002): 269.

⁸⁰ Swatee Sarangi and R. K. Srivastava, “Driving Employee Engagement in Nationalized Banks in India,” International Conference on Economics, Business Innovation,” *International Proceedings of Economic Development and Research (IPEDR)* 38, (2012): 131, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.ipedr.com/vol38/027-ICEBI2012-A10024.pdf>.

⁸¹ Mark Dembo, “Is ‘Fun’ the Answer to what Ails Us?” DDI: Talent Management Intelligence, accessed October 21, 2010, <http://blogs.ddiworld.com/tmi/employee-engagement/>.

DDI says this “connection between what people do every day and the goals and mission of the organization is crucial to engagement.”⁸² They also say that engagement involves *value*, which again emphasizes the quality of meaningfulness.

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES in the United Kingdom) describes engagement as a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values.⁸³ For IES, engagement is a reciprocal relationship between employee and employer. The Valtera Corporation includes four components to what they call the “feel of engagement”: feelings of urgency (purposeful energy), feelings of being focused (concentrating on the task at hand), feelings of intensity (the depth of concentration), and feelings of enthusiasm (embracing both a sense of happiness and of energy).⁸⁴ Finally, the Conference Board, in recognizing the myriad of descriptions of engagement and the cognitive commitment, emotional engagement, and behaviour outcomes that are part of engagement, has put forth the following composite notion: “Employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work.”⁸⁵ In other words, feeling mentally and emotionally

⁸² Richard S. Wellins et al., “Employee Engagement: The Key to Realizing Competitive Advantage,” DDI (Development Dimensions International, Inc., MMV), 2, no date, accessed April 18, 2016, http://www.ddiworld.com/ddi/media/monographs/employeeengagement_mg_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf.

⁸³ D. Robinson et al., “The Drivers of Employee Engagement,” Report 408, Institute for Employment Studies, UK, April 2004, 10: accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/408.pdf>.

⁸⁴ William H. Macey et al., *Employee Engagement: Tools for Analysis, Practice, and Competitive Advantage* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 20–24. Italics added.

⁸⁵ John Gibbons, “Employee Engagement: A Review of Current Research and Its Implications,” The Conference Board Research Report Number: E-0010-06-RR, November 10, 2006, 5, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=1831>.

connected to their jobs, workers are then “willing to apply discretionary effort to help their company succeed.”⁸⁶

The preceding descriptions of engagement all put considerable stress on the *emotional* factor that is coming to be recognized more prominently. Since Hochschild proposed the idea of emotional labour in 1983, researchers have shown that when an employee displays emotions not consistent with their true feelings, then stress and disengagement result.⁸⁷ Even as early as their 2003 survey, Towers Perrin wrote, “Building engagement is a process that rests on the foundation of a meaningful and emotionally enriching work experience.”⁸⁸ The Conference Board reported in 2004, referencing the U.S. Corporate Leadership Council document in Washington, D.C.,⁸⁹ stated how important this aspect of emotional connection is when one is at work: “An analysis of both rational and emotional forms of engagement reveals that emotional engagement is four times more valuable than rational engagement in driving employee effort.”⁹⁰

In summary, common elements that cut across all current engagement notions include, first, the importance of an emotional involvement and, second, the need for meaning, that is, feeling valued and worthwhile in one’s work. It is clear that without an emotional component in their work, employees lack passion and feeling for the work itself,

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ A. A. Grandey and A. L. Brauburger, “The Emotion Regulation Behind the Customer Service Smile,” in *Emotions in the Workplace*, ed. R. G. Lord, R. J. Klimoski and R. Kanfer, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2002), 260–294. Also Alicia A. Grandey, “Emotion Regulation in the Workplace: A New Way to Conceptualize Emotional Labor,” *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 5, no. 1 (2000): 95–110.

⁸⁸ Towers Perrin, “Working Today: Understanding What Drives Employee Engagement,” *The 2003 Towers Perrin Talent Report*, 3.

⁸⁹ Catalog no.: CLC12PD3N8

⁹⁰ Corporate Leadership Council, “Driving Performance and Retention Through Employee Engagement: Executive Summary,” 4, accessed April 18, 2016, https://www.stcloudstate.edu/humanresources/_files/documents/supv-brown-bag/employee-engagement.pdf.

which then leads them to be unwilling to draw on personal *discretionary* effort (that is, “to go the extra mile”). This lack of an emotional component leads consequently to the lack of *commitment* in the workplace.

Although, as can be seen, the research data on workplace disengagement covers a very broad spectrum of employment situations, for the purposes of this thesis the workplace to be considered is far narrower. This will allow the practical application of the remedial practices suggested later to very specific circumstances. I will focus on more typical contemporary North American workplaces: those workers in industrial, financial and technology corporations, public service organizations, educational organizations, wholesale distributors, and large- and mid-sized retail chains. The DTU case study presented in chapter 5 - Dominion Travelogics Unlimited - is taken as a representative example.

1.4 Symptoms of disengagement

The management literature is replete with examples of how disengagement manifests itself practically in the workplace. In a survey conducted in 2003, Gallup determined that even a small country like Singapore was losing between US\$4.9 and US\$6.7 billion annually with its disengaged workforce, a figure that had risen five percentage points from 2002.⁹¹ The financial impact of a disengaged workforce is startling, and forms one of the main incentives for business and other organizations to address the

⁹¹ Ashok Gopal, “Disengaged Employees Cost Singapore \$4.9 Billion,” *Gallup Management Journal*, October 9, 2003, 1, accessed October 22, 2010, <http://gmj.gallup.com/content/1207/disengaged-employees-cost-singapore-49-billion.aspx>. Even back in 2002, writes Gopal, “the percentage of actively disengaged employees—the disenchanted and disaffected, who are often vocal about their negative attitudes toward their work and employer—[was] on the rise in Singapore’s workforce. At 17%, this figure is up five percentage points from May 2002, according to a recent Gallup Organization survey.”

problem. In its 2013 report, Gallup Inc. estimates that disengaged workplaces—those with "managers from hell"—are costing the United States annually between US\$450 to US\$550 billion.⁹² On the flip side, organizations that had a 9.3 engaged employees for every actively disengaged employee in 2010–2011 also had 147 percent higher earnings per share (EPS) when compared with their competition in 2011–2012.⁹³ This loss of productivity cost from workplace disengagement emerges from many of the reports.⁹⁴ It is **particularly** important to those for whom financial performance is the ultimate metric. The listing of the costs because of employee disengagement has a long trajectory. Even in 2008 the Human Capital Institute wrote that the US economy was losing as much as US\$350 billion per year in "lost productivity, accidents, theft and turnover."⁹⁵ And before that, in 2001, Gallup put the figure for the US economy between US\$292 and US\$355 billion annually.⁹⁶

⁹² Gallup Inc., "State of the American Workplace: Employee Engagement Insights for U.S. Business Leaders (2013)," 5, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://employeeengagement.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Gallup-2013-State-of-the-American-Workplace-Report.pdf>.

⁹³ Ibid., 9. In addition, Gallup shows that within the same industry high-engagement companies have 3.9 times the EPS (or earnings-per-share) growth rate compared with organizations with lower engagement. See Bob Kelleher, "It's Not About Employee Satisfaction! The Do's and Don'ts of Conducting an Employee Engagement Survey," 1. Accessed April 9, 2016, <http://employeeengagement.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Dos-and-Donts-of-an-Engagement-Survey.pdf>. See also Ty Kiisel, "Improving A Leading Indicator of Financial Performance: Employee Engagement," *Forbes*, December 14, 2011, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/tykiisel/2011/12/14/improving-a-leading-indicator-of-financial-performance-employee-engagement/#73ff8edc102a>.

⁹⁴ "It's impossible to overstate the importance of an engaged workforce on a company's bottom-line," states Kevin Aselstine, Managing Principal at Towers Perrin in Toronto, "We analyzed financial results versus employee engagement levels at 40 global companies. We found that firms with the highest percentage of engaged employees collectively increased operating income 19 percent and earnings per share 28 percent year-to-year. By contrast, the companies with the lowest percentage of engaged employees showed year-to-year declines of 33 percent in operating income and 11 percent in earnings per share." See "Towers Perrin Study Demonstrates Connection between Employee Engagement and Financial Performance," Insurance-Canada.ca, (October 22, 2007), accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.insurance-canada.ca/humanres/canada/2007/Towers-Perrin-Employee-Engagement-710.php>.

⁹⁵ Allan Schweyer, "The Economics of Engagement," Human Capital Institute, Enterprise Engagement Alliance, June 2009, 1. The report refers to Craig Donaldson, "Employee Disengagement Costs \$31.5 Billion," *Human Resources Magazine* (Australia), April 2005, accessed March 14, 2016, http://www.incentivecentral.org/pdf/Final_Economics_of_Engagement.pdf.

⁹⁶ PRNewswire, "Gallup Study Indicates Actively Disengaged Workers Cost U.S. Hundreds of Billions Each Year," *Gallup Management Journal*, March 19, 2001, accessed April 9, 2016,

Besides economic costs, health problems are also intimately tied in with disengagement costs. Between January 2, 2011 and December 30, 2012, Gallup surveyed “237,615 full-time employees (those who work at least thirty hours per week) and 66,010 part-time employees during this time period.”⁹⁷ Again, the costs represented US\$23 billion as a result of absenteeism. While employee well-being is person-specific, Gallup was also quick to say that engaging employees “through the fulfillment of certain critical psychological needs in the workplace” is critical.⁹⁸ Further, employees who are *engaged* in their work “demonstrate an elevated willingness to participate in workplace wellbeing programs and boast elevated physical and emotional health when compared with those who are disengaged. Engaged employees also have a better mood during the workweek and do not experience increased stress from prolonged commute times.”⁹⁹ In 2000, while the total economic burden of depression in the United States was estimated at US\$83.1 billion, nevertheless, its indirect workplace costs alone as a result of absenteeism, presenteeism, and reduced productivity amounted to US\$51.5 billion of that total.¹⁰⁰ In Canada the immense economic toll from disability due to mental illness nationally is estimated at roughly C\$51 billion a year in costs and productivity loss, with roughly C\$34 billion in

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/gallup-study-indicates-actively-disengaged-workers-cost-us-hundreds-of-billions-a-year-71719707.html>. To arrive at the \$292 billion estimate, Gallup used its own proprietary formula, plus widely used statistical guides.

⁹⁷ “Absenteeism Has Major Costs for Employers,” *My HR Professionals*, 1, accessed April 18, 2016, https://myhrprofessionals.com/old_site/human-resources/absenteeism-has-major-costs-for-employers/.

⁹⁸ Dan Witters, Diana Liu, and Sangeeta Agrawal, “Depression Costs U.S. Workplaces \$23 Billion in Absenteeism,” *Gallup Well-Being*, July 24, 2013, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/163619/depression-costs-workplaces-billion-absenteeism.aspx>. Gallup is commenting in its online Well-Being newsletter.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Jennifer Robison, “Disengagement Can Be Really Depressing,” *Gallup Management Journal*, April 2, 2010, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://gmj.gallup.com/content/127100/disengagement-really-depressing.aspx>.

Ontario alone.”¹⁰¹ What is of further importance is that in Canada there is ongoing pressure for employers not only to create and maintain a physically safe work environment, but also a workplace that is psychologically safe. Between 2005 and 2010, employees who have taken legal action have also been rewarded “to the tune of a 700 percent increase in damages.”¹⁰² Such wins for employees indicate the fact that though the legal standard is voluntary, “the legal landscape is changing.”¹⁰³ The Shain Report from April 2010 (commissioned by the Mental Health Commission of Canada) stated: “Overall, it is estimated that between \$2.97 billion and \$11 billion could be saved every year in Canada if mental injuries to employees attributable in whole or in part to negligent, reckless and intentional acts and omissions of employers, their agents and fellow employees were to be prevented.”¹⁰⁴ Some of the key highlights from the Psychological Health & Safety Standard that can provide important direction in making sure there is a psychologically safe and healthy workplace are as follows¹⁰⁵: (1) identification of psychological hazards in the workplace; (2) assessment and control of the risks associated with hazards that cannot be

¹⁰¹ Iain Marlow and André Picard, “Bell Launches \$50-Million Mental Health Initiative,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 22, 2010, 1, 4.

¹⁰² “Element 1: Obtaining Management Support,” Workplace Mental Health Promotion: A How-To Guide, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/comprehensive-workplace-health-promotion-affecting-mental-health-in-the-workplace/element-1>.

¹⁰³ Human Resources Professionals Association, “Canada Sets a New Psychological Health & Safety Standard,” 1, 2, accessed March 28, 2016, http://www.hrpa.ca/Documents/news/National_Standard.pdf. See also CSA Group, “Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace - Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Staged Implementation” CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013, 1st ed., 2013, 1–76, accessed March 28, 2016, http://shop.csa.ca/en/canada/occupational-health-and-safety-management/canrsa-z1003-13bnq-9700-8032013/inv/z10032013?utm_source=redirect&utm_medium=vanity&utm_content=folder&utm_campaign=z1003.

¹⁰⁴ Mental Health Commission of Canada, “The Shain Reports on Psychological Safety in the Workplace—A Summary,” April 2010, accessed March 28, 2016, http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/system/files/private/Workforce_Psychological_Safety_in_the_Workplace_ENG_0.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ This may mean obtaining outside professional consultation for some organizations.

eliminated (those caused by organizational change or reasonable job demands); (3) implementation of practices that can support and promote psychological health and safety in the workplace; (4) the possibility of growing a culture that will promote psychological health and safety in the workplace; and (5) implementation of systems of measurement and of review to ensure sustainability.¹⁰⁶ The new National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace,¹⁰⁷ therefore, is one very important piece of legislation in the effort to help resolve employee disengagement, since its root cause is that of emotions. It can also be a delicate matter in the workplace that may need sensitive and highly skilled consultation. For our purposes, two symptoms of workplace disengagement below put the problem of employee disengagement in sharp relief.

1.4.1 Absenteeism/Presenteeism

When Gallup did its analysis on the data of disengagement, it discovered dramatic differences on key business outcomes between the top and bottom quartile workgroups. One of the areas where such a difference manifested itself was with absenteeism. With the most disengaged there was a 37 percent greater absenteeism rate than the norm, whereas with engaged employees there was an absenteeism rate of 4.5 percent less than the norm.¹⁰⁸ Another example of the link between disengagement and absenteeism is found in the research on German absenteeism. In separate 2007 and 2008 studies, Gallup found that

¹⁰⁶ Human Resources Professionals Association, “Canada Sets a New Psychological Health & Safety Standard,” 2.

¹⁰⁷ “National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (Standard),” accessed April 18, 2016, <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/issues/workplace/national-standard>.

¹⁰⁸ Gallup Consulting, “Employee Engagement: What’s Your Engagement Ratio?” 2008, 2010, 3, 6, accessed March 28, 2016, <https://www.2degreesnetwork.com/groups/2degrees-community/resources/employee-engagement-whats-your-engagement-ratio/>.

absenteeism increased for actively disengaged and non-engaged employees, while it decreased for engaged employees. Absenteeism for actively disengaged employees was 8.1 days/year versus the engaged employees who were absent 4 days/year.¹⁰⁹

Absenteeism as an expression of disengagement reflects not only *external* behaviours but also *internal* feelings of dissatisfaction. Over a ten year period in Canada, from 2000 to 2010, the average number of days that all federal employees were absent each year (excluding vacation days) grew by 40 percent, with an average of 16.9 days/year in 2008 to 2009 alone. Uncertified sick leave ballooned by 74 percent, from 4.1 to 7.1 days/employee. One expert suggested that this is “a sign of a public service that’s so stressed out and demoralized that employees are literally dropping like flies.”¹¹⁰ To cite another example, this time with Canadian nurses, one research study writes, “According to Canada’s Labour Force Survey, [the] rate of absenteeism among registered nurses is 80 % higher than the Canadian Average (8.1 % for nurses, compared with an average of 4.5 % for 47 other occupational groups).”¹¹¹ Pressure from the new social character spoken of

¹⁰⁹ Marco Nink, “Employee Disengagement Plagues Germany: Good Workers and Bad Management Crimp the Country’s Productivity and GDP,” Gallup Management Journal, April 9, 2009, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://gmj.gallup.com/content/117376/employee-disengagement-plagues-germany.aspx>.

¹¹⁰ Andrew Mayeda, “Public Service Absenteeism Jumps by 40 percent,” *Ottawa Citizen*, November 13, 2010, accessed November 13, 2010, <http://www.pressreader.com/canada/ottawa-citizen/20101113/286577398981867/TextView>.

¹¹¹ Judith Shamian et al., “Nurse Absenteeism, Stress and Workplace Injury: What are the Contributing Factors and What Can/Should Be Done About It?” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 23, no. 8/9, 2003, 82, 83, 86. Absenteeism is an ongoing problem with nurses due to physical injuries on the job, stress-related injuries caused by psychosocial factors and additional physical activities they have to do within a given shift as a result of massive restructuring and downsizing. “In 2012 Registered Nurses and nurse supervisors working in the health care and social assistance sector worked well over 21.5 million hours of overtime.” According to the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions President Linda Silas, this overtime represents 11,900 full-time equivalent jobs. There was also “an average of 18,900 of Canada’s 251,500 Registered Nurses and nurse supervisors in the sector . . . absent from work due to own illness or disability with a total cost, then of paid overtime in 2012 estimated at \$746.5 million, up from \$660.3 million in 2010.” See “Absenteeism and Overtime Rates Clearly Indicate Need for More Emphasis on Safe Nursing Staff Numbers in Canada,” Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (Press Release): June 3, 2013, accessed

earlier has now also impinged on the hospital environment. When asked if they thought absenteeism was due to illness, 100 percent of the nurses said that it was not. Even as far back as 2002, nurses were stating that the most important psychosocial factors contributing to absenteeism were feelings of exhaustion, burnout and frustration, lack of social support (from management and from each other), and lack of respect shown by patients.¹¹²

Even if they are not absent, employees also often not fully present at work. A Kingston upon Thames University Business School working paper points to “deepening disengagement among employees.”¹¹³ *HR Magazine* reported that half of the workforce may be “just going through the motions.”¹¹⁴ This was especially indicated by Gallup’s large UK sample: those disengaged were present in a physical way, but they were absent psychologically. These employees also spoke badly about their employer and how the organization was “such a rotten place to work.”¹¹⁵ Even in 2001, Buckingham writes that over 80 percent of employees were disengaged at work! The literature refers to this as *presenteeism*. It is likened to employees who are medically sick but who still come to work. Presenteeism covers those who are emotionally sick of work and who still come to the

March 28, 2016, <https://nursesunions.ca/news/absenteeism-and-overtime-rates-clearly-indicate-need-more-emphasis-safe-nursing-staff-numbers-i>.

¹¹² Final Report of the Canadian Nursing Advisory Committee, “Our Health, Our Future: Creating Quality Workplaces for Canadian Nurses,” 18, 25, 34, 71, 2002, accessed April 18, 2016, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/alt_formats/hpb-dgps/pdf/pubs/2002-cnac-cccsi-final/2002-cnac-cccsi-final-eng.pdf. The full text of this report may be viewed on the Internet, at Health Canada’s website: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>.

¹¹³ Sandeep Kular et al., “Employee Engagement: A Literature Review,” Working Paper Series No. 19, Kingston University, Kingston Business School, London, UK, October 2008, 7, 8.

¹¹⁴ Steve Bates, “Getting Engaged,” *HR Magazine* 49, no. 2, February 1, 2004, accessed October 21, 2010, <http://www.shrm.org/Publications/hrmagazine/EditorialContent/Pages/0204covstory.aspx>.

¹¹⁵ Marcus Buckingham, “What a Waste,” *People Management*, October 11, 2001, 37, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2013/01/29/1163a-2001-10.aspx>.

office each day and simply put in time, for example, to maintain their pension, “ride out the string” until retirement, or get revenge against a toxic manager.

On the other hand, it could be that an employee is not fully disengaged but is coping as best as possible in a toxic work environment. In this case, the employee is doing their best *in spite of* the situation. This could be described as *benign presenteeism*: doing the best one can but not really being genuinely involved because of health problems. However, there is as well a *malignant presenteeism*, in which the employee is deliberately not “into it” because of workplace, managerial, and cultural toxicity. Attridge et al. write that “when health, emotional, worklife, or personal problems interfere with an employee’s ability to perform at acceptable levels of productivity, this is considered a presenteeism problem.”¹¹⁶ About 33 percent of workers experience presenteeism when they present themselves to the Employee Assistance Office (EAP) office even when there is a climate of engagement, showing up at the EAP and admitting to presenteeism is still a challenge for many employees. Despite these problems, employees may simply not want employers to see that they are not committed to their jobs. The person may not be totally disengaged but is often actively non-engaged. When the active disengagement has a malign element, the employee is most likely and actively working against the organization’s best interests. The employee is physically present but covertly undoing productivity initiatives simply by not caring or anticipating what could be done to further the initiatives. Lost productivity adds to the cost of doing business for an organization.

¹¹⁶ Mark Attridge et al., “Corporate Health Profile: Measuring Engagement and Presenteeism,” in *Employee Assistance Programs: Wellness Enhancement Programming*, 4th ed., ed. Michael A. Richard, William G. Emener, and William S. Hutchinson, Jr. (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher Ltd., 2009), 229.

1.4.2 Declining innovation

Innovation has to do with the production and adoption of new ideas.¹¹⁷ Claudia Heimer argued in 1999 that managing emotions is often connected to innovation and that the complexity of the business environment demands nothing less.¹¹⁸ Ancona and Caldwell also argued for the central role of innovation for the long-term survival of organizations.¹¹⁹ Gallup research confirmed the business need for innovation in a US survey where they found that fully engaged workers are most likely to drive organizations forward because they are typically more innovative. They surveyed employees to discover what effect employee engagement might have on team-level innovation and customer service delivery. Interestingly, 59 percent of the engaged employees said that their work fostered their most creative ideas, while only 3 percent of actively disengaged employees said that it did.¹²⁰ Additionally, 61 percent of the engaged employees said that their colleagues' creativity spurred them on, while only 9 percent of the actively disengaged employees agreed. In short, "Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward."¹²¹ Obviously disengagement produces very different results.

¹¹⁷ Rosabeth Kanter, "When a Thousand Flowers Bloom: Structural, Collective, and Social Conditions for Innovation in Organizations," *Research in Organizational Behavior*, vol. 10, ed. B. M. Staw and L. L. Cummings, (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1988), 169–211.

¹¹⁸ Heimer is an organizational psychologist. Her article is based on her contribution to the 2nd World Congress of the World Council of Psychotherapy held in Vienna in July 1999. See Claudia Heimer, "Emotional Rehydration," in *In Search of Meaning in the Workplace*, ed. L. Holbeche and N. Springett (Horsham, West Sussex: Roffey Park, 2003). [originally in *The Ashbridge Journal*, 6 pages (1999)]

¹¹⁹ D. Ancona and D. Caldwell, "Management Issues Facing New Product Teams in High Technology Companies," in *Advances in Industrial and Labor Relations*, vol. 4, ed. D. Lewin, D. Lipsky, and D. Sokel (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1987), 191–221.

¹²⁰ Jerry Krueger and Emily Killham, "Who's Driving Innovation at Your Company?" Gallup, September 14, 2006, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/24472/whos-driving-innovation-your-company.aspx>.

¹²¹ Attridge, "Measuring and Managing Employee Work Engagement," 387.

Thus, we see that the higher the rate of disengagement, the greater the increase of absenteeism among employees. The Canadian figures on public sector employees and nurses illustrated such absenteeism. Presenteeism as a symptom of workplace disengagement illustrates how employees may be at work physically but psychologically absent. Finally, the problem of employee disengagement sharply destroys innovation in the workplace. On the other hand, an organization that fosters a climate of engagement also fosters innovation.

1.5 Reactions to disengagement

There have been various reactions to the problem of workplace disengagement as ways to increase employee engagement. The reactions discussed here come largely from three separate disciplines: human resources studies, psychology and sociology. The role that spirituality may play in disengagement will be presented in a separate chapter.

1.5.1 Human resources studies

The twentieth century witnessed a long line of approaches that sought to enhance human relations in the workplace and improve the overall well-being of workers, although often with an emphasis on leadership. Key studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emphasized the link between the human factor and workplace performance.¹²²

¹²² Some information provided in the following is from Marilyn K. Gowing, "Measurement of Individual Emotional Competence," in *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace: How to Select for, Measure, and Improve Emotional Intelligence in Individuals, Groups, and Organizations*, ed. Cary Cherniss and Daniel Goleman (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 83–86. The "human factor" means that not everything is linear or measureable. Human beings are emotional, unpredictable, loving, etc.

While Frederick W. Taylor is best known for his emphasis on scientific management, in which tasks and people could be related in such a way as to increase efficiency,¹²³ Mary Follet's different emphasis was on how managers need to consider the human side of the organization—an obvious challenge to Taylor's vision. Subsequently, from a series of studies known as the Hawthorne Studies (1924–1932) emerged the Human Relations Movement.¹²⁴ These studies suggested that a worker's level of performance was affected by a manager's behaviour or leadership. It was assumed that if managers could elicit cooperation from their employees, this would lead to increased productivity.

In 1955 Robert L. Katz argued for three fundamental skills necessary for an effective administrator: technical, conceptual and human skills.¹²⁵ In 1960 another researcher, Douglas McGregor, published his work on Theory X and Theory Y.¹²⁶ A Theory X manager assumes that workers are lazy, dislike work, and will try to do as little as possible. Since this is assumed, close supervision is called for. A Theory Y manager assumes that employees are not necessarily lazy and will do what needs to be done if given the opportunity. The task of a Theory Y manager is to create a work environment that provides self-initiative and self-direction. In 1973 Henry Mintzberg published what has become a classic exposition on what he considered to be the top ten roles that managers

¹²³ Taylor's emphasis was that there was only one best way to complete a task and that was to discover and develop work through scientific study and analysis. He saw that this would involve “a complete revolution” in mental attitudes not only in the habits of all those working in management but also in employees. The efficient principles enumerated became known as Taylorism. See *The Principles of Scientific Management*, (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1997), 69. In contradistinction to Frederick Taylor (1856–1915), Dr. Elton Mayo (1880–1949) wanted to look at how paying attention to worker needs could improve productivity. What became known as the “Hawthorne effect” suggested that worker productivity would increase if they were given personal attention in the work they were responsible for.

¹²⁴ It originated in the 1930s which was initially started.

¹²⁵ Robert L. Katz, “Skills of An Effective Administrator,” *Harvard Business Review*, 1955, 33, no. 1, 34, accessed April 18, 2016, <https://hbr.org/1974/09/skills-of-an-effective-administrator>.

¹²⁶ Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960).

need to perform optimally.¹²⁷ He grouped these roles into three broad categories: *decisional* (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator), *informational* (monitor, disseminator, spokesperson), and *interpersonal* (figurehead, leader, liaison). Leadership in the workplace today is seen in much broader terms than before, with some different emphases, including its emotional factor. One article argues, for example, that there is a sterile nature to leadership when leaders simply go through the motions without embracing emotion, heart, and soul in how they lead.¹²⁸

With industrialization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the emerging field of personnel management reacted to the plight of workers and sought to enact policies that would provide equity. In the mid-twentieth century, personnel morphed into human resource management (HRM), a *function* that manages all the human aspects of people from hiring to firing. Human resource development (HRD), a *profession* usually understood as a subsection of HRM, is concerned with the training and development of employees. In the 1980s human resources began to align itself with more strategic management concerns and compliance regulations as well, becoming strategic human resource management (SHRM) and hence a major management activity. In either case, the end goal for HRM is that it be a process whereby organizations engage their employees in pursuing organizational and individual goals.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Henry Mintzberg, *The Nature of Managerial Work* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

¹²⁸ Dave Ulrich and Wendy Ulrich, "Leaders Who Make Meaning Meaningful," *IVEY Business Journal*, (July/August 2010), accessed April 9, 2016, <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/leaders-who-make-meaning-meaningful/>.

¹²⁹ Richard M. Hodgetts, K. Galen Kroeck, and Michael E. Rock, *Managing Human Resources in Canada* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, 1995), 5.

In the face of disengagement, the field of HRM and its HRD practitioners are keenly aware of the need for fully engaged employees. The field is inundated today with the expression “the war on talent,”¹³⁰ meaning that the best people must be hired, and the military metaphor has been dominant now for at least a decade. Another area where HRM is reacting to disengagement is its awareness that it needs to create and enable a healthy corporate climate, culture, and environment. In practice, this means ongoing HRD, for example, employee training and development, providing effective performance appraisals and feedback, and career planning for employees. Keep in mind that however the practice of HRM is at work in the organization, it is generally seen now as integral to doing business. Lockwood argues that such awareness can be listed under a term like “competitive advantage” by which employee engagement, for example, is seen “as a critical driver of business success in today’s competitive marketplace.”¹³¹

To minimize disengagement and participate in this so-called war on talent, it is estimated that what is needed is a relational component.¹³² This component includes positive human relations, but it is difficult to know whether promoting positive human relations is also simply a way to hire more flexible employees for the social character of the new workplace and to focus employee engagement on adapting to it. In other words,

¹³⁰ Clayton Glen, “Key Skills Retention and Motivation: The War for Talent Still Rages and Retention Is the High Ground,” *Industrial and Commercial Training* 38, no. 1 (2006): 37–45, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/00197850610646034>.

¹³¹ Nancy R. Lockwood, “Leveraging Employee Engagement for a Competitive Advantage,” 2007 *SHRM Research Quarterly* (Alexandria, VA: The SHRM Foundation, 2006), 1, 4, accessed March 29, 2016, <https://www.shrm.org/Research/Articles/Documents/07MarResearchQuarterly.pdf>.

¹³² Ian O. Williamson, “The War for Talent Ends,” *QS Top MBA*, September 8, 2009, accessed March 14, 2016, <http://www.topmba.com/why-mba/faculty-voices/war-talent-ends>.

employee engagement becomes one of the “performance drivers.”¹³³ HR specialists also concentrate on developing “commitment.” Vance suggests giving attention to practices such as job design, recruitment, employee selection, training and development, compensation and performance management, and “engagement action plans.”¹³⁴ Finally, HRM is also aware that it needs to create and foster a healthy corporate climate, culture, and environment. Engaged employees want not only to fulfill their potential but also to feel that in their work that they are actually doing so.

Another strategic approach to disengagement are lists such as the “10Ms of Engagement”.¹³⁵ Model (symbolizing integrity); Metropolis (an organization characterized by camaraderie, support, and respect); Magnate (representing acknowledgement and appreciation); Moderation (governing employees’ energy); Manager (representing empowerment); Moon (symbolizing learning); Mirror (relating to people who reflect a healthy self-esteem); Malleability (symbolizing change resiliency and flexibility); Microphone (characterizing employees who are unafraid to speak for themselves); and Match (recognizing that people are passionate about different jobs). Such lists of “tips” abound.¹³⁶

¹³³ Eric Mosley, “How Employee Engagement Drives Business Success,” *Chief Executive*, March 23, 2011, accessed March 14, 2016, <http://chiefexecutive.net/how-employee-engagement-drives-business-success/>.

¹³⁴ Robert J. Vance. *Employee Engagement and Commitment: A Guide to Understanding, Measuring, and Increasing Engagement in Your Organization* (Alexandria, VA: The SHRM Foundation, 2006), 27, 28–35, accessed March 29, 2016, <https://shrm.org/about/foundation/research/Documents/1006EmployeeEngagementOnlineReport.pdf>.

¹³⁵ Cris Wildermuth and Mel Wildermuth, “10Ms of Engagement,” *Training & Development* 62 (2005): 50–53. *Training & Development* is the official magazine of the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD).

¹³⁶ Robyn Reilly, “Five Ways to Improve Employee Engagement Now,” *Gallup Business Journal*, January 7, 2014, accessed March 14, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/166667/five-ways-improve-employee-engagement.aspx>. See also Josh Bersin, “Becoming Irresistible: A New Model for

These proposed strategies provide courses to promote healthy communication patterns, make sure that employees are fully informed should there be upcoming transfers, the need for transparency throughout the organization, the ongoing opportunities for employee learning, and the appropriate levels of compensation, are business-driven and well-placed. The evidence suggests, however, that while they may have had some success, they do not of themselves address either the extent or the roots of workplace disengagement.

1.5.2 Sociological studies

According to Harvey Cox, “The Market” has become God.¹³⁷ We live in a new economic dispensation; everything can be bought and sold. The Market must never stay still but continue to expand and with its omniscience determine the human needs for such expansion. The “econologists” have now taken over with their implicit First Commandment: “There is *never* enough.” But there are now clearly recognized sociological consequences when worker engagement is usurped in order to be recast and revisioned by the theology of this Market, and these consequences are now seen as contributing to the widespread disengagement that exists. The current corporation reflects these views of econologists.

Employee Engagement,” *Deloitte Review*, no. 16, January 26, 2015, accessed March 14, 2016, <http://dupress.com/articles/employee-engagement-strategies/>.

¹³⁷ Harvey Cox, “The Market as God: Living in the New Dispensation,” *The Atlantic Online*, March 1999, accessed March 31, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/03/the-market-as-god/306397/>. Cox capitalizes the first letter of the two words—“The Market”—“to signify both the mystery that enshrouds it and the reverence it inspires in business folk” and uses the expression 55 times. Italics in the original.

Since Cox wrote his article, Mintzberg *et al.* have linked what they call the culture of selfishness directly to workplace disengagement.¹³⁸ They attack the US economic culture—especially since 9/11—and its economic assumptions and fabrications, what they call a “Syndrome of Selfishness.”¹³⁹ They describe how five “mutually reinforcing misperceptions have driven a series of disruptive wedges into the socioeconomic fabric, distorting our views of corporate and social responsibility.”¹⁴⁰ These fabrications or disruptive wedges have badly infected business and have led to corporate, social, and individual irresponsibility that have seriously impacted ethics and integrity. The first disruptive wedge is the notion that we are essentially *homo economicus* driven by self-interest, by a desire for more even if that means selling our integrity to get it. They even hint at an evocation of the spiritual: “Beyond material goods lies an inner sense of what is good.”¹⁴¹ They maintain that the essence of responsible management is that one must judge between short-term gains and deeply rooted values. This disruptive wedge or fabrication creates a “wedge of *distrust*”¹⁴² because we end up with a society and a workplace that is scheming and calculating what is in the best interest only of the self; gone is any social glue.

The second disruptive wedge directly fosters disengagement with its notion that the purpose of a corporation is solely to maximize shareholder value, implying, of course, that

¹³⁸ Henry Mintzberg, Robert Simons, and Kunal Basu, “Beyond Selfishness,” *MIT Sloan Management Review* 44, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 66–74. A particular notion that relates to this thesis implies the distinction between the commodity-based (objective) and meaning-based (subjective) visions of an organization. These will be discussed in later chapters.

¹³⁹ Mintzberg *et al.*, *The Nature of Managerial Work*, 68.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* Italics in original.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 68–69. Italics in original.

any social responsibility is that of government. This misperception casts aside a balanced set of stakeholder views and also casts aside the social locus of a corporation's existence. The wedge that this view promotes is a “wedge of *disengagement*,”¹⁴³ that is “[t]hose who create the benefits are disengaged from the ownership of their efforts and are treated as dispensable, while those who own the enterprise treat that ownership as dispensable and so disengage themselves from its activities.”¹⁴⁴

The need for “heroic leaders” creates the third disruptive wedge, the “wedge of *disconnection*”¹⁴⁵ between the leader and the rest of employees, in effect centralizing power. A fourth fabrication is the notion that an effective organization must be lean and mean. When meanness becomes a managerial virtue, the basic covenant between implicit security and employee loyalty becomes shattered. According to Mintzberg *et al.*, such a misperception focuses solely on the present and on short-term gains and drives a “wedge of *discontinuity*”¹⁴⁶ between the present and the future because quarterly earnings, not looking further into the future, becomes the norm.

The fifth and final misperception is that a rising tide of prosperity will lift all boats because everyone will benefit, something that has not proven to be the case. Thus a “wedge of *disparity*”¹⁴⁷ is created between those who benefit from stock price increases and the bulk of employees who make that increase happen in the first place. This again seems to transfer any social responsibility out of the workplace itself. With all of these corporate

¹⁴³ Ibid., 69, 70. Italics in original.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 70–71. Italics in original.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Italics in original.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 71–72. Italics in original.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 72–73. Italics in original.

misperceptions and fabrications, it is forgotten that engagement “is rooted in experience—in the stories of those whose actions have promoted the values of trust, judgment and commitment. There are many such stories.”¹⁴⁸ The authors sum up their analysis on disengagement by quoting a director from Pilkington Glass: “It isn’t just what you do this year that matters . . . but what you are working on that is going to bear fruit in ten years’ time. It is important that the company is not only profitable, but also has ‘heart’.”¹⁴⁹ Mintzberg et al., sum up their argument by writing: “We can live our lives and manage our enterprises obsessed with getting ever more, with keeping score, with constantly calculating and scheming. Or we can open ourselves to another way, by engaging ourselves to engage others so as to restore our sense of balance.”¹⁵⁰ Although Mintzberg *et al.* are writing from a sociological perspective, they seem to go beyond pure human resource analysis, and they certainly point to the fact that the problem of disengagement has much deeper roots than simply management issues alone.

1.5.3 Psychological studies

Harter et al. see well-being in the workplace as essential, not only for individual employees but also for organizations and communities themselves.¹⁵¹ For them well-being

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 73. “Pilkington Group Limited is a multinational glass manufacturing company headquartered in St Helens, United Kingdom and a wholly owned subsidiary of the Japan-based NSG Group. Prior to its acquisition by NSG in 2006 it was an independent company listed on the London Stock Exchange and for a time was a constituent of the FTSE 100 Index” or (Financial Times Stock Exchange). “Pilkington,” *Wikipedia*, accessed March 14, 2016, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilkington>.

¹⁵⁰ Mintzberg et al., *The Nature of Managerial Work*, 74.

¹⁵¹ James K. Harter, Frank L. Schmidt, and Corey L.M. Keyes, “Well-Being in the Workplace and Its Relationship to Business Outcomes: A Review of the Gallup Studies,” in *Flourishing: The Positive Person and the Good Life*, ed. C.L. Keyes and J. Haidt (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2002), 205–224, accessed March 14, 2016, <http://media.gallup.com/documents/whitePaper--Well-BeingInTheWorkplace.pdf>.

embraces employee engagement which, in turn, is a “combination of cognitive and emotional antecedent variables in the workplace.” Engagement “generates higher frequency of positive affect (job satisfaction, commitment, joy, fulfillment, interest, caring)” which, in turn, contributes to “the efficient application of work, employee retention, creativity, and ultimately business outcomes.” Both managers and employees can influence these elements of well-being.¹⁵²

Kahn, on the other hand, describes how his conceptualization of engagement began with his reading of Goffman, who spoke about role performances that people act in and out of.¹⁵³ Roles that people like to be in are embraced; roles they do not like to be in are disdained. Kahn says that in work environments a similar calibration of self-in-role occurs, what he called “*personal engagement* and *personal disengagement*.”¹⁵⁴ In a work role one can “bring in” one’s personal self or “leave it out.” The idea that people self-employ and self-express is seen by Kahn “as a matter of course.”¹⁵⁵

Kahn’s research on personal engagement and workplace disengagement involved three psychological conditions. The first was *meaningfulness*, which he defined as “the feeling that one is receiving a return on investments in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy. People experienced such meaningfulness when they felt worthwhile,

¹⁵² James K. Harter, Frank L. Schmidt, and Corey L.M. Keyes, “Well-Being in the Workplace and Its Relationship to Business Outcomes: A Review of the Gallup Studies,” 2, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://www.nhsemployers.org/~media/Employers/Documents/Retain%20and%20improve/Harter%20et%20a%202002%20WellbeingReview.pdf>.

¹⁵³ Erving Goffman, *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1961), 90.

¹⁵⁴ William A. Kahn, “Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work,” 694.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* With this idea Kahn acknowledges Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954).

useful, and valuable – that they made a difference and were not taken for granted.” The second condition is *safety*, which he defined as “feeling able to show and employ one’s self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career. . . . When situations were unclear, inconsistent, unpredictable, or threatening, personal engagement was deemed too risky or unsafe.”¹⁵⁶ The last was *availability*, which Kahn defined as “the sense of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources to personally engage at a particular moment. It measures how ready people are to engage, given the distractions they experience as members of social systems.”¹⁵⁷ Of these three psychological conditions, meaningfulness has been found to have the strongest link to engagement.¹⁵⁸ In other words, persons become engaged when they *feel* valuable and valued.

Additional research involving the human factor in improving workplace performance has often concentrated not on leadership, but on worker motivation. Writing on this subject, psychologist Abraham Maslow provided a significant foundation for later research.¹⁵⁹ Latham and Pinder, in their 2005 comprehensive review of the literature between 1993 and 2003, address the role of affect in motivation.¹⁶⁰ For them work motivation is a psychological process, an interaction between oneself and the environment, as well as “a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an

¹⁵⁶ William A. Kahn, “Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work,” 708.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 703–704, 708, 714.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Pech and Bret Slade, “Employee Disengagement: Is There Evidence of a Growing Problem?” *Handbook of Business Strategy* 7, no. 1 (2006): 22, accessed March 29, 2016, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bret_Slade/publications.

¹⁵⁹ Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 2nd ed. (New York: Joanna Cotler Books, 1970); *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1982).

¹⁶⁰ A. K. Korman, J. H. Greenhaus, and I. J. Badin, “Personnel Attitudes and Motivation,” *Annual Review of Psychology*, 28 (1977): 175–96.

individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration.”¹⁶¹

Psychologists have studied both the psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work, as well as the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability that affect these qualities. To minimize disengagement, the University of Missouri-Kansas City focuses on such areas as career support, recognition of competence, intradepartmental relations, working conditions, external relations, job fit, role support, social support, job satisfaction, and work engagement.¹⁶² While these are all excellent strategies, they basically reflect what is already in the human resources literature. Further, they represent an external approach to the problem. Consequently, they do not go deep enough to get at the underlying roots of the disengagement problem.

Positive psychology, or the scientific study of how to make a worthwhile life for individuals and communities, brings a weightier and more internal approach to the problem

¹⁶¹ Gary P. Latham and Craig C. Pinder, “Work Motivation Theory and Research at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 56 (2005): 486, accessed March 14, 2016, <http://www.hrma.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Latham-Pinder-wk-mot-theory-an-rev-05.pdf>. See also Craig C. Pinder, *Work Motivation in Organizational Behavior* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 11.

¹⁶² Doug Buchanan, “Employee Engagement: Motivated and Productive People Who Are Innovative and Creative,” (PowerPoint presentation: University of Missouri-Kansas City, n.d.). Gail Hackett, Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost, in a UMKC Strategic Plan Implementation Update (November 29, 2012), in a PPT presentation (Slide 5), presents an update of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Vision statement which reads: “UMKC will become a model urban research university characterized by signature graduate and professional programs, a dynamic undergraduate population, a highly diverse faculty, staff and student body, and active engagement with its city and region,” accessed April 18, 2016, https://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwir2r2QjJnMAhVHkIMKHsWAsQFggbMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.umkc.edu%2Fprovost%2Fdownloads%2FStrategic_Plan_Listening_Session_11-29-12.ppt&usg=AFQjCNFX_6n4OJthj2g3sXM_3BuxIyOfmw&sig2=HAtz8NEZKwWX4wjXI0CuRA&bvm=bv.119745492,d.amc&cad=rjt.

of employee disengagement.¹⁶³ Scholars identify the two concepts: a practitioner-led concept that includes elements accounted for by individual orientation (such as personal satisfaction and meaning), and an organizational one (such as employee motivation and commitment).¹⁶⁴ Positive psychology appears to put more emphasis on the first concept by recommending future research that investigates more of the “Competing Values Framework,” the strategies that employers use for work/life balance, job fit, and making sure that employees have a “calling” to the work they do because callings are linked to the notion of being authentic.¹⁶⁵

Most importantly, Maccoby, with his use of the notion of social character, draws upon Erikson’s eight stages of life framework to explore the development of social character.¹⁶⁶ Maccoby’s focus is on human development, which he sees as the “growth of competence, a process in which individuals and/or groups increase their ability to both determine and satisfy their needs.”¹⁶⁷ A disengaged workforce obviously does neither, because social character requires a supportive community and ideals. Because today’s business social character is not only linked to corporate misperceptions and fabrications but also shapes them, a spirit of individualism has become rampant. This makes community a

¹⁶³ Martin E. P. Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “Positive Psychology: An Introduction,” *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000) no page, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/55/1/5/> and <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/special/4015501.aspx>

¹⁶⁴ Martin Stairs and Martin Galpin, “Positive Engagement: From Employee Engagement to Workplace Happiness,” in *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work*, ed. P. Alex Linley, Susan Harrington and Nicola Garcea (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2010), 157.

¹⁶⁵ Amy Wrzesniewski and Jane E. Dutton, J. E., “Crafting a Job: Revisioning Employees as Active Crafters of Their Work,” *Academy of Management Review* 26, no. 2 (2001): 179–201, accessed March 29, 2016, http://faculty.som.yale.edu/amywrzesniewski/documents/Craftingajob_Revisioningemployees_000.pdf. See also Michael G. Pratt and Blake E. Ashforth, “Fostering Meaningfulness in Working and at Work,” in *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline*, ed. Kim S. Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003), 320.

¹⁶⁶ Maccoby, “The Self in Transition,” 162–174.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

struggle. Maccoby uses Eric Erikson's stages to describe a positive life-cycle of development from a *bureaucratic* to an *interactive* social character. Four examples will illustrate how such a psychological shift would occur and suggest healthy approaches to the problem of disengagement.

In Erikson's third stage, that of industry vs. inferiority, a bureaucratic social character would insist on knowing one's place, whereas an interactive social character would support interpersonal competence and teamwork.¹⁶⁸ With the fourth stage, or industry, a person would shift from simply "passing the tests" to that of learning how to learn.¹⁶⁹ With the sixth stage, that of intimacy, a bureaucratic social character imposes a sense of mutual care.¹⁷⁰ In a shift to the interactive social character, mutual development is defined by the people themselves: there is a freedom and an ability to make choices and a network is built together. Maccoby links this stage to Freud's notion of *lieben und arbeiten* (to love and to work), and says, "Beyond normality, perhaps happiness requires love in one's work and some working at love."¹⁷¹ Finally, with the seventh stage, that of generativity, the shift would be from a social character that provides a parental role to one of coaching and facilitation and a focus on what to pass on to society or "taking responsibility for building one's society rather than merely enjoying one's rights and complying with the laws."¹⁷² In each of these shifts, an employee develops a greater sense of self-directiveness and self-responsibility. These are clearly important attitudes for

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 162.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 167.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 170.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 171.

¹⁷² Ibid., 171.

nourishing workplace engagement because, as we have seen, employee disengagement can be correlated with conditions in which psychological identification and psychological meaningfulness are lacking and low levels of trust exist between managers and subordinates.¹⁷³

1.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter began with a discussion of today's changing workplace. While every age has a social character, or the way people adapt to the dominant economic and socio-political structure of its society, so in today's business world a new social character is evident as well. A character holds certain key values for people and in their adaptation they absorb these values, knowingly or not. It was argued that, as in past ages when dominant people imposed many of the values, so in today's workplace the dominant people do likewise and employees internalize these values in order to fit in.

Unlike the rugged individualism of the nineteenth century with its sense of independence, integrity, and autonomy, work shifted in the twentieth century to a bureaucratic experience and led to the birth of the corporate person. The organization was stable and employees could identify with a company and what it stood for. However, in the 1960s and 1970s the landscape changed: workers needed to become responsible for themselves because the organization was becoming less paternal. Emotional distress resulted because the organization was not the source of security that it once was. Work changed from being an activity involving personal achievement to a more impersonal

¹⁷³ Pech and Slade, "Employee Disengagement: Is There Evidence of a Growing Problem?" 21–25.

activity in that work became a productive relationship involving being employed by someone else with no guarantee that the employee would ever see the final product. This lack of connectedness—where formerly employee achievement and effort went into making and seeing their product—led to a growing sense of disengagement which, as we saw, contains a fundamental emotional content. A distinct sense of alienation—a lack of meaning, a lack of control over work processes, powerlessness, working in isolation, a lack of a sense of purpose and involvement in the employee's work, and a lack of social interaction with co-workers—began to take a heavy toll. Employee disengagement began to develop in earnest.

We then examined research on employee disengagement from three different survey data organizations: Gallup, Towers Perrin, and BlessingWhite. While the figures and percentages of engaged to disengaged employees had somewhat different emphases, the overall picture was that the problem is massive globally. This sense of employee disengagement has raised global concerns. While there is a continuum of disengagement, those at the extreme negative end actively work against an organization. In other words, they are deliberately destructive. Disengagement occurs in numerous organizations globally, at all levels, within different industries and sub-industries. It is also very costly to organizations.

Two symptoms of employee disengagement were chosen to illustrate the problem: presenteeism/absenteeism—two sides of the same reality, the first being physically present at work but emotionally absent, and the second being absent physically—and declining innovation, a result of employees not feeling passionate enough about the work they do and hence not feeling inspired to be creative. It has been pointed out how human resources,

sociology, and psychology have tried to address this problem. These attempts, while helpful, have proven inadequate. There have been different reactions to address the problem of employee disengagement, such as efforts by human resource management; sociological reactions that analyzed a culture of selfishness resulting in what Mintzberg called disruptive wedges: of distrust, disengagement, disparity, and disconnection; and psychological reactions that embraced the reality of well-being as critical to employee engagement. The syndrome of societal selfishness, therefore, only exacerbates the problem of employee disengagement because it gives permission to employees to think only of themselves, a dynamic which the organization ironically has in effect reinforced because of the social character of the times.

From this discussion, the message becomes clear: work and a positive sense of oneself must go together¹⁷⁴ because work can give a person a sense of significance, of value, of worth, and of being a “somebody.”¹⁷⁵ Work becomes an essential part of the fibre of total well-being. It contributes to the broader society, and gives to the individual a social dignity. Worker disengagement erodes or destroys these positive values. The following chapter will summarize how emotional intelligence has addressed this issue.

¹⁷⁴ Claire E. Wolfteich, “Work,” in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. Michael Downey (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press (A Michael Glazier Book), 1993), 651.

¹⁷⁵ Roger S. Gottlieb, *A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart and Protecting the Earth* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 80.

Chapter Two

Emotional Intelligence: The Symptoms of Disengagement

*Mittler zwischen Hirn und Händen muss das Herz sein.*¹

1.1 Introduction

The first chapter discussed the widespread nature of workplace disengagement and the various symptoms by which it has presented itself. It is apparent that the current studies of disengagement identify an emotional component. One of the analyses clearly states that “engagement . . . is driven dominantly by emotional factors.”²

The present chapter will examine how the theory and practice of emotional intelligence (EI) might be usefully considered to address the particular symptoms selected: absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation. While there are currently some statistical studies beginning to appear on the topic and on aspects of emotional intelligence and employee engagement,³ it is still a budding research field despite the literature’s

¹ “The mediator between head and hand must be the heart.” *Metropolis* (1927). Title card for the film.

² Gibbons, *Employee Engagement*, 10, 12. Italics added.

³ Ann Kulow, “Qualitative Study of the Relationship between the Employee Engagement of Certain Employees and the Emotional Intelligence of Their Respective Leaders,” (College of Professional Studies Professional Projects, Paper 21, Marquette University, 2012), accessed March 29, 2016, http://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cps_professional; Caroline Igoki Mwangi, “Emotional Intelligence Influence on Employee Engagement Sustainability in Kenyan Public Universities,” *International Journal of Academic Research in Public Policy and Governance* 1, no. 1 (January 2014): 75–92, accessed March 29, 2016, http://hrmars.com/hrmars_papers/Emotional_Intelligence_Influence_on_Employee_Engagement_Sustainability_in_Kenyan_Public_Universities.pdf; Mai Ngoc Khuong and Nguyen Hoang Yen, “The Effects of Leadership Styles and Sociability Trait Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement—A Study in Binh Duong City, Vietnam,” *International Journal of Current Research and Academic Review* 2, no. 1 (January 2014): 121–136, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.ijcrar.com/vol->

analysis of the problem as one related to emotion.⁴ EI will be considered not only for its contribution to the understanding of disengagement, but also for how EI can provide a connecting link to applying spiritual values in the study of disengagement.

Clearly each historical period of humankind has its own social character, narrative, assumptions, or zeitgeist—its own “spirit of the time.” The early twenty-first century is no different. Jeremy Rifkin calls this the Age of Empathy, emphasizing that researchers from different disciplines and fields are reexamining features of faith and reason but within the context of a broader empathic consciousness. Rifkin maintains that these researchers argue that “all of human activity is embodied experience—that is, participation with the other—and that the ability to read and respond to another person as if he or she were oneself is the key to how human beings engage the world, create individual identity, develop language, learn to reason, become social, establish cultural narratives, and define reality and existence.”⁵

5/Mai%20Ngoc%20Khuong%20and%20Nguyen%20Hoang%20Yen.pdf.; S. C. Das and Wasif Ali, “Impact of Leaders Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement: Experiences from Banking Companies in India,” *Vidyasagar University Journal of Commerce* 20 (2015), accessed March 29, 2016, [http://14.139.211.206:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/1076/1/S.C._Das\[1\].pdf](http://14.139.211.206:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/1076/1/S.C._Das[1].pdf).

⁴ For example, limited research with two studies showed a connection between job resources (e.g., supervisor support, job control, reduction of effects of job demands) and employee engagement as well as its converse, employee disengagement, when there are minimum job resources, which opens the door to workplace disengagement. A third study involved gender differences in the relationship between the management of the two domains and family and work engagement. A third study revealed that family did not negatively influence work engagement for men, but work engagement was enhanced for women by family. The authors conclude: “The first two studies provide support for the idea that job resources were related to engagement. This is significant because it lays the groundwork for proposing that *EI as a resource could be related to engagement*. The final study establishes that a relationship between the work family domains and engagement exists. This allows the current study to advance the literature by examining whether EI moderates this relationship” [italics added], in K. Ravichandran, R. Arasu, and S. Arun Kumar, “The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Work Engagement Behavior: An Empirical Study,” *International Journal of Business and Management* 6, no. 11 (November 2011): 157–158, accessed March 2016, <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ijbm/article/viewFile/12863/9011>.

⁵ Jeremy Rifkin, “‘Empathic Civilization’: When Both Faith and Reason Fail, Stepping Up to The Age of Empathy,” *Huffpost Books: The Blog*, May 25, 2011, accessed March 12, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeremy-rifkin/empathic-civilization-whe_b_478552.html.

Rifkin is not alone. Over the past fifty years researchers have observed that experience is more than simply cognitive processes; they have begun to acknowledge the importance of feelings and emotions as well. *Experiencing experience* is critical for people today because it connects them to themselves, to what they *feel* is meaningful, to how they can relate to themselves, to others, and to the world around them. This requirement is called the *ecology of feelings*,⁶ a concept that is at the heart of emotional intelligence theory.

Zeidner et al., in particular, have written that EI fits the spirit of our times, because it offers “an alternative view on the interface of reason and emotions.”⁷ Behavioural neurologist and neuroscientist António Damásio claims that emotions are necessary factors in making sound judgments and decisions.⁸ The claim is that EI can help us work more effectively to resolve human problems and any conflict between what one is feeling and what one is thinking. For these researchers, this is a huge step forward because contemporary people are often more effective in solving technical problems than human ones.⁹ The widespread implications of emotional intelligence mean that with the

⁶ Matthews et al. use the phrase “natural ecology of emotions.” Gerald Matthews et al. state: “Central to the concept of EI are its benefits in everyday life . . . the relationships between emotional response and behavior and adaptation to real-world encounters [and] how emotions may facilitate or impede effective response in real life. Emotions are experienced within a natural ecology of ongoing person-environment interaction,” in Gerald Matthews, Moshe Zeidner, and Richard D. Roberts, *Emotional Intelligence: Science & Myth* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press (A Bradford Book), 2002), 159.

⁷ Moshe Zeidner, Gerald Matthews, and Richard D. Roberts, “How Social Is Emotional Intelligence?” in *What We Know About Emotional Intelligence: How It Affects Learning, Work, Relationships, and Our Mental Health* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press (A Bradford Book), 2009), 256.

⁸ Antonio Damasio, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1994).

⁹ John D. Mayer, Joseph Ciarrochi, and Joseph P. Forgas, “Emotional Intelligence in Everyday Life: An Introduction,” in *Emotional Intelligence in Everyday Life*. 2nd ed., ed. Joseph Ciarrochi, Joseph P. Forgas, and John D. Mayer (New York: Psychology Press, 2001), xi.

publication of a bestseller by that name,¹⁰ EI rapidly became a major topic of interest for the lay public as well as in scientific circles. It seems that the time was right.

2.2 Emotional intelligence theory

2.2.1 The terminology of EI¹¹

It is important to clarify terminology, especially since the widely used and generally accepted phrase *emotional intelligence* is sometimes regarded as inexact.¹² Contemporary psychology and medical neuroscience have shown how to clearly distinguish between *emotions* and *feelings*. For many researchers, especially neuroscientists, emotions are raw, unprocessed, instant, and physical, while feelings are processed, pondered, and cognitive. That is, emotions are a collection of physiological changes in body and brain states that respond to the content of one's perceptions of a particular occurrence. The signals generated by these changes in the brain produce additional changes that are largely perceptible only to the individual in whom they are enacted. These provide the essential

¹⁰ Daniel Goleman. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York: Bantam, 1995).

¹¹ "As EQ (emotional quotient) is the level or quantity of one's EI (emotional intelligence), SQ (spiritual quotient) is the level or quantity of one's SI (spiritual intelligence). And when I coined the term "EQ" [1985] I was thinking about "IQ" (intelligence quotient) which is the level, quantity amount of one's cognitive intelligence. In mathematics, a "quotient" is one number that it is divided by a number of another number then multiplied by yet another number. This is the process of creating standardized scores that went into arriving at one's IQ. An IQ, EQ or SQ is simply a number that tells you how cognitively, emotionally and spiritually intelligent one is. These are only numbers that mean something (i.e., how intelligent we are). One is the thing, and the other is the amount of that thing. . . . we would not confuse a kilo of potatoes with potatoes, we should not confuse EQ with EI or SQ with SI," Reuven Bar-On, personal email, April 19, 2016.

¹² The following section is based upon personal communication with Dr. Reuven Bar-On as well. See also Antoine Bechara, Antonio R. Damasio, and Reuven Bar-On, "The Anatomy of Emotional Intelligence and Implications for Educating People to Be Emotionally Intelligent," in *Educating People to Be Emotionally Intelligent*, ed. Reuven Bar-On, J. G. Maree, and Maurice Jesse Elias (Westpoint, CT: Praeger, 2007) esp. 274–277; also, Reuven Bar-On et al., "Exploring the Neurological Substrate of Emotional and Social Intelligence," *Brain* 126, no. 8 (August 2003): 1790–1800.

ingredients for what is ultimately perceived of as a feeling. Emotions are often what an outside observer can see or measure, and feelings are what the individual senses or subjectively experiences. Thus, an emotion is an automatic physiological or bodily reaction to something that can be visually and physiologically observed and recorded, while a feeling is our higher level cognitive understanding and interpretation of what we are reacting to, why we are reacting to it, and what it means to us about ourselves, others and the world around us. It should be noted, however, that while current research makes a distinction between the neural (emotions) and the cognitive (feelings), it wants to maintain the existence of a continuum between the two.

One ironic implication of this new neuroscientific terminology is that the term emotional intelligence becomes something of a misnomer, says Bar-On, because emotions (automatic physiological/bodily reactions) cannot be intelligent in and of themselves. Emotions first have to be neurologically transformed into feelings (i.e., thoughts about emotions) before they can be used in thinking, problem solving, and decision making. Our intellectual function works with processed feelings and not with raw emotions. Bar-On has contended that a better name for emotional intelligence, as well as a better name for cognitive intelligence and even multiple intelligences, would simply be intelligence (or human intelligences or general intelligence), because thinking, reasoning, problem solving, and decision making rely on a very wide mix of input which is cognitive, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual.

It should be pointed out that here the use of terminology can vary tremendously, depending on the author's or researcher's assumptions, perspectives, or model. For example, the late philosopher, Robert C. Solomon, made the same distinction between the

raw (physiological) and the processed (cognitive) as Bar-On and various neuroscientists do, but he used the term *emotion* also to cover the cognitive.¹³ This dissertation respects the findings of neuroscientists and psychologists regarding the distinction between the merely physiological (i.e., the emotions) and the cognitive (i.e., the processed) and the continuum between them, but will continue to use accepted phrases such as emotional intelligence and emotional-social intelligence in their broad sense to include the cognitive processing of bodily reactions.

2.2.2 The development of EI theory

Despite the increased interest in EI, scientists have been studying this construct for much of the twentieth century. Indeed, its historical roots can be found even earlier. In 1872 Charles Darwin published his conclusion that emotional awareness and emotional expression play a major role in survival and adaptation,¹⁴ a premise that remains vital to EI to the present day, in that it deals with the use of processed emotions or feelings in tactical and strategic reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Although the various terms and definitions used to describe EI have changed over time and continue to change, they are still describing various aspects of the same construct and the differences between them are often simply terminological. The use of italics for the various terms (below) illustrates the trajectory of the concept from Darwin to the present and how many earlier conceptualizations are relevant to the way EI is viewed today.

¹³ Robert C. Solomon, *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁴ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1872/1965), e.g., 95.

Publications on *social intelligence* first began with the work of Edward Thorndike in 1920 with a primary focus on defining, describing, and assessing what was perceived as socially competent behaviour. Thorndike's construct of social behaviour has been described as "the ability to perceive one's own and others' internal states, motives and behaviours, and to act toward them optimally on the basis of that information."¹⁵ This construct has strongly influenced the various conceptualizations of emotional intelligence that applied later in the century. For example, Edgar Doll published the first instrument designed to measure the development of *socially intelligent behaviour* in young children. Doll coined the term "SQ" ("*social quotient*") to describe his approach to assessing the level of socially intelligent behaviour.¹⁶ David Wechsler then included two subscales—comprehension and picture arrangement—apparently designed to assess certain aspects of social intelligence even in his well-known test of cognitive intelligence.¹⁷ He later suggested that the measurement of intelligence (with such abilities as abstract reasoning, learning, and adaptation) could not be complete without taking into account non-cognitive abilities, such as affective and conative influences (cultural norms, drive, persistence, will, and some aspects of temperament and personality) that factor into one's global behaviour and are

¹⁵ Reuven Bar-On et al., "Exploring the Neurological Substrate of Emotional and Social, Intelligence," in *Social Neuroscience: Key Readings*, ed. John T. Cacioppo and Gert T. Berntson (New York, London: Psychology Press, Taylor and Francis Group, 2005), 225. See Edward Thorndike, "Intelligence and Its Uses," *Harper's Magazine*, January 1920, 227–235, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://harpers.org/archive/1920/01/intelligence-and-its-uses/>. See also F. Stuart Chapin, "Preliminary Standardization of a Social Impact Scale," *American Sociological Review* 7, no. 2 (1942): 214–225, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://drsmorey.org/bibtex/upload/Chapin:1942.pdf>.

¹⁶ E. A. Doll, "A Generic Scale of Social Maturity," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 5 (1935): 180–188; F. A. Moss and T. Hunt, "Are You Socially Intelligent?" *Scientific American*, 137 (1927): 108–110.

¹⁷ Reuven Bar-On, "The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Subjective Well-Being," *Perspectives in Education* 23, no. 2, (2005): 41–61, esp. 42.

necessary for success. Intelligence, in other words, was a function of the *whole* personality and multidimensional.¹⁸

Scholarly research in this area has continued uninterruptedly to the present and included scientific studies conducted by many prominent psychologists. Scholars began to shift their attention from describing and assessing social intelligence to the understanding of the *purpose* of interpersonal behaviour and the role it plays in effective adaptability within the social context. Not only did such research help define human effectiveness from the social perspective, but it also reinforced one crucial aspect of David Wechsler's definition of general intelligence: "the capacity of the individual to act purposefully."¹⁹ This obviously echoed identifiable tenets of Darwinian thinking related to adaptation and survival, but it also helped position social intelligence as an important part of general intelligence.

The "'new look' movement of the 1950s" opened up the theory of social intelligence to the idea that people construct their world as they anticipate what it might look like and how it might work for them.²⁰ Rotter had an analogous idea with his emphasis on people ferreting out opportunities that would help them adapt to their surroundings.²¹

¹⁸ David Wechsler, "Nonintellective Factors in General Intelligence," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 38, no. 1 (January 1943): 101–104.

¹⁹ David Wechsler, *The Measurement and Appraisal of Adult Intelligence*, 4th ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Williams & Wilkins Company, 1958): 7.

²⁰ Sabrina Zirkel, "Social Intelligence: The Development and Maintenance of Purposive Behavior," in *The Handbook of Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Development, Assessment, and Application at Home, School, and in the Workplace*, ed. Reuven Bar-On and James D. A. Parker (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (A Wiley Imprint), 2000), 4. The "new look" perspective held that perception of an object is not determined solely by the object's actual features but also by the observer's internal states, that is, one's values, motives and self-concept.

²¹ J. B. Rotter, "Generalized Expectancies for Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement," *Psychological Monographs* 80 (1966): 1–28.

Thorndike's "law of effect,"²² coupled with social intelligence, now began to focus on the *desired effect* of behaviour. A person's *creative power of interpretation* could make a better future because they could choose *how* they wanted to have that future. Social intelligence, therefore, gave a person the framework to see the link between their behaviour and their social context. It also allowed the person to see how their understanding of that social context *engaged* their potential to change and increased adaptiveness to the new environment. Thus, people could actively interpret the *meaning* of their social surroundings and how best to respond to them. According to Zirkel, the core assumptions about social intelligence and human behaviour began to be played out:²³ (1) behaviour is *purposive* and *strategic*; (2) people are *active*, not passive, participants in their lives; (3) behaviour is *social* and *contextual*; (4) behaviour is *developmental*; and (5) there is a premium placed on *cognition*, because people need to be creatively adaptive and imaginative by using their cognitive ability to transform their environment and the meanings they attach to them. Thus, social intelligence gives us the capacity to adapt to the world around us to act purposefully because of our inborn need for *connectedness* with others in that environment. Bar-On writes that Wechsler's emphasis on acting purposefully "clearly positioned social intelligence as an important part of general intelligence."²⁴

²² See E. L. Thorndike, *The Elements of Psychology* (New York: A.G. Seiler, 1905). Two criticisms emerge from this: a possible undue emphasis on social engineering and a behaviourist sense of reductionism, that is, the mind being reduced to behaviour and behaviour being reduced to environmental stimuli and observable responses.

²³ Zirkel, "Social Intelligence," 4.

²⁴ Reuven Bar-On, "Emotional Intelligence and Self-Actualization," in *Emotional Intelligence in Everyday Life*, ed. Joseph Ciarrochi, Joseph P. Forgas, and John D. Mayer (New York: Psychology Press, 2001), 83.

While some scientists were focusing on the interpersonal or social component of human intelligence, others began looking at the intrapersonal or more narrowly emotional component of this construct. One area of scientific inquiry began to focus on *alexithymia*,²⁵ which many consider to be closely related to the essence of EI in that it concerns the ability (or in the negative, the inability) to recognize, understand, and describe feelings or emotions. Alexithymia research grew out of clinical observations first published in the late 1940s and was initially intended to explain the development of psychosomatic disorders from a plausible etiological perspective.²⁶ Further research explored the neural circuitry that governs *emotional awareness*.²⁷ Today, neurological research has begun to provide solid tangible evidence of the anatomical foundations of the emotional intelligence construct, which some had earlier questioned as “elusive” and possibly “mythical.”²⁸ More contemporary research continues to support this connection between the neurological (emotions) and the cognitive (feelings).²⁹

²⁵ The term itself appeared in 1967. See Paul Sifneos, “Clinical Observations on Some Patients Suffering from a Variety of Psychosomatic Diseases,” *Acta Medica Psychosomatica* 21 (1967): 133–136.

²⁶ P. D. MacLean, “Psychosomatic Disease and the Visceral Brain: Recent Developments Bearing on the Papez Theory of Emotion,” *Psychosomatic Medicine* 2 (1949): 338–353; J. Ruesch, “The Infantile Personality,” *Psychosomatic Medicine* 10 (1948): 134–144.

²⁷ R. D. Lane, “Levels of Emotional Awareness: Neurological, Psychological and Social Perspectives,” in *The Handbook of Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Development, Assessment, and Application at Home, School, and in the Workplace*, ed. Reuven Bar-On and James D. A. Parker (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (A Wiley Imprint), 2000), 171–191.

²⁸ M. Davies, L. Stankov, and R. D. Roberts, “Emotional Intelligence: In Search of an Elusive Construct,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 75 (1998): 989–1015; Moshe Zeidner, Gerald Matthews, and Richard D. Roberts, “Slow Down, You Move Too Fast: Emotional Intelligence Remains an ‘Elusive’ Intelligence,” *Emotion* 1 (2001): 265–275.

²⁹ Antonio R. Damasio, “The Somatic Marker Hypothesis and the Possible Functions of the Prefrontal Cortex,” *Proceedings of The Royal Society* 351 (1996): 1413–1420; Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 2000).

Early discussions of social intelligence influenced the way EI was later conceptualized. For example, Peter Salovey and John Mayer originally viewed emotional intelligence as part of social intelligence.³⁰ They suggested that both concepts might be closely related, even representing components of the same construct. Their developing conceptualization of EI later resembled that of alexithymia and has apparently evolved from a similar way of viewing this construct, that is, the ability to perceive, understand, and express emotions.³¹ Although they originally referred to this construct as *emotional competence*, a term previously used by Carolyn Saarni,³² the term they eventually chose was emotional intelligence.

It is vital to note that interpersonal or social competence (the ability to understand others and relate with them) depends on intrapersonal or emotional competence (the ability to understand our own emotions and express feelings).³³ The way in which these EI components combine in coping with the demands of the broader environment suggests that both may be interrelated parts of the same construct. Bar-On in particular has demonstrated that *emotional and social intelligence* (or simply *emotional-social intelligence*) is composed of a number of intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies that combine to determine effective or purposeful human behaviour.³⁴ Based on the available research, Bar-

³⁰ Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, "Emotional Intelligence," *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality* 9 (1990): 189.

³¹ John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, "What Is Emotional Intelligence?" in *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Implications for Educators*, ed. Peter Salovey and D. Sluyter (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 3–31.

³² Carolyn Saarni, "Emotional Competence: How Emotions and Relationships Become Integrated," in *Socioemotional Development. Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, vol. 36, ed. R.A. Thompson (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 115–182.

³³ Dr. Reuven Bar-On, personal communication, July 6, 2010.

³⁴ Reuven Bar-On, *The Development of a Concept of Psychological Well-Being* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rhodes University, South Africa, 1988).

On argues that it is more accurate to refer to this wider construct as *emotional-social intelligence* (ESI).³⁵

It can readily be seen that since Thorndike, a number of different conceptualizations of EI have appeared which have created an interesting mix of confusion, controversy, and opportunity regarding the best approach to defining and measuring this construct. To help clarify this situation, the *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology* suggested that there are three major conceptual models involved in emotional measurement:³⁶ the Salovey-Mayer-Caruso model,³⁷ which defines this construct as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions (feelings) to facilitate thinking, measured by an ability-based measure; the Goleman model,³⁸ which views this construct as a wide assortment of competencies and skills that drive managerial performance, measured by multi-rater assessment; and the Bar-On model,³⁹ which describes an array of interrelated emotional and social competencies and skills that impact intelligent behaviour, measured by a self-report within a potentially expandable multi-modal approach, including interview and multi-rater assessment.

³⁵ Reuven Bar-On, "Emotional and Social Intelligence: Insights from the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)," in *The Handbook of Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Development, Assessment, and Application at Home, School, and in the Workplace*, ed. Reuven Bar-On and James D.A. Parker (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 363.

³⁶ C. Spielberger ed., *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology* (New York: Academic Press, 2004). The quotes cited for the three models are taken from Reuven Bar-On, "The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI)," *Psicothema* 18, Supplement (2006): 14.

³⁷ John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey, and David R. Caruso, *Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)* (Toronto, Ontario: Multi-Health Systems, Inc., 2002).

³⁸ Daniel Goleman, *Working With Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1998). See also R. E. Boyatzis, Daniel Goleman, and Hay Group, *The Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI)* (Boston: Hay Group, 2001).

³⁹ Reuven Bar-On, *The Emotional Quotient-Inventory (EQ-i): A Test of Emotional Intelligence* (Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems, Inc., 1997). See also *The Emotional Quotient-Inventory (EQ-i): Technical Manual* (Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems, Inc., 1997); Reuven Bar-On and Richard Handley, *The Bar-On EQ-360* (Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems, Inc., 2003); *The Bar-On EQ-360: Technical Manual* (Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems, Inc., 2003).

Although these models have some similar characteristics, it is this last model that will be used for this thesis, because of its wide acceptance and the broad understanding of emotional-social intelligence that it implies.

In developing his model of emotional-social intelligence, Bar-On found that most descriptions, conceptualizations, and definitions of this wider construct from Darwin onward have included one or more of the following basic components: the ability to recognize and understand emotions and to express feelings; the ability to understand how others feel and relate with them; the ability to manage and control emotions and strong feelings; the ability to manage change, adapt, and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature; and the ability to generate positive affect and be self-motivated. Bar-On's model itself is based on his experience as a clinical psychologist and his review of the professional literature, as well as on assistance from experienced health practitioners to identify the particular factors (identified in this chapter) that were thought to impact effective emotional and social functioning, which he thought would eventually lead to well-being.

As a result of his research, Bar-On defines emotional-social intelligence as “an array of interrelated emotional and social competencies and skills that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand and relate with others, and cope with daily demands and pressures.”⁴⁰ Bar-On describes EI in action:

people who are emotionally and socially intelligent [have] the ability to be aware of their emotions and of themselves in general, to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and to be able to express feelings non-destructively. Furthermore [they are] aware of the feelings and needs of others and . . . able to

⁴⁰ Reuven Bar-On, “The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Subjective Well-Being,” *Perspectives in Education* 23, no. 2 (2005): 47. Slightly amended by Dr. Reuven Bar-On in a personal e-mail, July 6, 2010.

establish and maintain cooperative, constructive and mutually satisfying. Ultimately, emotionally intelligent people are able to effectively manage personal, social and environmental change by realistically and flexibly coping with the immediate situation and solving problems of an interpersonal nature. To do this, they need to manage emotions effectively and be sufficiently optimistic, positive and self-motivated.⁴¹

This broad definition and EI emphasis will be regarded as generally normative for the purpose of this thesis, although the thesis itself does not require critical discussion of the merits and drawbacks of the slightly different emphases from one researcher to the next, since it will concentrate on the broader issue of the *purposeful use* of emotional intelligence, which clearly involves social components, and is not specifically concerned with the possible methods of measuring the various components. Scientific studies have clearly shown, however, that Bar-On's basic EI components have important applications for workplace situations, something that will be discussed further below.

2.3 Studies of emotional intelligence

There have been numerous studies done since 1995 applying EI theory to various contexts. Selected contexts have been chosen that might have some implications for workplace disengagement: social interactions, health (physical and psychological), and work itself (workplace performance and well-being). Greater attention obviously will be paid to these last applications.

⁴¹ Reuven Bar-On, "How Important Is It to Educate People To Be Emotionally Intelligent, And Can It Be Done?" in *Educating People To Be Emotionally Intelligent*, ed. Reuven Bar-On, J.G Maree, and Maurice Jesse Elias (Westport: CT, 2007), 2.

2.3.1 EI and social interactions

Social psychologists studied how emotions control normal social interactions (whose norms vary obviously from culture to culture) and how people react to the violation of social norms. In the latter studies, the emotional significance of events, which also include the appropriate expressions of emotions and consequent social behaviours, are defined by “feeling rules.”⁴²

Researchers today are taking steps to measure emotional intelligence. Published in 1997, the Emotional Quotient-*Inventory*TM, or EQ-*i*TM,⁴³ is a self-report that is now in widespread use with millions of persons around the world who have completed it.⁴⁴ Many end users have also employed this assessment for personal self-knowledge and the improvement of interpersonal relationships. In light of such widespread measurement of emotional competencies, Bar-On has shown that EI relates significantly to social interaction.⁴⁵

EI is seen to support healthy “feeling rules” that establish effective social competence in interactions. Being able to read one’s emotions and those of others can serve as “affective barometers” to read the quality and context of the person-environment interface, a factor supporting the ecology of feelings: “satisfaction with life and social relationships, higher self-esteem and well-being, harmonious close personal relationships,

⁴² Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts, *Emotional Intelligence*, 156.

⁴³ Reuven Bar-On, *EQ-iTM: BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory. Technical Manual* (Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems Inc., 1997). See also Bar-On, “The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI),” 21. Each of the competencies will initially show a bracketed abbreviation.

⁴⁴ E-mail from Diana Durek, EQ-*i*TM Administrator, Multi-Health Systems, Inc., Toronto, ON, August 9, 2010.

⁴⁵ Bar-On, “The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI),” 19.

empathic perspective taking, receipt and provision of social support, greater self-control in social situations, and diverse health outcomes.”⁴⁶

2.3.2 Health: Physical and psychological

Bar-On et al. describe three studies that demonstrate a moderate but statistically significant relationship between emotional-social intelligence and physical health.⁴⁷ In the first study, involving two groups of adolescents (healthy and non-healthy), the EQ-*i*™ Optimism factor was the most significant subscale between the groups.⁴⁸ In the second study, relying on research that showed a significant correlation between self-perceived health and clinically assessed health,⁴⁹ Bar-On administered the EQ-*i*™ to 3,571 adults. Results indicated a moderate relationship.⁵⁰ In the final study, 2,514 male recruits in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) completed the EQ-*i*™. Results from the data showed a low to moderate correlation between EI and general physical health.⁵¹ The relationship between physical health and EI may be reciprocal, that is, “satisfaction with (a) one’s physical

⁴⁶ Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts, “How Social Is Emotional Intelligence?” 200–201.

⁴⁷ Reuven Bar-On, “How Important Is It, and Can It Be Done?” in *Educating People to Be Emotionally Intelligent*, ed. Reuven Bar-On, J.G. Maree, and Maurice J. Elias (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 5–11, esp. 5.

⁴⁸ E. Krivoy, M. Weyl Ben-Arush, and Reuven Bar-On, “Comparing the Emotional Intelligence of Adolescent Cancer Survivors with a Matched Sample from the Normative Population,” *Medical & Psychiatric Oncology* 35, no. 3 (2000): 382.

⁴⁹ B. Shadbolt, J. Barresi, and P. Craft, “Self-Related Health as a Predictor of Survival Among Patients with Advanced Cancer,” *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 20, no. 10 (2002): 2514–2519.

⁵⁰ Reuven Bar-On, “The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i): Rationale, Description, and Summary of Psychometric Properties,” in *Measuring Emotional Intelligence: Common Ground and Controversy*, ed. Glenn Geher (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2004): 111–142.

⁵¹ Bar-On, “The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI),” 13–25.

fitness and self-acceptance, as well as with (b) one's interpersonal relationships, and with (c) work have a strong impact on one's health."⁵²

There is a stronger correlation between EI and psychological health. One study by Bar-On included 418 psychiatric patients in Argentina, Israel, South Africa, and the United States randomly compared with selected non-clinical samples. After administering the EQ-*i*TM, he found statistically significant differences in overall emotional-social intelligence as well as on most of the EQ-*i*TM scales between the clinical and non-clinical populations.⁵³ In a second study involving 2,514 Israeli military recruits who completed the EQ-*i*TM, Bar-On compared the scores from groups having major or minor psychiatric issues with a random group of recruits from the same large sample who did not receive a psychiatric profile during their military service. There was a moderate yet significant relationship between EI and psychological health.⁵⁴

Finally, Brackett and Salovey found statistically significant correlations between the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and measures of anxiety and depression,⁵⁵ correlations suggesting a clear relationship between EI and psychological health. Bar-On would support the existence of such a connection on the grounds that

⁵² Reuven Bar-On, "The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Health and Wellbeing," in *Emotional Intelligence: New Perspectives and Applications*, ed. A. Di Fabio (Rijeka, Croatia: InTech, 2012), 29–50; also, Reuven Bar-On, "The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Subjective Well-Being," *Perspectives in Education* 23, no. 2 (2005): 55; B. L. Fredrickson, "The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London: Biological Sciences* 359 (2004): 1367–1377, accessed April 10, 2016, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1693418/pdf/15347528.pdf>.

⁵³ Bar-On, "EQ-*i*TM," 149–150. See also Reuven Bar-On, "Applying Emotional Intelligence in Clinical Psychology," in *The Psychology of Counseling*, ed. A. Di Fabio (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2012), 109–124.

⁵⁴ Bar-On, "How Important Is It to Educate People?" 3–13.

⁵⁵ Marc A. Brackett and John D. Mayer, "Measuring Emotional Intelligence with the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso-Emotional-Intelligence-Test (MSCEIT)," in *Measuring Emotional Intelligence: Common Ground and Controversy*, ed. Glenn Geher (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2004), 188.

deficiencies in specific competencies “may lead to anxiety (an inability to adequately manage emotions), depression (an inability to accomplish personal goals and lead a more meaningful life) and problems related to reality testing (an inability to adequately verify feelings and thinking) respectively.”⁵⁶

2.3.3 EI and the workplace

The twentieth century showed EI, with its noncognitive elements, to be in a long line of approaches that sought to enhance human relations in the workplace and to improve the overall well-being of workers. In other words, emotional-social intelligence (ESI) has come to be seen as a driving force that includes both *thinking* and *feeling* dimensions needed for *purposive* action.

Studies over the past fifteen years have demonstrated the significance of EI as a positive force in various areas of the workplace: assessment (recruitment, selection, and performance), leadership development, and general workplace well-being. Each of these applications touches upon the realities of workplace engagement and disengagement. Clearly there is a give-and-take relationship between EI and the workplace itself. “Work and emotions are most plausibly construed as being reciprocally determined.”⁵⁷ People with higher EI scores will contribute to a better workplace. At the same time, a healthy workplace environment will assist the development of EI in those who work there.⁵⁸ Such a

⁵⁶ Bar-On, “The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI),” 19.

⁵⁷ Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts, “How Social Is Emotional Intelligence?” 256.

⁵⁸ “A three-year Parish Vibrancy Study of 135 parishes in a Catholic Diocese showed that in 52 of the parishes, the priest’s emotional and social competencies as seen by others had a positive effect on improvement of parishioner satisfaction,” in R. Boyatzis, T. Brizz, and L. Godwin, “The Effect of Religious Leaders’ Emotional and Social Competencies on Improving Parish Vibrancy,” *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 18, no. 2 (2011): 192.

correlation is supported also in reverse in a study by Bar-On of unemployed persons which indicated low EI scores.⁵⁹ Clearly a situation of long-term unemployment would be a serious challenge to healthy EI. At the same time, it is also not surprising that those with low EI will have greater difficulty in finding employment. In 1996 the Employment and Training Administration within the United States Department of Labor noted that employers look for the three most important hiring skills: oral communications, interpersonal skills, and teamwork abilities.⁶⁰

The most extensive use of EI in workplace situations has been as an assessment tool to recruit new employees, select current employees for new tasks, and evaluate employee performance. The first known study, which used the EQ-*i*™ to test the relationship between ESI and occupational performance, was with 1,171 United States Air Force recruiters in the mid-1990s. The study examined recruiters' ability to meet annual recruitment quotas for Top Gun pilots.⁶¹ After testing, it was found that recruiters who scored high on assertiveness, empathy, happiness, self-awareness, and problem-solving were 2.7 times more likely to succeed in their work.⁶²

Performance in highly stressful and potentially dangerous occupations was studied by comparing EQ-*i*™ scores with externally rated performance for a sample of 335 regular

⁵⁹ Reuven Bar-On, "A Sample of the Chronically Unemployed," in *BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory: A Measure of Emotional Intelligence. Technical Manual* (Toronto: Multi-Health Systems Inc., 1997), 143.

⁶⁰ Goleman, *Working With Emotional Intelligence*, 12–13, 332.

⁶¹ Richard Handley, "AFRS Rates Emotional Intelligence," *Air Force Recruiter News*, April 1997.

⁶² July 26, 2010 e-mail communication from Dr. Reuven Bar-On. See also "United States Air Force (Case 2)," *EI Insider Report*, Toronto: MHS, Summer 2010, 6. A recent study was released at the time showing that the Bar-On EQ-*i*™ would save the US Air Force \$190 million. This time it was useful to test trainees in the rigorous two-year Pararescue Jumpers (PJ) program, to identify those PJ trainees who had the best chance of successfully completing the program.

combat soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces and for an additional sample of 240 soldiers in one of their elite units.⁶³ Both studies clearly revealed a significant relationship between higher ESI and this specific type of occupational performance.⁶⁴ A non-military example would be American Express and its successful American Express Financial Advisors (AEFA) arm, which created an ongoing emotional competence development program. In the early 1990s AEFA realized that negative emotions in salespeople created serious blocks to their sales success. The role of EI competence training was pivotal. Not only was there an 18 percent increase in sales compared to the control group, but 90 percent of the leaders saw EI as important to their work performance and 91 percent experienced EI's positive effect personally.⁶⁵ In another study Bar-On found that 30 percent of the difference in occupational performance could be attributed to ESI. This is all the more stunning because Wagner's extensive meta-analysis showed that IQ or cognitive intelligence accounted for only 6 percent of such variance, whereas Bar-On's research showed EI to account for almost five times the weighting in explaining the same type of performance.⁶⁶

EI has also been used in workplace leadership studies. Goleman et al. state that leadership is rooted in emotional factors: "Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. . . . Great leadership works through the emotions."⁶⁷ This is a

⁶³ Reuven Bar-On, Richard Handley, and Suzanne Fund, "The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Performance," in *Linking Emotional Intelligence and Performance at Work: Current Research Evidence*, ed. V. Druskat, F. Sala, and G. Mount (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 10–14.

⁶⁴ Bar-On, "The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI)," 20.

⁶⁵ Douglas Lennick, "Emotional Competence Development and the Bottom Line: Lessons from American Express Financial Advisors," in *Educating People to Be Emotionally Intelligent*, ed. Reuven Bar-On, J.G. Maree, and Maurice J. Elias (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 201.

⁶⁶ Bar-On, "The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI)," 19–20.

⁶⁷ Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 3.

very important statement because we have already seen in the disengagement literature the critical importance of leadership behaviour on worker performance. In one study leadership was appraised by examining the relationship between EQ-*i*TM scores and peer-nomination (those considered to possess leadership capacity among new recruits in the Israeli Defense Forces). In another study leadership was appraised by criterion group membership (IDF recruits who were accepted to officer training versus those who were not) and in a third study by multi-rater evaluations (ratings on various different leadership criteria made by an average of seven to eight coworkers). The results indicated a significant moderate to high relationship between ESI and leadership. Another important study showed that successful leadership is based to a large extent on ESI.⁶⁸ Similarly, when top American executives were studied by the Center for Creative Leadership as to why their careers got derailed, it was found that in emotional terms “the *inability* to build and lead a team was one of the most common reasons for failure.”⁶⁹ In a further study involving Siemens AG, star performers in ESI had significantly more growth in revenues and return on sales compared to average managers. Four particular strengths emerged with the EI-trained star performers: their drive to achieve results, their ability to take initiative, their collaboration skills and teamwork, and their ability to lead teams.⁷⁰ Such strengths are clearly all key indicators for employee engagement as well.

⁶⁸ Bar-On, “The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i),” 111–142; Bar-On, Handley and Fund, “The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Performance,” 12–14.

⁶⁹ Goleman, *Working With Emotional Intelligence*, 219. Italics in original. See Jean Brittain Leslie and Ellen Van Velsor, *A Look at Derailment Today: North America and Europe* (Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership, 1996), accessed March 29, 2016, <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED393195>.

⁷⁰ Annual sales, on average, \$29.8 million compared to the \$17 million of non-star and non-EI trained managers. In Lyle M. Spencer, “The Economic Value of Emotional Intelligence Competencies and EIC-Based HR Programs,” in *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace: How to Select for, Measure, and Improve Emotional Intelligence in Individuals, Groups, and Organizations*, ed. Cary Cherniss and Daniel

What is emerging from a number of these research studies are more and more profiles of what Bar-On refers to as Star Performer Profiling™, ongoing research that he has pioneered, perfected and used in organizations worldwide over the past 20 years. Stein and Book have also tested 16,222 people in various occupations for what they refer to as *EQ Stars*. The results serve as “their estimates of success” for understanding high performers,⁷¹ or those emotionally engaged, in various occupational groups. The groups vary, for example, from accountants, biologists, engineers, lawyers, nurses, personnel and human resources, physicians/surgeons, psychiatrists to religious workers (clerics, ministers), sales people, principals and university professors.

Apart from other assessment studies, EI, the measurement of which can produce group results as well as individual reports, has also been used to improve the overall quality of the workplace. What is important are the consistent structural and facilitating roles that EI occupies in relation to workplace performance and positive outcomes. There is always a tension to some extent, of course, between the demands of the organization and the personal hopes and requirements of employees. Still, successful organizations today realize that embracing employee concerns and expectations—with a sensitivity based in emotional intelligence theory—is critical to the overall success of the organization as well.

Goleman (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 45–82, esp. 72–74. See also Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*, 36, 263.

⁷¹ Steven J. Stein and Howard E. Book, *The EQ Edge: Emotional Intelligence and Your Success*, revised and updated (Toronto: Jossey-Bass (A Wiley Imprint), 2006), 316–323, esp. 316. The economic value of these EI-trained star performers was that they had sales that were 75 percent higher, as well as a 106 percent higher return on sales, than non-EI trained managers.

Workers spend much of their lives in a workplace environment and the workplace has become increasingly important as a source of personal support.⁷² While some companies may want employees to keep their personal lives entirely absent from the workplace,⁷³ it is obvious that employees bring *who* they are into the workplace, including their emotionality. Indeed, “the *experience* of work is saturated with feeling.”⁷⁴ There is constantly a psychological dance⁷⁵ between the needs of the organization and the expectations of employees. The dance can be brutish or graceful. Research evidence for optimal performance overwhelmingly supports “grace,” psychologically, organizationally, ethically, and financially—in other words, the opposite of a disengaged workforce. Daniel Goleman writes, “Neuroscience has discovered that our brain’s very design makes it *sociable*, inexorably drawn into an intimate brain-to-brain linkup whenever we engage with another person.”⁷⁶ When an employee expresses feelings at variance with the organization’s norms or when the employee wants to express the feelings but instead suppresses them,

⁷² “Although the experience of work is saturated with emotion, research has generally neglected the impact of everyday emotions on organizational life. Further, organizational scholars and practitioners frequently appear to assume that emotionality is the antithesis of rationality and, thus, frequently hold a pejorative view of emotion.” Blake E. Ashforth and Ronald H. Humphrey, “Emotion in the Workplace: A Reappraisal,” *Human Relations* 48, no. 2 (1995): 97–125, esp. 97. The authors argue that “emotionality and rationality are interpenetrated, that emotions are an integral and inseparable part of organizational life and that emotions are often functional for the organization.”

⁷³ Rich Feller, “The Future of Work,” *Vocational Education Journal* 71, no. 4 (April 1996): 24–27. The author writes that when North America’s job machine was operating at peak performance in 1970, “85 percent of ‘blue collar’ workers took direction, did what they were told and were rewarded for leaving their brains at the door.”

⁷⁴ Ashforth and Humphrey, “Emotion in the Workplace,” 98.

⁷⁵ Peter Senge et al., *The Dance of Change: The Challenges of Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1999), 5. The authors discuss how to maintain the “dance of change” once set in motion and how to minimize that limit, impede, or stop growth. study notes: Peter Senge et al., “The Dance of Change: The Challenges of Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations,” November 2001, accessed March 29, 2016, https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.solonline.org/resource/collection/0D48369E-E380-4F77-87DF-F37B4BB3D44E/Dance_of_Change_Study_Notes_Nov01.pdf.

⁷⁶ Daniel Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006), 4, 5.

such experiences can leave the employee at risk of poor mental health and burnout.⁷⁷ The acknowledgment, acceptance, appreciation, and expression of healthy emotion matters.

The fact remains that our emotions and feelings, felt or expressed, are regularly on the line, with ourselves and with others. This is the case whether these interactions concern the individual alone or concern demands and challenges from others within the organization. What is realized now is that the emotional self constantly *informs* us, that is, our emotions provide emotional information on a regular basis about ourselves and how we are experiencing our environment.⁷⁸ Having access to emotional information on the job can help employees to sort through a myriad of situations.⁷⁹ On the contrary, insensitivity in the workplace often comes from emotionally unintelligent managers who create organizational toxicity—“the outcome of emotionally insensitive attitudes and actions of managers and of the practices of their companies”—and who “fail to take into account the emotional attachment people have to their contributions to work.”⁸⁰ The converse would be managers with high EI who are sensitive to the emotional tone of their employees and leverage such a culture for positive results.

Goleman writes that “a new yardstick” is now in place with EI being a “different way of being smart.”⁸¹ The business world is quickly evolving, and while cognitive and technical skills are obviously important, a broad range of socioemotional competencies are now increasingly demanded also. At the same time, there is recognition that a person’s

⁷⁷ Anat Rafaeli and Robert I. Sutton, “Expression of Emotion as Part of the Work Role,” *The Academy of Management Review* 12, no. 1 (January 1987): 33.

⁷⁸ Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 43.

⁷⁹ Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts, “How Social Is Emotional Intelligence?” 255.

⁸⁰ Peter J. Frost, *Toxic Emotions at Work and What You Can Do About Them* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2007), 13.

⁸¹ Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, 3, 4.

well-being is often shaped, positively and/or negatively, by their emotional experiences at work. Self-esteem, status and how one feels one can best be productive are heavily influenced by the socioemotional climate of the workplace. Obviously the personal side and the organizational demands are interrelated. Given that the workplace is such a crucible of emotionality, it is ironic that “the role emotions play in the work environment has been relatively neglected in both occupational research and practice, especially in relation to cognition and motivation.”⁸²

Still, EI has had, and is continuing to have, a significant influence upon workplace practices. “Companies are now scouting for people who are compassionate, reliable on the job, productive team workers, and care about both their coworkers and their job (i.e., emotionally intelligent individuals). It is readily apparent that EI has become an integral part of the discussion surrounding effective organizational recruiting and placement.”⁸³ At the same time there has been almost no research that would directly correlate EI factors and either disengagement generally or its symptoms.

2.4 EI and disengagement symptoms

This section examines the selected symptoms in light of EI theory and applications to suggest where the particular competencies identified as part of EI might be helpful in responding to disengagement’s negative effects. It is clear from the research that emotional

⁸² Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts, *Emotional Intelligence*, 468.

⁸³ Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts, “How Social Is Emotional Intelligence?” 253. As early as 1996, “68 percent of 150 information technology companies in the nation’s 1,000 largest companies stated that they believed ‘soft skills’ were more important now than they were five years ago [in 1991].” In Tom Dizarevic, “‘Soft Skills’ on Rise: IT Workers Can No Longer Rely on Technical Expertise,” *Computer Reseller News*, September 2, 1996, 111 [Based on a study by RHI Consulting, Robert Half Technology]. Cited in Stein and Book, *The EQ Edge*, 243, 332.

factors play a large part in worker disengagement. At the same time, EI theory and its measurement are more frequently being employed in workplace situations. We will examine in particular the emotional competencies that are part of Bar-On's model—the Emotional Quotient-*Inventory*TM (EQ-*i*TM)⁸⁴—and the extent to which it can be a response to disengagement. What is clear from all the research is that organizational toxicity is prevalent in many of today's workplaces. Key to the healing process is the restoration of trust, which “is one of the first certainties to disappear when someone gets hurt.”⁸⁵

According to Bar-On, EI “is a multifactorial array of interrelated emotional, personal, and social abilities that help us cope with daily demands.”⁸⁶ Of the fifteen EQ-*i*TM competencies Bar-On researched, ten competencies (Self-Regard, Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Stress Tolerance, Impulse Control, Reality Testing, Flexibility, Problem Solving, Empathy, and Interpersonal Relationship) made up the heart-and-soul of the EQ-*i*TM construct.⁸⁷ The additional 5 EQ-*i*TM factors (Optimism, Self-Actualization, Happiness, Independence, Social Responsibility) were seen as facilitators that supported the integrity and fluency of the ten factorial components. In other words, they were in the service of optimizing the praxis of EI more robustly and providing depth (Self-Actualization), balance (Independence), vision (Optimism), outreach (Social Responsibility) and a sense of contentment (happiness). In the newly researched 2.0 model, the factors are more or less the same but are grouped as composite scales more explicitly.

⁸⁴ Bar-On, *EQ-i*TM. See also Bar-On, “The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI),” 21.

⁸⁵ Frost, *Toxic Emotions at Work*, 211.

⁸⁶ Bar-On, “Emotional Intelligence and Self-Actualization,” 87.

⁸⁷ When a term is capitalized, it refers to a specific EQ-*i*TM competency, not just to the notion in general.

Happiness is now seen as the Well-Being indicator resulting from an individual's Self-Regard, Interpersonal Relationships, Optimism, and Self-Actualization scores (See Table 1).

Table 1: The EQ-i 2.0 Scales and What They Mean⁸⁸

5 EQ-i™ COMPOSITE AREAS AND 15 EQ-i™ COMPETENCIES / SKILLS	
SELF-PERCEPTION COMPOSITE	
Self-Regard* (see below)	Respecting oneself; confidence
Self-Actualization*	Pursuit of meaning and improvement
Emotional Self-Awareness	Understanding our emotions
SELF-EXPRESSION COMPOSITE	
Emotional Expression	Constructive expression of emotions
Assertiveness	Communicating feelings, beliefs; non-offensive
Independence	Self-directed; free from emotional dependency
INTERPERSONAL COMPOSITE	
Interpersonal Relationships*	Mutually satisfying relationships
Empathy	Understanding, appreciating how others feel
Social Responsibility	Social consciousness; helpful
DECISION MAKING COMPOSITE	
Problem Solving	Find solutions when emotions are involved
Reality Testing	Objectives; see things as they really are
Impulse Control	Resist or delay impulse to act
STRESS MANAGEMENT COMPOSITE	
Flexibility	Adapting emotions, thoughts and behaviours
Stress Tolerance	Coping with stressful situations
Optimism*	Positive attitude and outlook on life
Happiness*	The Happiness component is now seen as a barometer of emotional health and well-being, that is, in relation to and most often the result of one's scores on the following four subscales: * Self-Regard (see above) ... the degree one believes in oneself and lives according to their values; * Optimism (see above) ... given setbacks, the ability to 'bounce back' to one's level of optimism; * Interpersonal Relationships (see above) ... having well-developed relationships that buffer and work with life's daily demands; and * Self-Actualization (see above) ... a willingness to learn and grow on a journey aligned with personal values.

⁸⁸ New EQ-i™ Model 2.0. Adapted from Multi-Heath Systems Inc., ©2011. Based on the Bar-On EQ-i™ model by Reuven Bar-On, ©1997.

The key to emotional intelligence is Emotional Self-Awareness.⁸⁹ This forms the potential basis for healthy self-expression. An employee may have strength with many of the fifteen critical EQ competencies, but the conditions of disengagement can potentially destabilize some or many of them, depending on the person's overall Happiness score, which serves as a barometer for health and well-being. The Happiness score results from the person's scores on Self-Regard, Optimism, Interpersonal Relationships, and Self-Actualization. These EI factors are especially impacted by employee disengagement. In the case of presenteeism/absenteeism, for example, the employee is expected to take self-responsibility. When employees do not take self-responsibility, they cope either by being physically present but psychologically absent in the workplace (presenteeism) or they do not show up at all (absenteeism). It is easy to understand how various EQ-*i*TM competencies will be impacted, which in turn impacts an employee's overall well-being: employees lack the zest for work (low Optimism), hope in bettering themselves is destroyed (low Self-Actualization), low morale is evident throughout the workplace (low Happiness), employees will adapt their behaviour to minimal expectations (low Independence), and they will not go that extra mile to take initiative that is typical of engaged employees (low Social Responsibility). In other words, whether an employee acts inwardly through presenteeism or acts outwardly with absenteeism, they feel little need to look forward to being engaged in work since they are not content with themselves, others, and life in general (low Happiness).

⁸⁹ This notion of self-awareness will also be key in discussing Benedict's Rule and employees/managers.

Employees who cope in these ways will commonly lack the feeling of a sense of accomplishment and personal pride in their work and certainly a willingness to strive to live up to their potential in and through their work (low Self-Actualization). They also see little reason for how and why any effort should be made to create meaningful work (low Optimism). We saw in chapter 1 how Harter et al. described engagement as “the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work”⁹⁰—factors that are not present in presenteeism/absenteeism. Compounding this effect of low optimism is its added effect on social responsibility, which, as we saw above, facilitates one to identify with one’s social group and cooperate with others. Not only will employees not take initiative to further organizational goals, but they will see little reason or justification to move beyond a state of simply being physically present at work and giving minimum effort, or none at all when they can avoid it.

When we turn to the EQ-i™ factorial competencies mentioned above, two major ones that employees will likely lack or that are repressed in presenteeism/absenteeism are Assertiveness, which would provide them with the ability to constructively express their emotions, and effective Problem Solving, which would provide them with the ability to solve personal and interpersonal problems in the workplace, that is, to feel they could and would want to figure out and resolve issues with others to the satisfaction of all parties in a forum without reprisals. Low Stress Tolerance is a key competency that allows employees to manage their emotions and to be aware of how much of a workload they can tackle and

⁹⁰ James K. Harter, Frank L. Schmidt, and Theodore L. Hayes, “Business Unit-level Relationship Between Employee Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, and Business Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87, no. 2 (2002): 269.

what remedies are available to help them cope with overload. Because they are unable or unwilling to do so, the key Reality Testing component can also be deficient or missing. When Reality Testing is lacking, employees will not sort out “EI disasters” because the ability to be aware of and understand self-and-other emotions is deficient or missing. So is the key Interpersonal Relationships competency because there is no real desire to relate well with others, at least in their workplace context. In effect, the symptom speaks for itself: presenteeism says employees go through the motions and perform minimum work patterns; absenteeism in effect says employees simply refuse to engage their emotions in anything to do with their work.

Greater competency in Problem Solving would likewise enable employees to effectively deal with the personal and interpersonal problems in relation to what is “too much.” In the disengagement literature we saw that this can be magnified when employees do not feel psychologically safe anymore and cannot be themselves. In turn, they also feel unable to access the resources needed to do the work and end up being unable to solve the problems they need to address. The lack of work-life balance so often associated with disengagement would especially indicate the lack of this particular emotional competency. Similarly, burnout from imbalance signals that employees are not managing workload demands and personal obligations. Frost puts both viewpoints into a clear perspective: burnout is a “painful erosion of the spirit” in relation to an intolerable workload (organizational) as well as “*an insufficiently sustaining personal life*” (personal).⁹¹ Low Happiness creates an intolerable malaise among employees where even the simplest of

⁹¹ Frost, *Toxic Emotions at Work*, 130. Italics in original.

tasks seem difficult. Employees often begin not to feel good about themselves (low Self-Regard), make minimum effort (low Assertiveness), develop psychological rigidity (low Flexibility), show disinterest in solution-oriented outcomes (low Problem Solving), stay to themselves (low Empathy), and do not engage with others (low Interpersonal Relationships).

Declining innovation has also been identified as a pervasive symptom of disengagement. Frost perceptively writes, “When properly supported . . . employees will often contribute innovative solutions to problems, even when they lack the formal training to address them.”⁹² Such support produces effective problem-solving, mutually satisfying interpersonal work-relationships, motivated and self-actualized individuals and team members, and the satisfaction and happiness that come from doing good work. Flexibility is absolutely crucial to innovation because rigid bureaucracy and rules, coupled with an overall “organizational” mentality, can cripple innovative thinking.⁹³ The behaviour of leaders impacts significantly not only the emotional state and subsequent performance of subordinates⁹⁴ but also the innovation efforts of an organization.⁹⁵ Reality Testing is also essential so that an employee is able to place ideas and improvements in the context of actual needs, while Empathy will allow employees to share their ideas with others and benefit from their input so that these ideas may be developed and improved.

⁹² Ibid., 213.

⁹³ Riane Eisler and Alfonso Montuori, “The Human Side of Spirituality,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 49.

⁹⁴ Janet R. McColl-Kennedy and Ronald D. Answerson, “The Impact of Leadership Style and Emotions on Subordinate Performance,” *Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 545–559.

⁹⁵ William J. Burpitt and William J. Bigoness, “Leadership and Innovation Among Teams,” *Small Group Research* 28 (1997): 414–423.

Being able to go against the rules often allows for creative thinking to occur. This demands a significant role for the ability to think outside the box, or to utilize Optimism. In the face of today's workplace and global challenges, employees have to deal with adversity, a key benefit of healthy optimism. Employees must maintain positive attitudes at times in the face of trying circumstances. The self-fulfilling prophecy that believing something is possible is often missing with disengaged employees. A final and especially important competency may also well be lacking: Social Responsibility. This helps an employee think beyond narrow organizational goals to perceive the real needs of the wider world that require a response. While human resources literature has often seen declining innovation in different terms—for example, in terms of insufficient time and lack of attentiveness—it appears quite evident that emotional factors also play a large part as a necessary preamble.

2.5 Strengths from EI

2.5.1 Beyond IQ

The argument has long been touted that being smart often implies IQ smartness. What emotional intelligence research and practice has shown—over the past thirty years specifically—is that being emotionally “smart” is often more appropriate and a major factor in being successful, especially in today's workplace. It is fair to say that the bias in favour of *rationality* has often become the *only* benchmark for success in the workplace.⁹⁶ To go beyond this standard, not negate it, we must transcend the

⁹⁶ Ashforth and Humphrey, “Emotion in the Workplace,” 97–125.

“prevailing logical positivist paradigm of management theory and practice.”⁹⁷ The emotional, rather than the financial, legal, or geographical, is often now seen as providing the organizational glue that creates a viable human organization.⁹⁸ Emotions provide a different kind of awareness; emotions can and do *inform* us since they are also a knowing, a cognitive processing of neurological data

People often pay lip service to the notion that emotions are indeed real, and that they can work for us. We have grown up in a culture, however, that sends out the message that being cognitively smart is more desirable. Students quickly learn that getting good grades is the fast track to rewards. Indeed, some fast tracks are preferable to others, for example, medicine, engineering, biology, physics and chemistry, business, and IT—the “hard” disciplines. Such a hierarchy of what it means to be smart is systemic in global culture. Yet, in one EI study, cognitive ability accounted for just 6 percent of what is involved in being a successful human being.⁹⁹ Hiring may be based on the hard disciplines but getting fired often results from a lack of soft skills (EI).

We live in an emotional economy and, as neuroscience has demonstrated, emotions are catching on. The expression “smile and the world smiles with you” is literally true from a neuroscience perspective because mirror neurons “reflect back an action we observe in

⁹⁷ Kathryn Pavlovich and Patricia Doyle Corner, “Spiritual Organizations and Connectedness: The Living Nature Experience,” *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* 6, no. 3 (September 2009): 209.

⁹⁸ Anat Rafaeli, “What is an Organization? Who are the Members?” in *Creating Tomorrow’s Organizations: A Handbook for Future Research in Organizational Behavior*, ed. C. L. Cooper and S. E. Jackson (New York: Wiley, 1996), 121–139.

⁹⁹ Stein and Book, *The EQ Edge*, 255. Involving Planter’s Bank in Manila, the Philippines, the country’s fifth-largest financial institution in 1997, 100 front-line workers took the EQ-*i*™ as well as a standardized IQ test. Superiors also submitted independent work appraisals. “[T]he IQ results accounted for less than 1 percent of their work appraisal scores, but their EQ scores could be linked to 27 percent of their success.”

someone else, making us mimic that action or have the impulse to do so.”¹⁰⁰ Raw emotions, of course, need to be processed by our feeling-cognitive self as judgment calls. These are feeling choices we make that provide strategic direction to the way we choose to live and, as such, extravert our value system, that is, put it into action in our behaviour. We *become what we do*.

While it must be acknowledged that the study of emotions has been integral to the practice and research in psychotherapy, this was not traditionally the case regarding the workplace, even though we clearly “feel” our work.¹⁰¹ In the past there was a definite split comparable to the classic mind/body split between the organization and emotion: organizations were theorized as a mind/body duality with employees simply considered cognitive-rational entities that could be manipulated as any other piece of the organization. Irrational emotions, it was thought, would have no impact on goal-directed decision making.¹⁰² In a male-dominated corporate world, emotion has long been discounted view because it has been associated with the feminine, the personal, and irrationality.¹⁰³

However, from the early 1970s emotion was often more openly acknowledged by researchers in organizational studies, even if only under the guise of subjective states such as satisfaction¹⁰⁴ or commitment.¹⁰⁵ A particular moment in this process occurred in 1973

¹⁰⁰ Goleman, *Social Intelligence*, 41. See also 13–26, 43ff.

¹⁰¹ Anat Rafaeli and Monica Worline, “Individual Emotion in Work Organizations,” *Social Science Information* 40, no. 1 (2001): 96.

¹⁰² David Gibson, “In Search of Rationality,” in *Social Perspectives on Emotion*, vol. 5, ed. David Franks, W. Wentworth, and J. Ryan (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1997), 214–226, esp. 216.

¹⁰³ Dennis K. Mumby and Linda L. Putnam, “The Politics of Emotion: A Feminist Reading of Bounded Rationality,” *The Academy of Management Review* 17, no. 3 (July 1992): 465–486.

¹⁰⁴ See Edwin A. Locke, “The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction,” in *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, ed. Marvin D. Dunnette (Chicago, IL: Rand McNally, 1976), 1297–1351.

¹⁰⁵ Arnon E. Reichers, “A Review and Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment,” *Academy of Management Review* 10, no. 3 (1985): 465–476.

with the publication of McClelland's landmark paper on competence testing versus intelligence testing.¹⁰⁶ What has been of importance since the early 1990s has been ongoing research on workplace competence.¹⁰⁷ Rigorous studies demonstrate that competency is not simply correlated with IQ, but is perhaps even more closely with EQ. As a result, more and more attention has been devoted to the role that emotion plays in workplace and organizational success. "More refined emotions such as joy, love, or anger, as well as social feelings such as shame, guilt, compassion, or jealousy" began to emerge in the 1990s,¹⁰⁸ thanks in no small part to the overall value society began to place on the role of emotional intelligence in personal and work lives. There is the realization that *all* of our knowing is needed for healthy living and working: both the cognitive and affective selves. The latter strength is clearly essential in any approach to workplace disengagement.

2.5.2 Feeling architecture

Perhaps the most outstanding strength of the Emotional Quotient-*Inventory*TM as a measurement of EI is that when published in 1997 it provided an architecture of emotions for the very first time. What this author calls a *feeling architecture*—it fit an important

¹⁰⁶ David McClelland, "Testing for Competence Rather than Intelligence," *American Psychologist* 28, no. 1 (January 1973): 1–14.

¹⁰⁷ The best competence studies have used a methodology that distinguishes the specific capabilities of star performers versus those of average performers. See Lyle Spencer and Signe Spencer, *Competence at Work: Models for Superior Performance* (New York: Wiley, 1993). Cited in Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, *Primal Leadership*, 248, 290 (Appendix A, #1).

¹⁰⁸ The quote is from Rafaeli and Worline, "Individual Emotion in Work Organizations," 98. See also Ashforth and Humphrey, "Emotion in the Workplace," *Human Relations* 48, no. 2 (1995): 97–125; Peter Frost et al., "Narratives of Compassion in Organizations," in *Emotion in Organizations*, 2nd ed., ed. Stephen Fineman (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 25–46, accessed April 10, 2016, <http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/janedut/Compassion/Part%201%20Emot%20Text.pdf>.

aspect of today’s zeitgeist: scientific validity and reliability—was available to anyone who completed the EQ-*i*™ and studied their report.¹⁰⁹

When we begin to acknowledge that we do indeed have emotions, the next step is to *recognize* that emotions are interconnected. That is, no one is simply a one- or two-emotion person. A person utilizing one emotion—for example, a Pollyanna—will be very off-putting to others. In human situations, variety and developed competencies in a range of areas are truly essential. People who brag that they have strong assertiveness on their EQ Report, for example, but who also have empathy as their lowest competency may be experienced by other people as bullies. A stronger sense of empathy would tone down and shape assertiveness, because assertiveness that is unattached emotionally to empathy can show itself as interpersonal aggressiveness. By providing a structured picture of emotions with a clear interrelationship among them, Bar-On has enabled a wide range of applications, including the application of these structures to better understand particular symptoms of workplace disengagement.

2.5.3 Growability

Recognizing that our emotions are interconnected allows us to *understand* that we have *choices*, providing we come to know our emotions and develop a sense of fluency with them. It is clear that our emotions and feelings can be cultivated and developed. EI theory and practice supports, therefore, the “growability” of our emotions and feelings, especially up to the age of fifty, whereas “cognitive intelligence remains relatively stable

¹⁰⁹ The assessment consists of 133 simple items, tested at a grade 6 reading level, that can be completed in 30–40 minutes. It is set up and accessed through a Certified or Licensed EQ-*i*™ Coach, Counsellor, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist.

from about 17 years of age and onward.”¹¹⁰ We can, for example, become more empathic—one of the Bar-On EQ-i™ competencies—through understanding and developing listening skills, practicing these skills, and building on them. We can learn to be more emotionally independent—another of the Bar-On EQ-i™ competencies—through developing a deeper and robust sense of self-identity and understanding how addiction and codependency occur in relationships. The growability factor is incredibly important for today’s workplace, since it means in addition to the employee growing personally that training and development efforts can have measureable outcomes for an organization. Group reporting, which is an EQ option, and group development can be a particular help in this respect. While not everyone can be content working in customer service, which demands, for example, that an employee be fluent in key EI skills such as Empathy, Interpersonal Relationships, Reality Testing, Assertiveness, and Problem Solving, it is possible to ‘grow’ such skills in some employees. Research has shown that investment in EI training for business performance has consistently been rewarded, even financially, by such positive outcomes.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Bar-On, EQ-i™, 93 and 94.

¹¹¹ Compared to non-trained personnel, there was a 17 percent increase in production with EI-trained supervisors, in Jerry J. Porras and Brad Anderson, “Improving Managerial Effectiveness Through Modeling-Based Training,” *Organizational Dynamics* 9 (1981): 60–77; there was a 50 percent reduction in lost-time accidents and a US \$250,000 increase in productivity goals for another group of EI-trained supervisors, in A. Pesuric and William Byham, “The New Look in Behavior Modeling,” *Training and Development* (1996): 25–33; and there was a 25 percent increase in productivity for financial services advisors who received EI competence training, in Fredrick Luskin, Rick Aberman, and Arthur Delorenzo, Jr, *The Training of Emotional Competence in Financial Services Advisors* (Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations report, 2005), accessed April 10, 2016, http://www.eiconsortium.org/reports/emotional_competence_training_financial_advisors.html.

2.5.4 Purposefulness

Our emotions are purposeful: they are not created by life at random or have us simply at their mercy, as many would claim (“I couldn’t help it! He *made* me angry!”). Philosopher Robert C. Solomon, in describing his “existentialist perspective” on emotions, writes that “emotions are or at least can be *strategies*.”¹¹² He continues, “emotions are often habits, to some extent learned but also the product of practice and repetition. . . . Emotional habits are the product of pathways well worn.”¹¹³ The Bar-On architecture in effect recognizes this by seeing some competencies as outcomes. Knowing that emotions can be developed and that they can provide choices means that their strategic value can be applied to purposeful ends. In an organization, for example, one needs the ability to think with emotion and communicate the outcome of such thinking.¹¹⁴ As we have seen, they can be directed to very practical outcomes. Flexibility and other associated competencies can clearly lead to an increased possibility of innovation. More empathy can go a long way toward reducing organizational toxicity. We are not necessarily at the mercy of emotions. We can, in fact, learn to use them for guidance in problem-solving and decision making. Our emotions—powerful though they can be—can become our strategic allies to help us anticipate and purposefully build that future we envision.

¹¹² Solomon, *True to Our Feelings*, 20.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹¹⁴ Cary Cherniss and Daniel Goleman, eds., *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace: How to Select for, Measure, and Improve Emotional Intelligence in Individuals, Groups, and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 32–38.

2.6 Limitations with EI

EI by itself lacks a vision of the purpose of work. In its current application to the workplace, its focus is solely on productivity. While the application of EI to the workplace has made significant contributions to the well-being of employees, it has both inherent and potential limitations that must be addressed. A capitalistic economy with little concern for teleology (instrumentalism); that ignores connectedness (self-referencing) to embrace a wider sense of its context; that lacks ‘soul’ or ‘spirit’ because reality is seen as only quantitative with a measurement bias that can amount to “physics envy”¹¹⁵ (materialism); and that is potentially missing any formal moral compass (ethics) can obviously use EI for purposes that are not directed to worker well-being or the good of the workplace as such.

2.6.1 Instrumentalism

“We live in a world shaped by capitalism. . . . In one or another of its ever-changing forms, capitalism has been with us for three centuries, and it will be with us for a long time yet.”¹¹⁶ It is not for this thesis to argue the merits of one economic system over another. At the same time, it is important to analyze the effects of the system that is operative in much

¹¹⁵ “Physics envy is a hallmark of twentieth century psychology, especially in America. Psychologists engage in a Newtonian fantasy: One day, their faith says, a Newton will arise among psychologists and propound a rigorous theory of behaviour delivering psychology unto the promised land of science.” Thomas Leahey, *A History of Modern Psychology*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2001), 24. In Katherine Cheshire and David Pilgrim, *A Short Introduction to Clinical Psychology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), 33.

¹¹⁶ Jerry Z. Muller, *The Mind and the Market: Capitalism in Western Thought* (New York: Anchor Books (A Division of Random House, Inc.), 2002), xvii. A working definition of capitalism—which has not always lived up to the ideal (it is interesting to note that Toynbee saw the early monks as capitalists because the locus of control was an inner one. See Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (UK: Oxford University Press, 1947), 226)—that Muller proposes is that it is “a system in which the production and distribution of goods is entrusted primarily to the market mechanism, based on private ownership of property, and on exchange between legally free individuals.” (xvii)

of our world, especially when one effect appears to be workplace disengagement that robs value from work itself. Muller has observed, “What is striking is the ability of the capitalist market to co-opt and incorporate a remarkable range of preferences, trends, tastes, and identities.”¹¹⁷ It is not surprising that such a system, driven solely by market considerations, might sometimes co-opt EI for instrumentalist purposes.

Perhaps the issue at heart is that capitalism’s tendency to use the most efficient means to attain its ends has been too successful and has sometimes fostered unlimited self-interest without the attendant reflective measures that are needed for personal growth and institutional integrity.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, there is one ironic and counterintuitive EI moment in this discussion of the dynamics of the market. According to Georg Simmel (1858–1918), “capitalist competition creates inducements for empathy, and thus ‘achieves what usually only love can do: the divination of the innermost wishes of another, even before he himself [sic] becomes aware of them.’”¹¹⁹ But there is also a danger that “the process of the increasing abstraction of money would continue beyond Simmel’s time, of course . . . Through constant exposure to an abstract means of exchange, individuals under capitalism [then become] habituated to thinking about the world in a more abstract manner.”¹²⁰ It seems increasingly evident that such abstraction can divorce people from their feelings,

¹¹⁷ Muller, *The Mind and the Market*, 398. Muller goes on to say: “In Nazi Germany, Coca-Cola advertisements featured a storm trooper coming home thirsty from a rally and reaching for his Coke. Conversely, in the late 1960s, ‘Mao jackets’ were briefly a hot commodity in the west. From sports cars to spirituality, from dashikis to communion wafers, from skullcaps to pornography—where there is demand, the market creates supply.”

¹¹⁸ Muller writes that even education has “at least one eye of what it will bring in the marketplace,” *ibid.*, 399.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 401. Muller is quoting Georg Simmel, “Conflict,” in *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*. Trans. Kurt H. Wolff and Reinhard Bendix (New York: Free Press, 1955), 61–62.

¹²⁰ Muller, *The Mind and the Market*, 244.

from what is truly worthwhile. In effect, writes Muller, “This numerical, calculating style of thought spills over into more and moral personal [and workplace] decisions. Life becomes more cool and calculated, less impulsive and emotional.”¹²¹ Muller describes this dynamic, as the “intellect, concerned with the weighing of means, comes to play an ever greater role.”¹²² The danger is that such an overall instrumentalist viewpoint leads to EI being factored into the workplace as just another means of productivity, for example, deliberately including it solely for professional growth.

Pava states that a “commodity-based” organization that only focuses on production has neglected the necessary emphasis of its “meaning-based” requirements.¹²³ The corporation must be both instrumental *and* expressive. It not only produces goods and services (instrumental role) but also “serves as a location where human beings interpret life’s meanings” (expression role),¹²⁴ not only as a way to facilitate profits. Efforts which are aimed at increasing shareholder value *only* to the neglect of stakeholder concerns increase such a possibility. On the contrary, were it to combine both views—the instrumental *and* the expressive—EI would be facilitating legitimate return-on-investment as well as enhancing employee well-being and an improved corporate culture.

¹²¹ Ibid., 244, referencing Georg Simmel, translated as “Money in Modern Culture,” in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds., *Simmel on Culture* (London, 1997) 243–255, at 251–253.

¹²² Muller, *The Mind and the Market*, 245.

¹²³ Moses L. Pava, *The Search for Meaning in Organizations: Seven Practical Questions for Ethical Managers* (Westport, CN: Quorum Books, 1999), 5–18.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 5, 6.

2.6.2 Self-referencing

One of the concerns with EI is that it can be experienced as a pseudo-spirituality. Especially with the contemporary turn away from religion, people seek other avenues of self-affirmation.¹²⁵ Matthews et al. quote the popular television hostess Oprah Winfrey: “Never again will I do anything for anyone that I do not feel directly from my heart. I will not attend a meeting, make a phone-call, write a letter, sponsor or participate in any activity in which every fibre of my being does not resound yes. I will act with the intent to be true to myself.”¹²⁶ Their criticism addresses Winfrey’s self-referenced assumption of making an individual’s feelings the ultimate validation for behaviour. Certainly, EI can readily be seen as one form of spirituality among the mix of many available today—a quite unintended purpose—that can in the extreme produce attitudes of self-aggrandizement. While the EQ-i™ has features that can prevent this, such a danger remains.¹²⁷ The danger is compounded when loose definitions of spirituality are used, like that of Daniel Ang’s as “a project of lifelong integration in our deepest reality.”¹²⁸ Here there can readily be a confusion between the emotional and the spiritual, with the result that EI is taken for something it was never

¹²⁵ Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977). Vitz argues that “psychology has become a religion, in particular, a form of secular humanism based on worship of the self,” 9.

¹²⁶ Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts, *Emotional Intelligence*, 587, footnote #1 to chapter 1. For quote from Oprah Winfrey, see http://www.oprah.com/omagazine/200007/omag_200007_iknow.html.

¹²⁷ A criticism that Kristjánsson has regarding the EQ-i™ is that it is a self-report and that one can easily fool oneself. See Kristján Kristjánsson, “‘Emotional Intelligence’ in the Classroom? An Aristotelian Critique,” *Educational Theory* 56, no. 1 (February 2006): 42. However, one of the validity checks that Bar-On has included in the EQ-i™ is the Positive Impression (PI) scale—“a correction factor designed to adjust for response bias.” The PI scale measures to what extent a person is inflating their self-presentation. Such inflation could happen, for example, because the person wants to present a positive persona or is indicating that their tendency is to wear “rose-coloured glasses” in relationships. An elevated score “can also indicate self-deception, a lack of self-awareness, or problematic self-esteem, rather than an attempt to make a positive . . . impression.” In Bar-On, *EQ-i™*, 5, 46.

¹²⁸ Daniel Ang, “Unlearning Our Illusions: Merton’s Spiritual Revolution,” *Spirituality* 15, no. 82, (January–February 2009): 41.

intended to be. This danger is certainly compounded when EI is used in what is often a materialist context, such as the modern business world where “marketisation” is the “postmodern master narrative” that “has emerged as the ultimate pattern for integration.”¹²⁹

2.6.3 Scientific materialism: Loss of psyche

In 1972, in a critical review of behaviourism, Albert Kreinheder wrote: “In the academic world it [behaviourism] now holds perhaps the supreme position. And it moves ever onward into every part of life.”¹³⁰ In its supreme position it declares that a person, like a rat, has no soul, no special ideas, but like the rat is wholly dependent upon external contingencies. People are viewed externally because the behaviourists are “testy materialists” and rationalists who “would rather have a psychology that resembled physics than one that resembled the human being” for a person is “a datum, a thing.”¹³¹ What has been forgotten in behaviourism, says psychologist Russell Lockhart, is the inner life or psyche because the “patient's inner life assumes little or no systematic status.”¹³²

The consequence of such a vision of the human person was that consciousness came to be seen as confined within our bodies and free will existed only indirectly, for example, when our muscles physically moved things. Reality was physical, tangible, and measurable.

¹²⁹ Lieven Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition: An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context*, Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs 30 (Louvain: Peeters Press, 2003), 74.

¹³⁰ Albert Kreinheder, “How Like a Rat Is Man?” *Psychological Perspectives* 3, no. 1 (1972): 78.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 74, 75.

¹³² Russell A. Lockhart, *Words as Eggs: Psyche in Language and Clinic* (Dallas, TX: Spring Publications, Inc., 1983), 9. In the coming to birth of a new cosmology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, scientist Margaret Wertheism, in referencing Copernicus, Kepler, Descartes, Galileo, and Newton, writes, “What all of them fear was a universe stripped of spirit.” As well, “the tectonic plates of the Western psyche began to shift” and there was a “refocusing from spirit to matter.” A “full-blown reconfiguration of Western cosmological thinking” had begun. Margaret Wertheism, “Lost in Space: The Spiritual Crisis of Newtonian Cosmology,” in *Seeing Further: The Story of Science and the Royal Society*, ed. Bill Bryson (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2010), 45, 49, 48, 47.

Psychology often embraced this materialist vision of life and when the puzzle of “the electrochemical neural correlates”¹³³ is resolved, consciousness will be fully understood. Such determinism frequently influenced psychology with authors like behaviourist B.F. Skinner (1904–1990) denying free will and transforming psychology into the study of behaviour as measureable data.

Researchers like Salovey and Bar-On have clearly demonstrated that EQ, or the strengths and weaknesses of emotional competencies, can be measurable, and EQ applications have used the results of such breakthrough research. At the same time the theory and tools of emotional intelligence have been and will be challenged by those more quantitative in approach and those who come from a more behaviourist tradition because such applications may not be seen as hard or measureable science. At the same time, an inherent limitation of EI emerges when it is used within a tradition that makes totally *materialistic assumptions* about the human person, assumptions that may come from psychology, medicine, and neuroscience.¹³⁴ Such assumptions, for example, are often embedded in brain research, although this is clearly on the wane with contemporary neurological research by scientists like Damasio.¹³⁵ If emotional intelligence theory is considered scientific only if it is materialistic, quantifiable, and physically and neurologically evident in the brain, such a conclusion omits any connection, then, with the

¹³³ Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner, *Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 36.

¹³⁴ Mario Beauregard and Denyse O’Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist’s Case for the Existence of the Soul* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2007), esp. ix–xi, 3; Jeffrey Schwartz and Sharon Begley, *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* (Toronto: HarperCollins Canada/Harper Trade, 2003).

¹³⁵ Damasio, *Descartes’ Error*.

larger human psyche, and removes the ability for EI to become the foundation for “something more” in human life.

2.6.4 Need for ethics

Some further observations can be made concerning EI’s limitations. For example, in real-life social situations EI fails to address the Jungian *shadow side* because in and of itself it is not infused with moral or ethical values and clearly can be used in self-serving or manipulative ways. One could have a manager or employee scoring quite well on an EI assessment but using such personal emotional and social competencies and skills in manipulative ways where the end is seen to justify the means. A second concern is that a high EI type may exaggerate their emotions after experiencing a traumatic event. This could result in the expressing of negative emotions, for example, overreaction coming from high assertiveness and independence. We have already seen that organizations could use EI in ways that are fundamentally manipulative. A further caution is that high EI types could become overly sensitive when help is required—for example, showing too much empathy, and creating burnout and compassion fatigue for themselves—which is seen as “a physical, social, emotional and spiritual situation where people have really lost themselves and lost meaning,” says Devon Tayler, an Edmonton social worker and compassion fatigue consultant.¹³⁶ Scholars have also noted that EI cannot fully address—or at least see the need

¹³⁶ Maureen Flynn-Burhoe, “Compassion Fatigue: A Symptom of Caring,” *Sociological Imagination* (blog), September 12, 2009, (referencing Caitlin Crawshaw, 2009-09-12, “Caring Workers Pay Price: Compassion Fatigue Flies Under Radar,” *Edmonton Journal*, article unavailable), accessed March 12, 2016, <https://aflicktion.wordpress.com/2009/09/12/compassion-fatigue-a-symptom-of-caring/>.

for—such areas as social justice,¹³⁷ ecology,¹³⁸ and community,¹³⁹ which are clearly major workplace considerations. Clearly EI on its own cannot ensure a total balance in life, or ensure either responsible or ethical action. Basically EI, seen only as “tactical,”¹⁴⁰ is at best “amoral.”¹⁴¹ While it can be used as the basis for good ethical decision making (focusing, for example, on social responsibility), this may not always be the case.

Thus, while emotional intelligence aims to develop emotionally resonant leaders for superior performance in the workplace, there are also serious concerns about its moral agnosticism.¹⁴² Emotional intelligence, in promoting efficiency and effectiveness for managerial decision-making, can do so “at the expense of rigorous moral reasoning”?¹⁴³ One of the original researchers in emotional intelligence stated that his team had not engaged philosophers in a collaborative way as “we should”¹⁴⁴ have. Another research

¹³⁷ P. Jonas, “Understanding the Emotional Aspects of Social Justice Leadership: Helping to Prepare Future School Leaders,” *Human Resource Management International Digest* 19, no. 2 (2011): 24–26; Laurie A. Rudman, “Social Justice in Our Minds, Homes, and Society: The Nature, Causes, and Consequences of Implicit Bias,” *Social Justice Research* 17, no. 2 (June 2004): 136; Carolyn Saarni, “Emotional Competence: A Developmental Perspective,” in *The Handbook of Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Development, Assessment, and Application at Home, School, and in the Workplace*, ed. Reuven Bar-On and James D. A. Parker (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (A Wiley Imprint), 2000), 72; Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts, *Emotional Intelligence: Science & Myth*, 9; Quy Nguyen Huy, “Emotional Capability, Emotional Intelligence, and Radical Change,” *The Academy of Management Review* 24, no. 2 (April 1999): 335.

¹³⁸ Daniel Goleman, *Ecological Intelligence: The Hidden Impacts of What We Buy* (New York: Crown Business, 2010); Peter Salovey, “Foreword,” in John Pellitteri et al, eds., *Emotionally Intelligent School Counseling* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), xviii.

¹³⁹ Anne Abraham, “The Need for the Integration of Emotional Intelligence Skills in Business Education,” *The Business Renaissance Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (2006): 65–79; Candace M. Wannamaker. “A Study of the Need for Emotional Intelligence in University Judicial Officers” (PhD diss., Drexel University, November 16, 2005), 9, 10, 40, accessed April 12, 2016, https://idea.library.drexel.edu/islandora/object/idea%3A902/datastream/OBJ/download/A_study_of_the_need_for_emotional_intelligence_in_university_judicial_officers.pdf.

¹⁴⁰ Bar-On, EQ-i™, 1. See also 19 on Social Responsibility.

¹⁴¹ Kristján Kristjánsson, “‘Emotional Intelligence’ in the Classroom?” 54.

¹⁴² Declan C. Murphy and Emily E. Pyle, “How Catholic Spirituality Can Strengthen Emotional Competence in Managerial Situations,” 4, 12, accessed April 21, 2009, <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/conferences/becu/Finalpapers/PYLE-MURPHYPaperFINA.pdf>.

¹⁴³ Murphy and Pyle state that in an e-mail with EI psychologist John Mayer, Mayer said that his team had not engaged with philosophers on the ethical issues “although we should,” *ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

doubts whether EI, at this stage of its development, would have the “moral ballast” in similar fashion and strength as Aristotle’s “emotional virtue.”¹⁴⁵ While the very positive contributions that EI can make both in personal and workplace terms are clear, such reservations need also to be taken into account.

2.6.5 A bridge to the spiritual

The Christian spiritual tradition, especially the classic Catholic spiritual tradition, has frequently linked the corporeal with the spiritual. In the simplest expression, this is the understanding of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) that “grace builds on nature.”¹⁴⁶ Francis de Sales remarked, “There is no nature so good that it cannot be perverted to evil by vicious habits; there is none so perverse that it cannot, first by God’s grace and secondly, by our own labor and care, be brought under control and overcome.”¹⁴⁷ From the viewpoint of such a longstanding tradition, classical spirituality can certainly recognize the newly developed theories of emotional intelligence as being a help to the better development of the spiritual person.

At the same time, people who have been closely identified with EI theory and measurement would readily accept that something more can be needed. Bar-On himself believes that at least two sub-factors in his EQ-*i*™ architecture point to something that is more than just the emotional. He writes:

Additionally, an ‘expansion’ of Self-Actualization combined with the Interpersonal component of my model (i.e., actualizing oneself as well as contributing to one’s

¹⁴⁵ Kristján Kristjánsson, “‘Emotional Intelligence’ in the Classroom?” 43.

¹⁴⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, “gratia natura non tollit, sed perficit naturam,” *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 1, a. 8, resp. 2.

¹⁴⁷ St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 79.

social unit/s in the process—or ‘sharing’ one’s actualization with others or setting and achieving as well as trying to make those goals inter-personal) can be seen as a budding spirituality, a forerunner of spirituality and/or an EI factor that possibly impacts spirituality.¹⁴⁸

When speaking about social responsibility, he continues, “I did attempt to embed the moral compass in my conceptualization of this construct with the Social Responsibility factor (which is not prominent, if existent at all, in other EI models). For example, one’s skillfulness with emotional intelligence could be used for evil ends (if someone was low in Social Responsibility), which is exactly why I included this factor.” He goes on to say that “the emotionally and socially intelligent individual, by definition, is one who is socially responsible, cooperative and contributing to his/her social group with which he/she identifies and feels part of.” If, in fact—and this author believes it to be so—Self-Actualization and Social Responsibility hint at and act as bridges to the spiritual, then the problem of disengagement in the workplace can be considered as needing a spiritual response, since at least two EI elements are either ignored, violated, or willingly jeopardized: not seeing work as a way to become more of and an expression of oneself (Self-Actualization) and being consciously destructive regarding the work of others when one is *totally* disengaged (Social Responsibility).

Other authors are making similar, and even broader, connections between EI theory and spirituality. Murphy and Pyle dealt with the EI competencies of people in managerial positions. It is their position that traditional virtues, in particular those associated with the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, can complement and strengthen particular emotional

¹⁴⁸ E-mail correspondence, March 22, 2010.

competencies, such as empathy, when one expresses emotions appropriately “to accomplish the good”¹⁴⁹ in order to ensure that behaviour is directed to the right ends.¹⁵⁰

A similar but still broader finding has been arrived at by Harmer and Fallon, two psychologists. They assert that “the integration of emotional intelligence based principles and activities within organizations provide [sic] employees with additional skills to better understand and integrate their personal spiritual experience into their work.”¹⁵¹ They believe that EI and spirituality may be hierarchically linked,¹⁵² since spirituality builds on human potential, EI clearly forms one aspect of this correlation, and making such a linkage would be a “natural progression.”¹⁵³ While they affirm a hierarchy, they suggest that EI and spiritual growth can both occur concurrently and consequently.¹⁵⁴ Overall, they clearly re/cognize that EI development is “a useful precursor for providing employees with the inner capacity to better identify, interpret and pursue the more complex aspect of spiritual experience.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Murphy and Pyle, “How Catholic Spirituality Can Strengthen Emotional Competence in Managerial Situations,” 16.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵¹ Richard Harmer and Barry Fallon, “The Role of Emotional Intelligence in the Pursuit of a Spiritual Life: Implications for Individuals in Organizations,” *Organisations & People: Emotional Intelligence Special Edition* 14, no. 2 (2007): 1, accessed March 12, 2016, <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/27593347/role-emotional-intelligence-pursuit-spiritual-life-implications-individuals-organisations>.

¹⁵² Ibid., 77.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 6. Hoppe has proposed four attributes that spiritual leaders will likely consider in their quest for spiritual leadership: that of the “inner journey” or the need for leaders to look deep within themselves as they set “the compass for the search for truth and meaning as individuals and as leaders”; that of “meaning and significance” or the need to pull back from the busyness of everyday “to try to make sense of the world and their place in it, even if the questions go unanswered”; that of “wholeness” or the need to “develop philosophies and ethics that promote both individual and common good”; and that of “connectedness,” or the need to see the larger reality that “includes an understanding of our place in the world and beyond.” In Sherry L. Hoppe, “Spirituality and Leadership,” *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, no. 104 (2005): 85–87.

¹⁵⁴ Harmer and Fallon, “The Role of Emotional Intelligence,” 6.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 78.

2.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has looked at emotional intelligence, and in particular the EQ-i™ model with its structured emotional competencies, a model already widely in use within business and other organizations. What became clear from consideration of selected disengagement symptoms—presenteeism/absenteeism and declining innovation—was that these symptoms, as the literature describes them, clearly involve major emotional factors. It seems evident that in situations of disengagement, the application of EI theory can only be helpful, especially since EI can be developed both individually and in groups. At the same time, it is suggested that a major statistical survey designed to study the correlation between EI and disengagement, using such a research measurement as the EQ-i™, might provide an impetus which could convince organizational leadership of EI's usefulness in this respect.

Clearly EI has its limitations, although it must be noted that most of these are not inherent in EI itself but come from its improper use. And EI certainly has its strengths also. These have been observed and tested now over a considerable period. One of these strengths that is especially important when it comes to disengagement is the fact that the understanding of one's emotional competencies can be purposeful, that is, it can guide and change ways of acting. But perhaps the greatest strength of EI comes from its overall character as a tool for self- understanding which can help people better appreciate what is already meaningful for them in their lives, and thus serves as a means of developing human potential.

Perhaps it could be said that inasmuch as EI deals with self-awareness and with what is meaningful, it even offers a glimpse into the transcendence of the human person. It is this characteristic that leads to understanding EI's applicability in the workplace, that it

will lead spiritual leaders to consider attributes such as the importance of the inner journey, meaning and significance, wholeness, and connectedness. As helpful as EI may be in dealing with such issues as disengagement, it is clear from EI's own limitations, and the obvious current yearning for a workplace spirituality, that "something more" is needed. Spirituality constellates those yearnings in individuals that seek meaning and a sense of purposeful living. The next chapter will provide an overview of the current research on workplace spirituality to see whether there is research already in place to address the problem of workplace disengagement.

Chapter Three

Workplace Spirituality and the Symptoms of Disengagement

You're not your job.
You're not how much money you have in the bank.
You're not the car you drive.
You're not the contents of your wallet.¹

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 raised a problem of enormous importance to the global workplace: employee disengagement. It examined two particular symptoms of the problem (absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation) as being worthy of deeper study because they relate to the personal and organizational areas of workplace life, because they appear to be widespread, and because they seem to be open to an emotional and spiritual response. In the literature there is agreement that the problem has an emotional core. Chapter 2 surveyed the theory of emotional intelligence (EI) using the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory™ model. It found that while EI was essential to understand the architecture of emotions, and that its application to the workplace was important, something more was still needed. The current chapter will examine the growth and development of workplace spirituality, its self-understanding (including its various descriptions and its relationship to religion), and the notion of spiritual intelligence in a workplace context. The chapter will then be in a position to assess any potential contributions the literature may be

¹ Chuck Palahniuk, *Fight Club* (New York: WW Norton, 1995), 143.

able to provide, contributions that may be helpful in dealing with the particular factors of workplace disengagement that have been chosen for further study.

Interest in spirituality has grown at a phenomenal rate. The business world has not been immune, as two prominent writers in its field have recognized: “The search for something more has resulted in a question for postmaterialist assets, of which spirituality may be one manifestation.”² Indeed the influence within the business and organizational communities of workplace spirituality has been rapidly increasing. This impact has been all the more impressive in that workplace spirituality has had to surmount both a challenge to its legitimacy from more traditional management types,³ and a certain lack of clarity in defining itself.⁴

What is particularly interesting, while somewhat inexplicable, is that the rapidly growing body of literature on workplace spirituality has yet to address the overall problem of disengagement in any direct way.⁵ Nevertheless, this literature has seriously taken up the themes of organizational integrity, personal well-being, and social responsibility as

² Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz, “Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 3.

³ Riane Eisler and Alfonso Montuori, “The Human Side of Spirituality,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 46–56.

⁴ Workplace spirituality “hasn’t been able to build on itself, making emergent theory from the research difficult to develop and theory difficult to test.” See L. Tischler, J. Biberman, and Y. Altman, “A Model for Researching About Spirituality in Organizations,” *Business Renaissance Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (2007): 23.

⁵ In the 2003 edition to the *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality*, there are only *three* mentions of the word “disengagement,” the first one speaking of “civic disengagement,” the second involving disengagement as the result of the consumer culture and the third use on how forgiveness is “negatively correlated with denial and behavioral disengagement” because forgiveness is about not giving up. The third mention obviously can compound the resolving of employee disengagement because both denial and behavioural disengagement could block any inner movement towards forgiveness in the workplace. In *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 69, 157, 412.

necessary features of workplace life. Clearly such factors can provide a helpful foundation for the further examination of the three areas of toxicity, coping mechanisms, and declining innovation that will be considered.

What will ultimately be helpful in this regard will be to see the application of emotional and spiritual principles in the concrete setting of a particular, but representative, North American workplace that would be fairly typical of many public and private sector environments. The thesis will examine in chapter 5 a detailed case study of a mid-size Canadian company, including six smaller units, that reflects a common workplace situation. The particular company is in fact made no less typical of contemporary situations by having recently suffered considerable downsizing. Here, the problem of disengagement could be observed in an actual setting and the application of the principles drawn from the research undertaken in this thesis could be examined in a concrete situation.

3.2 Workplace spirituality

Jeffrey Pfeffer has identified four fundamental qualities that employees seek in their work: “(1) interesting work that permits them to learn, develop, and have a sense of competence and mastery, (2) meaningful work that provides some feeling of purpose, (3) a sense of connection and positive social relations with their coworkers, and (4) the ability to live an integrated life, so that one’s work role and other roles are not inherently in conflict and so that a person’s work role does not conflict with his or her essential nature and who

the person is as a human being.”⁶ In a very real way, the effort to promote these has become the foundation of a whole new body of literature on workplace spirituality.

3.2.1 The genesis of research on workplace spirituality

Obviously there were stirrings in the 1960s and 1970s that contributed to a societal paradigm shift. Attention became focussed on the Vietnam War, the peace movement, a “generation gap,” student unrest, a general reaction against authority and a mistrust of institutions, civil rights struggles of various kinds, and an emergent feminist movement. Symbolically much of this found expression in the three days of peace and music at the 1969 Woodstock Festival, an event that also reflected the turn inward and toward reflection that was seen as a particular feature of Eastern philosophies. Influential as well was Kuhn’s 1970 book on paradigms.⁷ In succeeding decades a host of new ideas emerged, seemingly from nowhere. According to Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, these presented “a frustrating circumstance for objectivists” who would want instead a discernible set of rules.⁸ All these factors form at least a remote backdrop to the development of the workplace spirituality phenomena.

This general climate of social change had a more immediate influence on the workplace in three ways. Social, economic, and business turmoil prompted the search for spiritual solutions to economic tensions. Both unstable work environments and distrust in

⁶ Jeffrey Pfeffer, “Business and the Spirit: Management Practices That Sustain Value,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 32.

⁷ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

⁸ Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, “Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality,” 4.

organizations stimulated a turning inward.⁹ A second factor was the profound changes that have affected business globally. In particular, a growing social consciousness had spillover effects in the crafting of corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts and practices.¹⁰ Finally, there was the new interest in Eastern philosophies. Included in this was the increasing awareness of diversity, which clearly affected a corporate world whose workers increasingly came from a variety of backgrounds. Concurrently, an effort to integrate Eastern and Western management practices began in earnest, which obviously meant that the roots of both had to be considered.

At the same time workplace spirituality also had its own roots in business and management literature. Four “precursors” from the field of organizational behaviour (OB) have been seen as particularly important to its genesis.¹¹ The first was the notion of *transformational leadership*, which could enable an employee to move beyond and transcend self-interest for the sake of the team, the organization, or the larger polity.¹² Another was *organizational citizenship behaviour*, a concept that promoted other-benefiting, nonreward-seeking, and extra-role behaviours in the workplace.¹³ In addition, the concept of *perceived organizational support* by employees reflected what was called

⁹ Ibid., 3, 4.

¹⁰ Craig Neal, “The Conscious Business Culture,” *Creative Nursing* 4 (1998): 5–7.

¹¹ Badrinarayan Shankar Pawar, “Some of the Recent Organizational Behavior Concepts as Precursors to Workplace Spirituality,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 88 (2009): 251–253. We have italicized the words “transcend” and “other” and “extra-role” in the first and second precursors to reflect early tacit notions of spirituality.

¹² Bernard M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectation*, (New York: Free Press, 1985), 20.

¹³ Dennis W. Organ, *Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Good Soldier Syndrome* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988).

the norm of reciprocity,¹⁴ a belief that an employee who felt supported would be of benefit to the employer.¹⁵ Finally, the organizational behaviour principle of *perceived procedural justice* encouraged clarity and fairness toward employees in organizational policies and procedures when decisions were made.¹⁶ These factors began to cultivate rudimentary elements such as transcendence and connectedness that came to be foundational for notions of workplace spirituality.

From the 1980s various books and articles concerning organizational sciences and management theory acknowledged the change that was underway. One of the most influential books was by Margaret Wheatley, who wrote, “Leadership is always dependent on the context, but the context is established by the relationships we value.”¹⁷ This was a breakthrough in business thinking: that relationships and context were critically essential in the doing of business, a clear shift from the focus only on the bottom line. Conger and Kanungo had already recognized that there was a discernable movement to move away, albeit gradually, from a fear-based context and way of doing business in a radically different manner, that is, to one of trust and empowerment.¹⁸ Conger soon followed this up with a pivotal book about the need for spirit at work.¹⁹

¹⁴ Alvin W. Gouldner, “The Norm of Reciprocity,” *American Sociological Review* 25 (1960): 161–178; Stephen Armeli et al., “Perceived Organizational Support and Police Performance: The Moderating Influence of Socioemotional Needs,” *The Journal of Applied Psychology* 83, no. 2 (1998): 288–297.

¹⁵ Pawar, “Some of the Recent Organizational Behavior Concepts,” 252–253.

¹⁶ Jerald Greenberg, “Organizational Justice: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow,” *Journal of Management* 16, no. 2 (1990): 399–432.

¹⁷ Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Learning About Organization from an Orderly Universe* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1992), 144–45.

¹⁸ Jay A. Conger and Rabindra N. Kanungo, “The Empowerment Process: Integrating Theory and Practice,” *The Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 3 (1988): 471–482.

¹⁹ Jay A. Conger, *Spirit at Work: Discovering the Spirituality in Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994).

What was emerging was a new paradigm for business.²⁰ Simplicity was giving way to a business context that was becoming much more complex, ideas of transformational versus the more traditional transactional model of leadership were gaining ground, and the formerly closed world of business now had to face a wider world which forced it to become more transparent and adaptable. Different images or metaphors of various business models and their strengths and limitations were presented by Gareth Morgan in a 1997 book.²¹ What Hock called the “Chaordic Age” also hit the business world.²² New strategies, new viewpoints, and new ways to do “impossible thinking” were also offered to business readers.²³ By 1999, whole issues of the noted *Journal of Organizational Change Management* were devoted entirely to research articles on workplace spirituality with such titles as “Spiritual perspectives on individual, organizational and societal transformation,” “Spirituality for managers: context and critique,” and “Spirituality at work: an overview.”²⁴ Building on Alvin Toffler’s “three waves,”²⁵ Wagner-Marsh and Conley even described a new organizational “fourth wave,” that of the spiritually-based firm.²⁶ The growth of

²⁰ Michael Ray, “The Emerging New Paradigm in Business,” in *New Traditions in Business*, ed. J. Renesch (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1992), 25–38.

²¹ For an overview of different images of organizations, including the organization as organism, see Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1997), 32–71. In his descriptions of business metaphors, there are organizations as machines, as organisms, as brains, as cultures, as political systems, as psychic prisons, as flux and transformation, and as instruments of domination.

²² Dee Hock, *Birth of the Chaordic Age* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1999), 201. He had shown how it could be possible to survive and thrive in business as a result of his success at setting up VISA International.

²³ Yoram (Jerry) Wind, Colin Crook, and Colin Gunther, *The Power of Impossible Thinking: Transform the Business of Your Life and the Life of Your Business* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School Publishing, 2005).

²⁴ *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Special Issue: Spirituality in Organizations: Parts I and II, Volume 12, Issues 3 and 4, 1999.

²⁵ Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, 1970).

²⁶ Fraya Wagner-Marsh and James Conley, “The Fourth Wave: The Spiritually-based Firm,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 12, no. 4 (1999): 292–302.

workplace spirituality was becoming exponential.²⁷ There were only nine refereed articles published on the notions of work and spirit between 1981 and 1990, but there were 117 between 1991 and 2000;²⁸ the next decade certainly experienced a far greater increase.

What emerged from this paradigm shift was the infiltration of this new spirituality literature into the way of doing business. Marques points out that a new bottom line was being defined,²⁹ one that was beginning to incorporate a higher vision of life that embraced a sense of meaning, interconnectedness, a simpler way to live and work, and a need for employees themselves to feel included.³⁰ The awareness of spirituality in the workplace and its demands began to influence and shape the mindsets not only of employees but also of managers, even in spite of the awkwardness of the word *spirituality*.³¹ By 2009 Bosch was able to write that contemporary management theory had become aware of “a new trajectory in management and workplace theoretical perspectives” and that workplace spirituality was becoming part of management praxis.³² It was no longer sidelined for it could now “throw considerable light and understanding on managerial issues and the process of leadership, as well as on learning processes in the workplace and organization.”³³ Underscoring a

²⁷ Mathew L. Sheep, “Nailing Down Gossamer: A Valid Measure of the Person-Organization Fit of Workplace Spirituality,” *Academy of Management Proceedings* (2004), B6.

²⁸ Jerry Biberman, “How Workplace Spirituality Becomes Mainstreamed in a Scholarly Organization,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 425.

²⁹ Joan Marques, “Socializing a Capitalistic World: Redefining the Bottom Line,” *Journal of American Academy of Business* 7, no. 1 (2005): 283–287.

³⁰ Joan Marques, Satinder Dhiman, and Richard King, *Spirituality in the Workplace: What It Is, Why It Matters, How to Make It Work for You* (Fawnskin, CA: Personhood Press, 2007), 7.

³¹ Carole L. Jurkiewicz, “Spirituality by any Other Name . . . Would Probably Sound Sweeter,” *Ethics Today* 4 (2002): 1–2.

³² Luidolf Bosch, “The Inevitable Role of Spirituality in the Workplace,” *Business Intelligence Journal* 2, no. 1, (January, 2009): 140, accessed April 19, 2016, <http://www.saycocorporativo.com/saycouk/bij/journal/Vol2No1/article5.pdf>.

³³ *Ibid.*

movement in management theory was a general shift from a strictly materialist way of business to one that could begin include spiritual values.³⁴

3.2.2 Its orientations

With the advent of a literature of workplace spirituality, significant trends began to emerge. Workplace spirituality gave rise to definite expectations regarding the nature and quality of workplace practices. In 1995 *Business Week* would write: “Get used to it. Spirituality is creeping into the office . . . And companies are turning inward in search of a ‘soul’ as a way to foster creativity and to motivate leaders.”³⁵

3.2.2.1 Interiority

Perhaps the most significant orientation of the literature was that of *interiority*. More and more, an awareness of the importance of the inner life of employees began to take hold; a “stirring of soul in the workplace” began to take place.³⁶ Already in 1909, Weber had warned about workers becoming “nothing but those little cogs, little men clinging to little jobs and striving toward bigger ones.” He sought ways to oppose the machinery that would “keep a portion of mankind free from this parceling-out of the soul.”³⁷ The new literature was responding in various ways. Authors noted the power of

³⁴ Craig Neal, “A Conscious Change in the Workplace,” *The Journal for Quality and Participation* 22, no. 2 (March/April, 1999): 27 ff.

³⁵ Michele Galen with Karen West, “Companies Hit the Road Less Traveled,” *Business Week*, June 5, 1995, accessed March 10, 2011, <http://www.businessweek.com/archives/1995/b342781.arc.htm>.

³⁶ Alan Briskin, *The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace* (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers Inc., 1998).

³⁷ From a speech Max Weber gave to the *Verein für Socialpolitik* (Association for Social Policy) in 1909. In J. P. Mayer, *Max Weber and German Politics* (London: Faber & Faber, 1944), 125–131, esp. 127–128.

management in this respect, that a manager's behaviour "dramatically shapes . . . employees' inner work lives."³⁸ For their part, employees began demanding that their inner lives be taken into account in their workplace experience; their self-worth hinged on such a critical matter.³⁹ Employees were seen to want to make a difference:⁴⁰ mission and values become incredibly significant.⁴¹ Cowan remarks that one's "spirit seeks a workplace" to express itself.⁴²

Interiority was reflected in influential books that became linked with a workplace spirituality such as *Care of the Soul*, which stated: "work is an important component of the spiritual life. . . . in this sense, all work is a vocation, a calling from a place that is the source of meaning and identity, the roots of which lie beyond human intention and interpretation."⁴³ *A Monk in the World* similarly spoke of the secular world of work: "Just as time orders and measures our life's activities, work orders our life's purpose and the resources we require. Our work contains an innate dignity when it is truly connected to us—when our creativity finds concrete expression in what we do, how we shape our environment, in the fruits of our efforts."⁴⁴ Building on such literature, workplace spirituality spoke to the need for interiority to which work itself could contribute. In 2000

³⁸ Teresa M. Amabile and Steven J. Kramer, "Inner Work Life: Understanding the Subtext of Business Performance," *Harvard Business Review* 85, no. 5 (May 2007): 74, 76.

³⁹ L. N. DiPadova, "The Paradox of Spiritual Management: Cultivating Individual and Community Leadership in the Dilbert Age," *Journal of Management Systems* 10 (1998): 31–46.

⁴⁰ See also Joel Bakan, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power* (London: Constable, 2005).

⁴¹ Pfeffer, "Business and the Spirit," 33.

⁴² John Cowan, *Common Table: Reflections and Meditations on Community and Spirituality in the Workplace* (New York: HarperCollins Business, 1993), 59.

⁴³ Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 181.

⁴⁴ Wayne Teasdale, *A Monk in the World: Cultivating a Spiritual Life* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2002), 97–98.

Ashmos and Duchon described spirituality as “recognition of an inner life that is nourished by meaningful work which takes place in the context of community.”⁴⁵ In even broader terms, this was a recognition that employees now more often saw themselves as whole persons with “physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs.”⁴⁶ Organizationally, respect for the whole person now meant recognizing interiority.⁴⁷ Overall the literature has increasingly recognized that employees have both an *inner* life as well as an *outer* life—not only in general terms, but in the workplace as well—and that the very notion of work needs to recognize both.

In 2003 Professor Barry Posner, Dean of the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University, wrote that leaders had a responsibility to reflect on the following:

Where leaders must go to find their voice is within. You have to explore your inner territory. You have to take a journey into those places in your heart and soul where you hide your treasures, and then let them out to play. You have to examine them on your own and then bring them out to the forefront. We take a few steps in this direction when we ask and answer for ourselves such questions as: What do I *stand* for? What do I *believe* in? What am I *discontent* about? What makes me *weep* and *wail*? What makes me *jump for joy*? What *keeps me awake* at night? What’s *grabbed hold* and won’t let go? Just what is it that I really *care about*?⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Donde P. Ashmos and Dennis Duchon, “Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure,” *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9, no. 2 (June 2000): 134.

⁴⁶ Gordon E. Dehler and M. Ann Welsh, “The Experience of Work: Spirituality and the New Workplace,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 109.

⁴⁷ Emma Bell and Scott Taylor, “A Rumor Of Angels: Researching Spirituality and Work Organizations,” in *Academy of Management Proceedings: 2001*, A2, Birmingham, AL.

⁴⁸ Barry Z. Posner, “Foreword,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), xii.

3.2.2.2 Spiritual leadership

The above are questions that a second trend, *spiritual leadership*, needs to confront as a result of the “turn to the inner.” The demand for a spiritual style of leadership has steadily increased. “Leaders are beginning to understand more fully the full impact that their behavior has on others, on organizations and the sustainability of the planet,”⁴⁹ wrote one author. Key early books on spiritual leadership were numerous, and had titles such as *Inner Excellence: Spiritual Principles of Life-Driven Business*,⁵⁰ *Leadership and the New Science*,⁵¹ *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest*,⁵² and *Work and the Human Spirit*.⁵³

In 1995 business leader Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest Airlines, had commented on the kind of people he would look for: “The focus is on the intangibles, the spiritual qualities, not an individual’s educational experience.”⁵⁴ By 1998 Vaill had clearly recognized that organizations had to begin paying attention to the “spiritual condition”⁵⁵ of their leaders, or what he described as “the feeling individuals have about the fundamental meaning of who they are, what they are doing, the contributions they are making.”⁵⁶ Earlier research was replete with studies on physical, mental, and emotional concerns, but Moxley’s publication on spirit and leadership had a real impact, since Moxley attempted to

⁴⁹ Sue Howard, “A Spiritual Perspective on Learning in the Workplace,” *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 17, no. 3 (2002): 236.

⁵⁰ Carol Osborn, *Inner Excellence: Spiritual Principles of Life-Driven Business* (New York: New World Library, 1992).

⁵¹ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*.

⁵² Peter Block, *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1993).

⁵³ John Scherer and Larry Shook, *Work and the Human Spirit* (Spokane, WA: Scherer, 1993).

⁵⁴ Michael A. Verespej, “Flying His Own Course,” *Industry Week*, November 20, 1995, 22.

⁵⁵ Peter Vaill, *Spirited Leading and Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 218.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

set out in detail the positive effects that spiritual leadership could produce in an organization.⁵⁷

Fry would publish another pivotal article in *The Leadership Quarterly* in 2003 that further defined spiritual leadership. He wrote that the “purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across the strategic, empowered team, and individual levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity.”⁵⁸ Workplace spirituality increasingly began to speak also of business and organizational leadership in *servant* terms. Spiritually speaking, such service was also called “inspired service” or “*selfless action, inspired and actuated by love and the intent to contribute to the highest good of all, with no immediate concern for personal gain.*”⁵⁹

In such a concept, spiritual leadership became more than just another “style” of leadership. It was about bringing out the best in employees, allowing them to become all that they could be.⁶⁰ Perhaps the most commonly embodied model of such leadership was that of Robert Greenleaf’s *servant leader*,⁶¹ a leadership that is “grounded in the notion that the best leadership is provided not by those who seek leadership roles, but rather by those

⁵⁷ Russ S. Moxley, *Leadership and Spirit: Breathing New Vitality and Energy into Individuals and Organizations* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

⁵⁸ Louis W. Fry, “Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (2003): 693. Also, Sharda S. Nandram and Margot Esther Borden, eds. *Spirituality and Business: Exploring Possibilities for a New Management Paradigm* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2009).

⁵⁹ Krista Kurth, “Spiritually Renewing Ourselves at Work,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 448. Italics in the text.

⁶⁰ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Encouraging the Heart: A Leader’s Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

⁶¹ Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977); *Servant, Leader, and Follower* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978). See also Larry C. Spears, ed., *Insights on Leadership: Service, Stewardship, Spirit, and Servant Leadership* (New York: Wiley, 1998).

with a compelling vision or goal and a desire to serve others first.”⁶² Its overriding requirement is to listen to and understand “the needs, values, desires, and issues” of the individual worker.⁶³ What was seen to make servant leadership so effective was that its very vulnerability “signals to workers that the servant leaders are honest, trustworthy, and willing to admit they are not perfect or all-knowing” and that this “helps create a work climate based on inclusivity and partnership, which are key facets of a spiritually rich workplace.”⁶⁴ The reasons for this new emphasis on spiritual leadership are summarized by Fry:

Spiritual leadership theory can be viewed in part as a response to the call for a more holistic leadership that helps to integrate the four fundamental arenas that define the essence of human existence in the workplace—the body (physical), mind (logical/rational thought), heart (emotions; feelings), and spirit. Such a call that perhaps requires a new organizational paradigm that no longer views the study of the humanistic, spiritual, and natural as separate and independent domains; a worldview that regards workplace spirituality in general and spiritual leadership in particular as vital components for building theory and testing propositions concerning purposeful humanistic systems and their effectiveness.⁶⁵

3.2.2.3 Community

In addition to the factors of interiority and spiritual leadership, a third major orientation within workplace spirituality can be discerned. Because employees are spending

⁶² Robert W. Kolodinsky, Michael G. Bowen, and Gerald R. Ferris, “Political Skill, Servant Leadership, and Workplace Spirituality in the Creation of Effective Work Environments,” in Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Eds.), *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003, 132.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 132, 133.

⁶⁵ Fry, “Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership,” 722. Fry writes in the abstract: “The purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across the strategic, empowered team, and individual levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity,” 693. There is an issue with his instrumentalist thinking but nearly fifteen years ago, this was breakthrough thinking.

more and more time at work, often under trying circumstances, these same employees are also seeking *community*. Connectedness and community in the workplace have become essential, especially now that other traditional support systems have given way. Social identity through community at work has become increasingly important. Wheatley underscores the perceived need for this when she remarks, “We are refocusing on the deep longings we have for community, meaning, dignity, and love in our organizational lives. We are beginning to look at the strong emotions that are part of being human, rather than segmenting ourselves (love is for home, discipline is for work) or believing that we can confine workers into narrow roles, as though they were in cogs in the machinery of production.”⁶⁶

The traditional viewpoint of the “corporation as a community”⁶⁷ was purely a pragmatic one. Employees were seen as banded together for company purposes; interests, skills, and strategy were coordinated to deliver a product or service. While this is not necessarily a mechanistic view, it sometimes became so. The new notion of a *corporation in community* goes far beyond this earlier concept. Ashmos and Duchon clearly include community as an integral part of their vision of workplace spirituality. They state, “Spirituality is also about people experiencing a sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace community.”⁶⁸ Connecting these qualities to interiority, Parboteeah and Cullen set out the necessary employment conditions that will make community at work

⁶⁶ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 12.

⁶⁷ Rogene A. Buchholz and Sandra B. Rosenthan, “Spirituality, Consumption, and Business,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 117–118.

⁶⁸ Ashmos and Duchon, “Spirituality at Work,” 135.

possible: employees need to feel valued; they must experience a sense of personal growth; they must be able to see themselves as connected with others; they need to know they belong; and they must feel a connection between their inner selves and others' inner selves.⁶⁹ Thus, says Vaill, the “fellowship aspect” of workplace spirituality—in other words, community—has found its time, because it “helps both leaders and members to confront the loneliness, disappointment, and pain of the modern organization and to decide that these conditions should not continue to rot the spirit of the organization and the people in it.”⁷⁰

3.2.2.4 Meaning

Significant also as a constant trend in the literature is the need to find *meaning* in work. Employees want to know that what they do has a sense of purpose, that it contributes in a meaningful way to themselves personally, to the organization, and to the larger society. Ashmos and Duchon point out how workplace spirituality is about “finding and expressing meaning and purpose in relation to others and to something bigger than oneself.”⁷¹ Such a view differs from the traditional view of job satisfaction. Finding meaning in one’s work “connotes a higher level of communication with work.”⁷² In other words, this “goes beyond the physical and intellectual experience of work to connote what is important, joyful, energizing, and spiritual about work [as well as] beyond the human relations view of work

⁶⁹ K. Praveen Parboteeah and John B. Cullen, “Ethical Climates and Spirituality,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*. 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 100–101.

⁷⁰ Vaill, *Spirited Leading and Learning*, 227.

⁷¹ Ashmos and Duchon, “Spirituality at Work,” 135.

⁷² Parboteeah and Cullen, “Ethical Climates and Spirituality,” 140.

as being merely interesting, intellectual, and satisfying.”⁷³ Finding meaning includes the sense that one’s work is allowing one to become fully human, not only contributing to an inner sense of self but also to the good of others. As one article summarized it, the “quest for purpose in work is not a new idea. However, the spirituality view is that work is not just meant to be interesting or challenging, but that it is about things such as searching for deeper meaning and purpose, living one’s dream, expressing one’s inner life needs by seeking meaningful work, and contributing to others.”⁷⁴ Such ideas have had real impact; even *HR Magazine* in 1998 could write: “Yesterday’s business motto was ‘lean and mean.’ Today’s business motto is ‘lean and meaningful.’”⁷⁵

One important contribution to this conversation was described by Pava, who discussed the importance of the meaning-based organization versus the traditional commodity-based organization. For him, a commodity-based view saw the corporation as “an instrumental tool to satisfy established wants and preferences.”⁷⁶ The meaning-based view acknowledges the function of production but insists that an organization’s “primary characteristic is that it serves as a location where human beings interpret life’s meanings.” A meaning-based view produces a “something more” that needs to be integral to the life of an organization.⁷⁷ Pava acknowledges the dialectic: employees create material goods and services but at the same time organizations create and shape employees. For him, both are necessary, but human expression trumps production. In the past, employees were identified

⁷³ Ibid., 101.

⁷⁴ John Milliman, Andrew J. Czaplewski, and Jeffery Ferguson, “Workplace Spirituality and Employee Work Attitudes: An Exploratory Empirical Assessment,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 16, no. 4 (2003): 429.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Ashmos and Duchon, “Spirituality at Work,” 134.

⁷⁶ Pava, *The Search for Meaning in Organizations*, 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 12.

as *labour*, and then as *human resources*. Pava insists instead that they should be seen holistically as *human beings* with spiritual needs and aspirations, employees who create and express meaning in their work. Despite his recognition of both factors, Pava notes that a meaning-based view ought to be the starting-point, since in his opinion, “The commodity-based view simply has no vocabulary in which to communicate and express meaning.”⁷⁸ Today the concept of the meaning-based organization has come to have considerable prominence.

3.2.2.5 Establishing a values framework

A final orientation that has emerged in the literature is that of *establishing a values framework* for work. A spirituality of the workplace is seen to include and foster an ethical vision. Here, Barrett’s work on establishing values has received merited acknowledgement.⁷⁹ Barrett claims that Maslow’s highest level of his hierarchy, self-actualization, “can be expanded to include four distinct stages in the development of spiritual awareness: transformation, cohesion, inclusion, and unity based on the seven levels of consciousness” with each level corresponding “to an existential life theme that is inherent in the human condition.”⁸⁰ *Transformation* for him is balancing self-interest with collective interest; *cohesion* necessitates bringing meaning to existence; *inclusion* he sees

⁷⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁹ Ron Cacioppe and Mark Edwards, “Seeking the Holy Grail of Organisational Development: A Synthesis of Integral Theory, Spiral Dynamics, Corporate Transformation and Action Inquiry,” *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 26, no. 2 (2005): 86–105.

⁸⁰ Richard Barrett, “Culture and Consciousness: Measuring Spirituality in the Workplace by Mapping Values,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 255.

as making a difference in people's lives; and *unity* as serving humanity and the planet.⁸¹

Barrett has applied these stages to business in detail. In organizational terms, he has found that two conditions are necessary to achieve long-term success: first, a strong value alignment between the employees' personal values, the organization's current cultural values, and desired organizational cultural values; and, second, that the principal ten values of the organization include the four stages of spiritual values. Barrett's writings have been particularly effective because he supplies concrete case examples of companies that both have their values aligned, and show profitability.

More recently, Spitzack has examined the moral argument for an integrated model of humanistic and responsible management, a topic that has been researched for many years. He references management writer Ulrich, who makes the case for humanistic management based on "the life conduciveness and legitimacy of corporate conduct."⁸² Spitzack would acknowledge also that stakeholders have increasingly demanded a wider accountability, for example, concern for the environment. People like Buchholz and Rosenthal have likewise expressed that wider concern in this way: "The production of goods and services is primarily for the flourish of human existence, and only in this context does their production gain its concrete rationale. . . . Ultimately, the corporation is responsible for the welfare of the community, because the multiple relations in which the corporation is embedded are at once the multiple relations inherent in community life."⁸³ At

⁸¹ Barrett, "Culture and Consciousness," 256–257.

⁸² Heiko Spitzack, "An Integrated Model of Humanistic Management," *Journal of Business Ethics* 99 (2011): 53. Also, Peter Ulrich, *Integrative Economic Ethics: Foundations of a Civilized Market Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁸³ Buchholz and Rosenthan, "Spirituality, Consumption, and Business," 118.

the same time, Spitzack will acknowledge that many executives lack the necessary responsiveness—what he calls their “inability to respond”⁸⁴—whether this is a matter of environmental concerns or human rights issues. But it is becoming increasingly clear that the matter of organizational values is not only important to external stakeholders, but perhaps even more so to those who work within the organization.

Argandoña, following up on some earlier authors, including Margaret Wheatley, has written that “the firm cannot omit such an important aspect of human life as love.”⁸⁵ His argument for including love is three-fold: typical *intrinsic* motivations, such as job satisfaction; the *extrinsic* exchange between two people, such as the impact the exchange will have on the other; and also a third motive, a *transcendent* one, which is “the desire to bring about a certain outcome not in the agent who acts, but in the other.”⁸⁶ An employee “who acts in this way is acting in the field of moral virtues such as prudence, truthfulness, justice—and love.”⁸⁷ Argandoña affirms that “need-love” (or desire-love, for example, remuneration, recognition, social relations, help, and advice—in other words, justice) is not enough. For him, “gift-love” (for example, affection and companionship), is also needed, at least in its rudimentary forms. This is love that wishes the good of the other person *for that person’s sake*. This “is the love that arises when a person acts out of transcendent motivation, i.e. when he takes into account the needs (including the moral needs) of the

⁸⁴ Spitzack, “An Integrated Model of Humanistic Management,” 53. See also Andrew J. Hoffman, “Reconciling Professional and Personal Value Systems: The Spiritually Motivated Manager as Organizational Entrepreneur,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 155–170.

⁸⁵ Antonio Argandoña, “Beyond Contracts: Love in Firms,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 99 (2011): 78.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

other.”⁸⁸ Argandoña’s conclusion, therefore, is “that people need to develop some form of love in their relations within any human organization if the organization is to be effective, attractive to people, and capable of being sustainable or consistent over time.”⁸⁹ To what extent such approaches as Argandoña’s will be accepted remains to be seen, but it is clear that a values framework in more general terms is now seen as an important business need. Cashman notes that it is also an important employee need that one reconciles worker self-interest with economic interest.⁹⁰

The literature of workplace spirituality also includes three cautionary notes. The first is the fact that companies demand measurement, a correlation between workplace spirituality and organizational performance. While there has been feedback, for example, via corporate culture research and policy analysis,⁹¹ greater precision is called for in correlating workplace spirituality and organizational performance. “Researchers must effectively demonstrate the utility of spirituality in the workplace by framing it as a question of value-added: how does spirituality help us to undertake work processes more effectively. Such utility can be shown on two bases: practical and ethical.”⁹² Sheep likewise argues that both quantitative measurement and nurturing the whole personality, a “both-

⁸⁸ Ibid., 81.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 82.

⁹⁰ Kevin Cashman, *Leadership from the Inside Out: Becoming a Leader for Life*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), 37. In highlighting the recognition of this business need, Cashman writes that in a decade his book “has been integrated into the curricula at more than 100 universities” because it promoted enduring principles as authenticity, courage and purpose that are not just “*nice to have*” but because they are deeply woven into the fabric of life, that produce tangible, measurable cause-and-effect relationships,” 15 (*italics in original*).

⁹¹ For feedback via corporate culture research, see Morris Altman, *Worker Satisfaction and Economic Performance* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2001). For feedback via policy analysis, see James M. Buchanan, *Ethics and Economic Progress* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

⁹² Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz, “The Science of Workplace Spirituality,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 9.

and” approach, is a viable possibility that respects qualitative methods: “The need for quantitative measurement in no way diminishes the value of qualitative methods . . . Where quantitative testing of a model can never fully describe a phenomenon, qualitative methods can generate richer data and meaning to generate theory.”⁹³ That being said, it is widely recognized that a necessary degree of confidence that can come only from scientific measurement is essential for business acceptance of any new ideas.

A second caveat of the literature is the danger that spirituality could be used simply as a corporate tool for the corporation’s own ends, especially in terms of control and instrumentality.⁹⁴ Even talking about its utility raises such an issue. The issue of boundaries is very important here. Sheep remarks that workplace spirituality research “gives an ethical pause that such seemingly benign interest can mask more self-interested managerial motivations for exploitation of workplace spirituality as a powerful tool for normative control.”⁹⁵ He gets concerned when he realizes that managerial discourse has begun using words like *passion*, *soul*, and *charisma* that can be interpreted as management’s interest in controlling the inner lives of employees through new means for the same old ends: profits. Such a motivation sometimes shows up, according to Sheep, in the personal growth programs now available that promote self-actualization for employees or help them to develop to their full potential. Such exploitation of an employee’s emotional side may also emerge in the control that groups hold over their members, perhaps in the pressure to have

⁹³ Mathew L. Sheep, “Nurturing the Whole Person: The Ethics of Workplace Spirituality in a Society of Organizations,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 66 (2006): 369.

⁹⁴ Marjolein Lips-Wiersma, Kathy Lund Dean, and Charles J. Fornaciari, “Theorizing the Dark Side of the Workplace Spirituality Movement,” *Journal of Management Inquiry* 18, no. 4 (December 2009): 288–300.

⁹⁵ Sheep, “Nurturing the Whole Person,” 365, also 366.

the “appropriate” employee.⁹⁶ There are clearly two contrasting views at work here: one that business can increase performance and productivity through the use of workplace spirituality (a utility viewpoint),⁹⁷ the other being the service viewpoint that “treating people as complete human beings” is simply “the right thing to do.”⁹⁸

A final cautionary note is the danger of spirituality coming across as proselytism, a danger widely recognized in the literature.⁹⁹ Imposing any particular spiritual expression in the workplace can fail to respect individual employees and can lead to exclusion and alienation. The widespread recognition of the possible negative effects of such action, however, is probably most often an effective corrective. Ashmos and Duchon state flatly that spirituality is not “about getting people to accept a specific belief system.”¹⁰⁰ Proselytism may occur because of a sense of permissiveness which by some employees “may be seen . . . as a license . . . and what was once an idiosyncratic, voluntary activity may gain normative momentum and seem mandatory.”¹⁰¹ With workplace spirituality becoming mainstream, managers and administrators need to be cautious with any interest group that they avoid “the temptation to proselytize or dictate dogma.”¹⁰² Mirvis has

⁹⁶ Mats Alvesson and Hugh Willmott, “Identity Regulation as Organizational Control: Producing the Appropriate Individual,” *Journal of Management Studies* 39, no. 6 (2002): 619–644.

⁹⁷ Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, “Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality,” 10–11.

⁹⁸ Dehler and Welsh, “The Experience of Work,” 66.

⁹⁹ Elmer H. Burack, “Spirituality in the Workplace,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 12, no. 4 (1999): 280–291; Gerald F. Cavanagh, “Spirituality for Managers: Context and Critique,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 12, no. 3 (1999): 186–199; Sukumarakurup Krishnakumar and Christopher P. Neck, “The ‘What,’ ‘Why’ and ‘How’ of Spirituality in the Workplace,” *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 17, no. 3 (2002): 153–164.

¹⁰⁰ Ashmos and Duchon, “Spirituality at Work,” 135.

¹⁰¹ Blake E. Ashforth and Michael G. Pratt, “Institutionalized Spirituality: An Oxymoron?” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 49.

¹⁰² Jerry Biberman, “How Workplace Spirituality Becomes Mainstream in a Scholarly Organization,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 425.

actually noted, however, certain companies that effectively proselytize using particular religious or spiritual doctrines.¹⁰³ While respect for diversity has become a much stronger principle, the possibility still exists that certain groups of cliques could dominate a spiritual agenda and thus foster instead divisiveness and alienation.

3.3 Particular questions

While it has these clear overriding orientations discussed above, including some quite common cautions, the literature of workplace spirituality has also dealt extensively with certain particular matters. Three of these issues will be dealt with here: the definition of workplace spirituality; its relationship to religiosity; and the question of spiritual intelligence.

3.3.1 Attempting to define workplace spirituality

Defining workplace spirituality has become a matter of considerable debate and discussion. Some have seen it as even defying language,¹⁰⁴ or have said that it “is like capturing an angel—it’s ethereal and beautiful, but perplexing.”¹⁰⁵ The question of definition is further complicated by controversies about methodology, the very validity of workplace spirituality, and how to measure it.¹⁰⁶ Markow and Klende point out that more

¹⁰³ Philip H. Mirvis, “‘Soul Work’ in Organizations,” *Organization Science* 7 (1997): 193–206.

¹⁰⁴ William Kahnweiler and Fred L. Otte, “In Search of the Soul of HRD,” *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 8 (1997): 174.

¹⁰⁵ Jennifer J. Laabs, “Balancing Spirituality and Work,” *Personnel Journal* 74, no. 9 (1995): 63.

¹⁰⁶ Val M. Kinjerski and Berna J. Skrypnek, “Defining Spirit at Work: Finding Common Ground,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 17, no. 1 (2004): 26–42.

than seventy definitions of workplace spirituality exist.¹⁰⁷ In a representative sampling, there appear the following recurrent concepts: ultimacy and ultimate concerns; yearnings for transcendence; experience of the sacred; connectedness; the life principle; the innate capacity that strives to go beyond egocentricity; and the animating force that gives purpose, direction, and meaning to one's life.¹⁰⁸

Cowan has done some detailed analysis of such descriptions and definitions. Keeping multidimensionality of spirituality in mind, he has found that among the variables, such as "ultimate concerns," "the nonmaterial," "awareness of transcendent dimensions," "responses to deep truth," "devotion to high powers," "ultimate truth," "recognition to higher powers," "in touch with a larger, deeper, richer whole," and a "transcendent energy source," there is a pattern with two overall understandings: (1) "a relationship (for example, commitment, belonging, and connectedness)," and (2) "a transcendence toward a nonmaterial referent or source (for example, higher power, potential, or force)."¹⁰⁹

Perhaps the most widely respected scholars in this area are Giacalone and Jurkiewicz.¹¹⁰ According to them workplace spirituality can be conceived in two very different ways. One approach is "the study of spirituality's passive, static, and trait-like qualities, similar to possessions (like beliefs) or actions (as in rituals) that change little if at

¹⁰⁷ Frank Markow and Karin Klenke, "The Effects of Personal Meaning and Calling on Organizational Commitment: An Empirical Investigation of Spiritual Leadership," *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 13, no. 1 (2005): 8–27.

¹⁰⁸ Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz, eds., *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*. 2nd ed. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 7.

¹⁰⁹ David A. Cowan, "Translating Spiritual Intelligence into Leadership Competencies," *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* 2, no. 1 (2005): 5–6.

¹¹⁰ Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, eds., *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., 12.

all over time” (the substantive view);¹¹¹ the other approach conceives spirituality “as dynamic, a set of skills, resources, capacities, or abilities that are evolving and developing and interact with the external environment” (the functional viewpoint).¹¹² The authors maintain that if workplace spirituality is to have practical and ethical utility, there ought to be a coming together of these perspectives. Their own proposed definition of workplace spirituality is “*a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy.*”¹¹³ While such a definition may well be capable of expansion or qualification, it does incorporate the elements of connectedness and transcendence regarded by Cowan as key, and it has become something of a working standard in the literature.

Nonetheless, while appreciating the desire to standardize reflected by authors such as Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, and the numerous other efforts to categorize workplace spirituality, this thesis will adopt a broader and more descriptive approach, one that is similar to Cowan’s. Here it would seem important for the approach to recognize three factors—the *intra*-personal, the *inter*-personal, and the *trans*-personal—and at the same time to reflect the relationship among them. It will also recognize that a *micro* notion of workplace spirituality is unduly restrictive. A *macro* concept that can be applied to the workplace as to other areas of life will recognize instead the integrity of any personal

¹¹¹ Ibid., 13.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid. Italics in the original. In the second edition of their *Handbook*, the authors have changed their definition to read: “*aspects of the workplace, either in the individual, the group, or the organization, that promote individual feelings of satisfaction through transcendence.*” Their reasons for this are not set out, and since this is very recent, there has been no opportunity for critical analysis.

spirituality. At the same time, the description adopted here will attempt to reflect both the substantive and the functional and to draw from the best of the concepts found in the literature.

Using these criteria, it is submitted that for the purposes of the present study spirituality can best be described as *a deeply personal outlook that shapes one's thoughts and actions according to what one perceives as ultimately important (transcendent) and that connects the individual to other persons and to the broader universe, enabling one to live in a meaningful and purposeful way.*¹¹⁴

“Deeply personal” here means that there is an *inner depth* of passion and assurance to the conviction that the person holds (intra-personal dimension). “Outlook” embraces the *extensiveness* of this inner conviction. “Ultimately important” refers to what is *beyond* the person, the sense of *transcendence* necessary to the spiritual pursuit (trans-personal dimension). The need for *connectedness* is reflected in the phrase “that connects the individual to other persons and to the broader universe,” while recognizing that connectedness involves both inter-personal and trans-personal dimensions. “Meaningful and purposeful way” is intended to emphasize that spirituality should be an effective or functional principle in real life, not simply a theoretical one. This expression conveys both a sense of inner worth and at the same time an agenda for living.

This description of spirituality, although a general one, is no less fitting for the workplace. First, it describes the sense of inner self-confidence and personal enthusiasm an employee will bring to their work. It also recognizes the extent to which relationships and

¹¹⁴ “For Christian spirituality, the unique perspective brought to the table is that of Jesus Christ.” In Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 87.

community are vital to workplace life, and the display of caring for others and for the wider world that is essential in any workplace situation. Finally, it acknowledges the significance of creating meaning and purpose in work itself. Although this description tries to be as specific as possible, it is sufficiently broad to cover, as is appropriate, both the religious and non-religious spiritual traditions that exist among workplace participants.

3.3.2 Spirituality and religiosity

A contemporary response by many today is that “I’m not religious but I am spiritual.” For some authors such a statement reflects a western sense of individualism, a “privatized religion without a community dimension . . . sometimes indistinguishable from self-centredness or selfishness.”¹¹⁵ But as was seen, modern management has become increasingly materialistic over the decades.¹¹⁶ While Hicks would argue for a role for religion in the workplace, a “respectful pluralism,”¹¹⁷ most researchers take great pains to separate the two.¹¹⁸ Giacalone and Jurkiewicz write: “spiritual concerns are not synonymous with religious ones; . . . viewing workplace spirituality through the lens of

¹¹⁵ Owen O’Sullivan, OFM Cap., “‘I’m Not Religious, I’m Spiritual’,” *Spirituality* 16, no. 93 (November–December 2010): 3

¹¹⁶ Pranav Desai, “Spiritual Psychology: A Way to Effective Management,” *African Journal of Marketing Management* 1, no. 7 (October 2009): 165.

¹¹⁷ Douglas A. Hicks, “Respectful Pluralism at Work,” in *Religion and the Workplace: Pluralism, Spirituality, Leadership* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 159–183.

¹¹⁸ Peter C. Hill and Gary S. Smith, “Coming to Terms with Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 171–184; Richard D. White, Jr., “Drawing the Line: Religion and Spirituality in the Workplace,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010). Schneiders has written that there is “a religiously de-contextualized spirituality as a substitute for or alternative to spirituality as the intense living of a faith tradition” and that this “de-racination of spiritual attitudes and practices from living traditions has led to an increasing commercialization of spirituality as a consumer commodity.” In Sandra M. Schneiders, “Spirituality and the God Question,” *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 246.

religious tradition is divisive.” They go on to state: “The disciplines of management and administration are premised on a positivist scientific model and admonish against embracing nonverifiable approaches to understanding workplace behavior.”¹¹⁹ Hill and Smith adopt a somewhat different approach and describe a tension between “dwelling” and “seeking” orientations to spirituality. Based on Wuthrow’s work,¹²⁰ a spirituality of dwelling emphasizes “*habitation*” (that seeks security, distinctions, community, and interrelatedness) and a spirituality of seeking emphasizes “*negotiation*” (that seeks quest, greater freedom, and restraints from community expectations).¹²¹ There are costs and benefits to each orientation. When it comes to looking at work, dwellers would see work as part of the fulfillment of the human person; seekers would understand work in how it affects the inner life. Dwellers will emphasize more the conscientiousness of doing good work; seekers emphasize freedom, individuality, and the inherent spirituality of it all. As Hill and Smith point out, there are employees who are both religious *and* spiritual;¹²² for them perhaps the framework of dweller and seeker will help to understand the increasing complexity of modern workplace spirituality. White, too, attempts some balance. While workplace spirituality is to be encouraged, he says there are definite limitations. “Values can, and do, collide.”¹²³ Still, like other aspects of diversity, spirituality (and White includes

¹¹⁹ Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, “Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality,” 5–6. This probably reflects the fact that in the business world contemporary secularization theory holds that “modern scientific truth supersedes all previous belief systems,” in Hill and Smith, “Coming to Terms with Spirituality,” 172.

¹²⁰ Robert Wuthrow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 4–5. Italics in the original.

¹²¹ Hill and Smith, “Coming to Terms with Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace,” 176.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 182.

¹²³ White, Jr., “Drawing the Line: Religion and Spirituality in the Workplace,” 185.

here religious expression) “should not merely be tolerated but, when appropriate, celebrated.”

3.3.3 Spiritual intelligence and the workplace

A distinct concept that is frequently examined is that of *spiritual intelligence* (SI). At the same time, it is worth noting that the idea of a separate spiritual intelligence, and even the notion of multiple intelligences, is not universally accepted. It is however increasingly being used as a foundation concept to introduce spiritual values to workplace situations. Without accepting or, for that matter, rejecting the notion, it is important to have some understanding of SI and how its practitioners apply it to the workplace.

Though there can be mixed responses to the theory of multiple intelligences, this theory has its many defenders because the idea of intelligence as traditionally understood is often considered too narrow. In 1983 Howard Gardner of Harvard University proposed seven independent types of intelligences—each linked to their own neurological substrate—that provided a perspective on intelligence as more than mental intelligence or IQ. For example, one could be word smart (linguistic intelligence), number/reasoning smart (logical-mathematical intelligence), picture smart (spatial intelligence), body smart (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence), music smart (musical intelligence), people smart (interpersonal intelligence), and self-smart (intrapersonal intelligence).¹²⁴ Gardner later added one other intelligence (naturalist) and he raised the possibility of a spiritual one. He subsequently

¹²⁴ Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic, 1983). The different kinds of “smarts” are itemized by Thomas Armstrong, “Multiple Intelligences,” *American Institute for Learning and Human Development*, accessed April 1, 2016, http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.php.

rejected spiritual intelligence because of quantification difficulty and named the ninth as existential intelligence.¹²⁵ But the conversation on SI had already begun.

Vaughan gives the following understanding of spiritual intelligence: that it is “more than individual mental ability,” that it “appears to connect the personal to the transpersonal and the self to spirit,” that it “goes beyond conventional development,” and that it “implies awareness of our relationship to the transcendent, to each other, to the earth and all beings.”¹²⁶ Her description is very much in line with Cowan’s understanding of workplace spirituality in that it includes the two dimensions of transcendence and connectedness. Vaughan points out that while it is not identical to cognitive, emotional, and moral development, it is related because “left unresolved, emotional or ethical issues certainly inhibit spiritual development.”¹²⁷ Thus, for her, self-awareness plays a significant role in spiritual maturity.

Tony Buzan, a noted author who was “hardened,” as he says, “on the supremacy of logic and the weakness of spirituality and emotion, while becoming a confirmed atheist,”¹²⁸ eventually discovered “multiple intelligences,” including spiritual intelligence.¹²⁹ For him, SI is formed from a combination of graces: getting the big picture, exploring one’s values, knowing one’s life vision and purpose, compassion to understand self and others, giving and receiving or charity and gratitude, embracing the power of laughter, developing

¹²⁵ Howard Gardner, “A Case Against Spiritual Intelligence,” *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 10 (2000): 27–34. See also Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

¹²⁶ Frances Vaughan, “What is Spiritual Intelligence?” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 42, no. 2 (2002): 19.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹²⁸ Tony Buzan, *The Power of Spiritual Intelligence: 10 Ways to Tap Into Your Spiritual Genius* (Toronto: HarperCollins Canada/Thorsons, 2001), xv.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, xvii.

childlike qualities, developing rituals, creating peace for oneself, and being exposed to the ultimate power, that of love. A second author describes spiritual intelligence using the words of Evelyn Underhill: “*that every human soul has a certain latent capacity for God, and that in some capacity is realized with an astonishing richness.*”¹³⁰ This author addresses three factors of which one might be aware so as to see anew, live the change, and pass it on: the false self, the true self, and the ability to live in flow.

What SI seems to indicate, therefore, is that there is a deeper level of knowing than what the senses, intellect, or feelings can teach us. It is the level of meaning, of value, of worth. It has also been seen as having a direct connection to work. As one researcher describes SI, it is “the ability to create meaning based on deep understanding of existential questions, and awareness of and the ability to use multiple levels of consciousness in problem solving.”¹³¹ The author acknowledges the very initial stages of the scientific study of SI, but does point out how the creation of meaning, central to SI, has been shown to be central to the workplace.¹³² As was seen earlier, the notion of work has been evolving, and the context of work now needs to be one of trust and of fostering purpose,¹³³ both of which are factors of a spiritual intelligence. For scientists Zohar and Marshall, spiritual intelligence¹³⁴ addresses and solves problems of meaning and value and allows people to

¹³⁰ Brian Draper, *Spiritual Intelligence: A New Way of Being* (Oxford: Lion UK Publishing, 2010), 187. The quote is from Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church* (James Clare & Co., 1987), 11.

¹³¹ Joseph (Yosi) Amram, “Intelligence Beyond IQ: The Contribution of Emotional and Spiritual Intelligences to Effective Business Leadership,” Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 2005, 16, accessed November 13, 2010, http://www.yosiamram.net/docs/EI_and_SI_in_Leadership_Yosi_Amram.pdf.

¹³² Bernard Bass, “From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision,” *Organizational Dynamics* 18, no. 3 (1990): 19–31; Warren Bennis, *Managing the Dream: Reflections on Leadership and Change* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2000).

¹³³ Sumantra Ghoshal, Christopher Bartlett, and Peter Moran, “A New Manifesto for Management,” *Sloan Management Review* 40, no. 3 (1999): 9–20.

¹³⁴ Zohar and Marshall are quite “loose” in using SI and SQ as interchangeable. See chapter 2, note 11.

place their actions and lives in a wider context, one that gives meaning. It reflects the longing to aspire to something that can take individuals beyond themselves and the present moment; one longs for what one does to have *worth*. They consider society's collective SI as low and that our culture is "spiritually dumb" with its "materialism, expediency, narrow self-centredness, lack of meaning . . . dearth of commitment" and loss of "our sense of fundamental values."¹³⁵ Their evaluation is reminiscent of Mintzberg et al.'s descriptions of corporate fabrications and misperceptions discussed earlier. SI is needed to unmask such understandings and to create workplace well-being.

Emmons also proposes the capacity for spiritual intelligence as a way to foster healthier workplaces. Among key capacities he suggests are the ability to see life as sacred, to shape life's pursuits, and to see the sacred in ordinariness. In addition, SI gives us the capacity to be virtuous (to show forgiveness, express gratitude, and display humility and compassion). In short, like other intelligences, SI "is the flexible and adaptive use of spiritual information applied to solving real life problems and thus has relevance for understanding manifestations of spirituality in workplace settings."¹³⁶ SI is presented by George as showing one how to align personal values with a clear sense of purpose in order to live with integrity.¹³⁷ He says that SI is important because it allows us to draw upon our deepest inner resources in order to care, to tolerate, and to adapt; it can give a clear and

¹³⁵ Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, *SQ: Connecting with our Spiritual Intelligence* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000), 3, 4, 22. Italics added.

¹³⁶ Raymond F. Paloutzian, Robert A. Emmons, and Susan G. Keortge, "Spiritual Well-Being, Spiritual Intelligence, and Healthy Workplace Policy," in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 127.

¹³⁷ Mike George, "Practical Application of Spiritual Intelligence in the Workplace," *Human Resource Management International Digest* 14, no. 5 (2006): 3.

enduring sense of identity amid shifting relationships. By better discerning the underlying strata of events and circumstances, work can be made meaningful.

The existence of a considerable body of scientific research literature on spiritual intelligence points to its increasing acceptance in many circles. Perhaps, too, the notion of spiritual growth inherent in the concept of SI sometimes comes into play because of the intense longing for wholeness which many do not find with religion. At the same time, SI becomes an attractive concept for introducing value and meaning into the workplace situation, where more religious approaches would not be accepted.

3.4 Workplace spirituality and the symptoms of disengagement

A study of the literature of workplace spirituality, to see how it may relate to the three symptoms of disengagement under discussion in this thesis, reveals only peripheral indications. The literature may touch the edges of the symptoms but it has not yet come to grips with the overall problem and rarely deals with its symptoms as such. Certainly a very broad connection is made between spirituality and engagement. Gull and Doh, for example, write that “when people find meaning in their activities they become more engaged, more responsible, more ethical, more collaborative, and correspondingly, more creative” and thus “for spirit in the workplace to be fully realized, organizations must enable the unfolding of each individual through his or her participation in the work of the organization.”¹³⁸ The literature on workplace spirituality thus supports the notion of engagement in the broad sense and the correlation between spirituality and positive

¹³⁸ Gregory A. Gull and Jonathan Doh, “The ‘Transmutation’ of the Organization: Toward a More Spiritual Workplace,” *Journal of Management Inquiry* 13 (2004): 129.

outcomes for employees.¹³⁹ Like Gull and Doh, other authors acknowledge that the workplace has become for many employees “a world without depth” where they feel psychologically isolated and alienated from their work with a longing for some sense of meaning and purpose to the work they are doing.¹⁴⁰ Cavanagh talks about “a separation from other people, alienation from their work, and a lack of meaning . . . often experienced as a profound absence or vacuum in one’s life.”¹⁴¹ He suggests that this is the experience of businesspeople in the absence of a spiritually-enriching work environment and that this phenomenon remains unexamined in many leaders, a situation Parker Palmer calls “functional atheism.”¹⁴² Certainly scholars like Cavanagh seem to be underlining situations that are typical of disengagement. As will be seen below, other authors go even further into the particulars.

3.4.1 Toxicity

When business professor Peter J. Frost spoke about the four capacities necessary for toxic handlers (those in a workplace “who take on the emotional pain of others for the benefit of the whole system,”¹⁴³ or “sin eaters,”¹⁴⁴ as Dr. Joan Borysenko calls them), he

¹³⁹ Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson, “Workplace Spirituality and Employee Work Attitudes,” 436, 438, 440.

¹⁴⁰ Gull and Doh, “The ‘Transmutation’ of the Organization,” 129. Also, Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal. *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit*, revised edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 62, 146, 150.

¹⁴¹ Gerald F. Cavanagh, “Spirituality for Managers: Context and Critique,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 12, no. 3 (1999): 186.

¹⁴² Parker J. Palmer, *Leading from Within: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 88.

¹⁴³ Peter J. Frost, *Toxic Emotions at Work and What You Can Do About Them* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2007), 3.

¹⁴⁴ Joan Borysenko, “The Power of the Mind and Spirit to Heal,” Hollyhock, Cortes Island, BC, Canada: workshop, July 1997, quoted in Frost, *Toxic Emotions at Work*, 3.

identifies physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual capacities. Two factors in particular are important for the spiritual capacity: being clear on one's values and showing reverence for a life balance.¹⁴⁵ What Frost is pointing to is the role of toxic handlers in absorbing the "toxins" of the workplace. While Frost's ideas are very helpful, our concern more directly concentrates on the causes of the toxicity, the toxic organization's effect on employees, and the emotional/spiritual response that might address these causes.

The literature recognizes, at least implicitly, the part that organizational leaders play in creating toxic environments. "Too often, [the] practices of leadership suffocate spirit,"¹⁴⁶ writes Moxley unambiguously. At the same time, spiritual leadership can be an antidote to such toxicity. Fry places such leadership in the context of an organization where employees are open and generous and have a "do-what-it-takes" attitude to their work: "spiritual leadership is necessary for the transformation to and continued success of a learning organization. Spiritual leadership taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual survival so they become more organizationally committed and productive."¹⁴⁷ Similarly, the emerging notion of the servant leader, as described earlier, is certainly a corrective to toxicity.

While toxicity is organizational in nature and is often caused by its leaders, its effects are felt personally by all individuals within the organization. The presence of workplace toxicity has been connected in the literature to the absence of the value of organizational justice. It has clearly been expressed that a key to minimizing organizational

¹⁴⁵ Frost, *Toxic Emotions at Work*, 128–131.

¹⁴⁶ Moxley, *Leadership and Spirit*, 7.

¹⁴⁷ Fry, "Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership," 694.

toxicity is the expectation by employees that they will be treated fairly, that a sense of justice be in place.¹⁴⁸ This was found to be particularly so when employees linked their perceptions to how employers made decisions and how they implement their decisions.¹⁴⁹ With downsizing and layoffs, perceived fairness by employees became a critical factor in determining whether toxicity invaded the workplace or not. The possibility of a toxic work environment is also seen to increase when the level of respect for employees goes down. They are then regarded as replaceable cogs in the machine. The literature suggests that this in turn leads to personal alienation, job dissatisfaction, lack of commitment, and the desire to unionize.¹⁵⁰ The presence of toxicity in a workplace also clearly affects the level of trust, a value that workplace spirituality frequently promotes, and one that is seen as essential for productive work, that is, work involving relationships.¹⁵¹ A summary of the literature might conclude by saying that the increasing lack of trust—which leads to a lowering of employee confidence, morale, meaning, and purpose—has been clearly identified as a key factor in worker disengagement, and at the same time the promotion of trust and commitment is seen as a major component of today's workplace spirituality.

¹⁴⁸ Richard S. Lazarus, "Hope: An Emotion and a Vital Coping Resource Against Despair," *Social Research* 66, (1999): 665–669; also, Richard S. Lazarus, "Toward Better Research on Stress and Coping," *American Psychologist* 55 (2000): 653–678.

¹⁴⁹ R. H. Moorman, "Relationship between Organizational Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: Do Fairness Perceptions Influence Employee Citizenship?" *Journal of Applied Psychology* 76 (1992): 845–855.

¹⁵⁰ David M. Efraty, M. Joseph Sirgy, and Philip H. Siegel, "The Job Satisfaction/Life Satisfaction Relationship for Professional Accountants: The Moderating Effect of Organizational Commitment," in *Development in Quality-of-Life Studies*, vol. 1, ed. H. Lee Meadow (Blacksburg, VA: International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies, 1997), 25. See also Phyllis Tharenou, "Employee Self-Esteem: A Review of the Literature," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 15 (1979): 316–346.

¹⁵¹ Elmer H. Burrack, "Spirituality in the Workplace," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 12, no. 4 (1999): 280–299; Robert B. Shaw, *Trust in the Balance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

Examining further factors whereby organizational toxicity affects workers and brings about eventual disengagement requires understanding also the contrasting emphasis that workplace spirituality has placed upon community and connectedness. Empirical studies have demonstrated that concern for others and high quality interpersonal work relationships are critical for worker job satisfaction and effectively lead others to work together to accomplish goals.¹⁵² As was seen in the previous chapter, Frost has clearly linked toxicity with a lack of empathy and the loss of a sense of connectedness.¹⁵³ In such an environment, the search for community and meaning and the chance of finding connectedness continues as workers seek to offset the toxicity they experience.¹⁵⁴ The need for community is evident in general terms, but it can be all the more vital when either managers or employees face significant challenges, such as a death in the family, a divorce, depression, etc. A spiritual understanding of community then becomes even more important.¹⁵⁵ The literature of workplace spirituality is quite consistent in linking spirituality with a sense of community and connectedness and a consideration for others;¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Joseph E. Champoux, *Organizational Behavior: Integrating Individuals, Groups, and Organizations*, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 11; Bernard M. Bass and Ralph M. Stogdill, *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Application*, 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1990), 43.

¹⁵³ Frost, *Toxic Emotions*, 18.

¹⁵⁴ G. Cavanagh et al., "Business Leadership and Spirituality," in *Bridging the Gap: Spirituality and Business*, ed. A. L. Delbecq and J. J. McGee, 2001 *Bridging the Gap Between Spirituality and Religion: Proceedings from the Santa Clara Conference*, ed. A. L. Delbecq, March 9–11, 2001.

¹⁵⁵ J. Weiss et al., "Calling, New Careers and Spirituality: A Reflective Perspective for Organizational Leaders and Professionals," in *Bridging the Gap Between Spirituality and Religion: Proceedings from the Santa Clara Conference*, ed. A. L. Delbecq, March 9–11, 2001, 81–110.

¹⁵⁶ Burack, "Spirituality in the Workplace," 280–291; John Milliman et al., "Spirit and Community at Southwest Airlines: An Investigation of a Spiritual Values-Based Model," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 16, no. 3 (1999): 221–233; Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson, "Workplace Spirituality and Employee Work Attitudes," 426–447. Cited in Fahri Karakas, "Spirituality and Performance in Organizations: A Literature Review," *Journal of Business Ethics* 94 (2010): 97.

spirituality is even seen as building community in sales force management.¹⁵⁷ Duchon and Plowman,¹⁵⁸ Fairholm,¹⁵⁹ and Milliman et al.¹⁶⁰ have suggested that such experiences of community as a spiritual value create greater worker attachment, loyalty, and belonging, at least implying that workplace spirituality offers an antidote to toxicity and a bridge to employee engagement.

3.4.2 Coping mechanisms

The literature of workplace spirituality constantly mentions the dispiriting effect of work on employees, that it does not “engage all their energies, does not provide them the sense of meaning and purpose for which they long, and does not call forth the best they have within them.”¹⁶¹ In such circumstances employees clearly need to learn to cope.

This thesis has indicated that in the face of disengagement there are two radically different coping mechanisms open to employees. The first is *presenteeism/absenteeism*. In an interesting description of organizational interactions, Vilnai-Yavetz and Rafaeli distinguish between “skeleton” and “tissue” scripts of organizations. The skeleton script is the routine business exchange that take place between people at work. Tissue scripts refer to behaviours that can be “pro social” as well as “extra role,” such as interpersonal cooperation and positive emotions. In practice, presenteeism means that to a particular

¹⁵⁷ Vishag Badrinarayanan and Sreedhar Madhavaram, “Workplace Spirituality and the Selling Organization: A conceptual framework and research propositions,” *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management* 28, no. 4 (2008): 421–434.

¹⁵⁸ Dennis Duchon and Donde A. Plowman, “Nurturing the Spirit at Work: Impact on Unit Performance,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 16, no. 5 (2005): 807–834.

¹⁵⁹ Gilbert W. Fairholm, “Spiritual Leadership: Fulfilling Whole-Self Needs at Work,” *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal* 17, no. 5 (1996): 11–17.

¹⁶⁰ Milliman et al., “Spirit and Community at Southwest Airlines,” 221–233.

¹⁶¹ Moxley, *Leadership and Spirit*, xiii, 7.

employee only the skeleton script is important. Effectively the authors are providing a response to presenteeism when they insist that “the tissue script . . . introduces spirituality into routine organizational interactions.” In their view, spirituality that takes in employees’ “concept of what is best, of what it means to help others be their best, and what it means to feel a sense of connectedness with work and coworkers” (that is, tissue social behaviours or their lack) “either promote or hinder such spiritual desires.”¹⁶² Since presenteeism means to be present physically at work but absent mentally because of illness, stress, disinterest, other obligations, those engaged in presenteeism avoid tissue behaviours. Such employees, rather than lose their jobs or be disciplined for not showing up, will come to work but extend minimum productive effort. They do not experience positive emotions about who they are at work and the work they do. Milliman et al.’s research has certainly found a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and employee attitudes such as commitment to the organization, intrinsic work satisfaction, and job involvement.¹⁶³

The similar and more clearly identifiable symptom of absenteeism occurs, of course, when, as a result of disengagement, an employee simply does not show up physically for work. What understandably reduces absenteeism is an employee’s commitment to the organization. Current research seems clearly to indicate that commitment is a consequence of spiritual values being present in the workplace, and these in turn appear to increase job satisfaction and reduce job turnover and absenteeism.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Iris Vilnai-Yavetz and Anat Rafaeli, “Organizational Interactions: A Basic Skeleton with Spiritual Tissue,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 79.

¹⁶³ Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson, “Workplace Spirituality and Employee Work Attitudes,” 426–447.

¹⁶⁴ Daniel C. Feldman and Hugh J. Arnold, *Managing Individual and Group Behavior in Organizations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983), 470.

Certainly a second cause of absenteeism can be job pressure. Ways for employees to cope with the increasing work pressures, as suggested in the workplace spirituality literature, include programs such as meditation, spiritual practices, wellness and fitness, and sports programs.¹⁶⁵ Even in 1983 Feldman and Arnold suggested that the increased job satisfaction that resulted from workplace spirituality could reduce both absenteeism and job turnover. Paloutzian et al. in 2010 confirmed this judgment: “A number of recent studies have demonstrated that employee happiness and well-being are positively associated with performance, morale, and commitment and negatively associated with absenteeism, turnover, and burnout.”¹⁶⁶ Moreover, the research of Wrzesniewski et al., which studied how people see their work as a job, a career, or a calling, had shown that those who saw their work as a calling also reported less absenteeism.¹⁶⁷ Some suggest, however, that further research still has to occur to connect spirituality and absenteeism.¹⁶⁸

A very different coping strategy for disengagement seen in chapter 1 was that of *burnout/depression*. This strategy is the flipside of presenteeism/absenteeism because while the coping involved in both absenteeism and presenteeism is a protective mechanism, both burnout and depression have a direct and profound negative effect upon the employee. With burnout and depression there is severe personal suffering. In workplace spirituality research, burnout is specifically correlated with the lack of well-being and employee

¹⁶⁵ Susan Cartwright and Cary L. Cooper, *Managing Workplace Stress* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997) 63, 75.

¹⁶⁶ Paloutzian, Emmons, and Keortge, “Spiritual Well-Being,” 80.

¹⁶⁷ A. C. Wrzesniewski et al., “Jobs, Careers, and Callings: People’s Relations to Their Work,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 31 (1997): 21–33.

¹⁶⁸ Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz, “Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 13.

happiness,¹⁶⁹ and performance, morale, and commitment all suffer when these elements are threatened. Even in the early 1970s Frew drew attention to the role of spirituality for the workplace while researching transcendental meditation and productivity in job-related coping to handle stress.¹⁷⁰ “Spirituality appears to be closely linked to transformational coping efforts in that it alters the view of an event and provides perspective and also gives an individual direction for altering the source of stress. . . . [I]ndividuals who engage in transformational coping are more likely to interpret stressors as challenges rather than threats and perceive themselves to be in control of a situation.”¹⁷¹ With employees experiencing feelings of job stress, the resulting physiological and psychological reactions can provoke complete exhaustion and burnout. Zellars et al. maintain that:

[by] relying on spiritual beliefs, individuals can respond to the environment by asserting themselves in such a way as to alter the response to the stressor, even when the conditions causing the strain cannot be altered. Rather than striking back at the supervisor either verbally or physically, they may be able to reframe the negative emotions arising in the current situation in light of the rewarding aspects of the overall job.¹⁷²

Some spirituality researchers speak of the notion of “high-hope workplaces.”¹⁷³

Employees in these workplaces are those who are able to compose “pathways thoughts and

¹⁶⁹ T. A. Wright and B. M. Shaw, “Affect and Favorable Work Outcomes: Two Longitudinal Tests of the Happy-Productive Worker Thesis,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 2 (1999): 1–23.

¹⁷⁰ David R. Frew, “Transcendental Meditation and Productivity,” *Academy of Management Journal* 17 (1974): 362–368.

¹⁷¹ Kelly L. Zellars, Pamela L. Perrewé, and Jeremy R. Brees, “The Multiple Roles of Spirituality in Occupational Stress and Well-Being,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 234.

¹⁷² Zellars, Perrewé, and Brees, “The Multiple Roles of Spirituality,” 235.

¹⁷³ Virgil H. Adams, III et al., “Hope in the Workplace,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 247–249. There are certain “commonalities” in these high-hope companies: “They reported financial success, along with projected growth. Thus, in terms of the ‘bottom line’ monetary analysis, the high-hope companies appeared to be prospering,” 247. They researched 125 companies, “ranging in size from 8 to 40,000 employees.” Interesting the size of the company did not relate to the hope level of the employees.

agency thoughts,”¹⁷⁴ who are planning to meet goals and are determined to do so. They cope better with many of today’s work environments, which are often experienced as places of “mundane misery.”¹⁷⁵ Such employees are thought to be more capable of experiencing their workplaces and managing more effectively. Pathways thinking establishes goal-setting for employees; agentic thinking is the motivational factor needed to meet a goal,¹⁷⁶ or “the mental targets of hope.”¹⁷⁷ The literature suggests that high hope employees in that double sense are able to visualize their goals and to animate their motivational selves to attain the goals. Job stress, on the contrary, will interfere with goal attainment because of the negative emotional barriers. Even with stress, employees often work until they drop, sometimes literally. Burnout is the result. When faced with cutthroat corporate culture, the parcelling out of job tasks so that no one employee has all the information, a lack of social support, role ambiguity,¹⁷⁸ and minimum control over their work, employees can frequently experience such job burnout. What is interesting is that the literature clearly identifies this as “tantamount to a loss of hope in the workplace.”¹⁷⁹ In this instance, too, the literature has touched on an evident link between spirituality and one of the important consequences of disengagement.

The top ten companies in terms of employee hope were identified, and their other responses were then examined in order to ascertain the characteristic of high-hope businesses,” 247. The #1 characteristic was: “No one, including management, is greatly feared by employees” with #10 being, “Enduring relationships with customers are encouraged rather than a given sale or objective,” 247.

¹⁷⁴ Adams III et al., “Hope in the Workplace,” 242.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ C.R. Snyder, Jen Cheavens, and Scott T. Michael, “Hoping,” in *Coping: The Psychology of What Works*, ed. C.R. Snyder (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 180.

¹⁷⁷ Adams III et al., “Hope in the Workplace,” 243.

¹⁷⁸ Kelly L. Zellars and Pamela L. Perrewé, “Affective Personality and the Content of Emotional Social Support: Coping in Organizations,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 86 (2001): 459–467.

¹⁷⁹ Adams III et al., “Hope in the Workplace,” 245.

Because of the changing workplace, as has been seen, there is also a loss of the community and connectedness that are integral to spirituality.¹⁸⁰ The resulting psychological isolation and alienation at work only magnify the loss, and personal depression can often follow suit. Spiritual well-being (SWB) on the part of workers is known to offset depressive episodes *if* managers create work environments that enable employees to develop a sense of belonging and partnership. Such an observation speaks to two realities: that employees have responsibility to take care of themselves but also that organizations need to take responsibility as well. At the same time, while belonging and partnership are connected to workplace spirituality in the literature, there is still no direct established link between the lack of SWB and the symptom of depression. Nevertheless, Paloutzian et al. write, “Therefore, those findings that come from the general body of research on the relationships between SWB and healthy or unhealthy functioning in other life domains are easily applicable to our understanding of what makes for a healthy or unhealthy work life.”¹⁸¹ Mention has already been made of the importance of perceived control over their work that enables employees to cope more effectively. As well, a “strong sense of spirituality may be the means by which individuals can cope with the numerous stressors that arise on a job . . . Spirituality may therefore increase an individual’s sense of control over a stressful job situation, possibly because the transitory nature of some stressors becomes clearer.”¹⁸² Higher levels of such control are directly associated with

¹⁸⁰ Karakas, “Spirituality and Performance in Organizations,” 98.

¹⁸¹ Paloutzian, Emmons, and Keortge, “Spiritual Well-Being,” 75.

¹⁸² Zellars, Perrewé, and Brees, “The Multiple Roles of Spirituality,” 235.

lowered anxiety and depression.¹⁸³ Finally, what can be gleaned from research writing on workplace spirituality that appears to recognize the reality of disengagement is that many employees work in situations “that wound their spirit. Survey after survey reveals decreasing job satisfaction and less employee engagement . . . and many widespread and widely advocated management practices are also destructive of human spirit and values.”¹⁸⁴ Workplace spirituality recognizes that the work of many employees is controlled by “fear, pressure, and impermanence,”¹⁸⁵ the net result of which is “lower job satisfaction and disengagement as well as greater distrust of management.”¹⁸⁶ As has been seen, for some employees the symptom of depression is not far behind.

3.4.3 Declining innovation

With the significant disengagement levels referenced in chapter 1, it seems clear that the enormity of the problem of disengagement simply works against innovation. Mourkogiannis writes of innovation, “This word . . . means a reason for doing something that appeals to our sense of what is right and what is worthwhile. In a business context, it is what drives an individual or group beyond the drive to make as much money as possible.”¹⁸⁷ In this light, MIT’s Otto Scharmer also writes very clearly that “profound innovation requires a spiritual place—a sense of purpose for coming into being, which is

¹⁸³ S. Mullarkey et al., “The Impact of Technology Characteristics and Job Control on Worker Mental Health,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 18 (1997): 471–489.

¹⁸⁴ Pfeffer, “Business and the Spirit,” 29.

¹⁸⁵ Mirvis, “‘Soul Work’ in Organizations,” 198.

¹⁸⁶ Pfeffer, “Business and the Spirit,” 27.

¹⁸⁷ Nikos Mourkogiannis, “Using Purpose to Drive Innovation,” *IVEY Business Journal* (July/August 2007): 1.

often the inspiration and motivation for the core team.”¹⁸⁸ Research has similarly recognized that innovation is only accomplished through higher levels of motivation, that is, building the enthusiasm and commitment of employees, core ingredients for the engaged employee and missing ingredients for the disengaged employee. White speaks of the fact that “organizations that offer spirituality-oriented work goals offer opportunities for their employees to feel a higher sense of commitment and greater personal growth.”¹⁸⁹ He further observes that the consequent spiritual health of employees “improves their intuitive skills, encourages teamwork, develops purposeful and compelling organizational vision, and boosts innovation.”¹⁹⁰ Research clearly supports the finding that “positive emotions broaden the scope of cognition and enable flexible and creative thinking.”¹⁹¹ Research has shown also that in addition to individual worker motivation, organizational cultural values related to workplace spirituality have greater influence than economic values as far as worker productivity, ethics, exercise of authority, and innovation are concerned.¹⁹² The research of Neck and Milliman has actually demonstrated a clear causal relationship between spirituality and increased innovation.¹⁹³

Bureaucratic rigidity is a factor that will also clearly cripple innovation.¹⁹⁴ This thesis has discussed the relationship between how one perceives stressors in the workplace

¹⁸⁸ C. Otto Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading From the Future as It Emerges* (Cambridge, MA: SoL (The Society for Organizational Learning, Inc.), 2007), 431.

¹⁸⁹ White, Jr., *Drawing the Line*,” 185.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Paloutzian, Emmons, and Keortge, “Spiritual Well-Being,” 80.

¹⁹² Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz, “Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality,” in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 6.

¹⁹³ Christopher P. Neck and John F. Milliman, “Thought Self-Leadership: Finding Spiritual Fulfillment in Organizational Life,” *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 9 (1994): 9–16.

¹⁹⁴ Eisler and Montuori, “The Human Side of Spirituality,” 49.

and what an employee thinks caused them and how the role of spirituality can moderate the perception positively; stressors that are not dealt with adequately can clearly engender a certain defensiveness. Senge's work in the early 1990s had shown how devastating defensiveness can be.¹⁹⁵ In being less defensive, according to Hendricks and Henricks, one becomes more open, a fact that increases the "vitality ease and flow" that is essential to innovation.¹⁹⁶ It is a foregone conclusion that when defensiveness is structural to the culture of the workplace, there is also a lack of healthy workplace spirituality and, hence, declining innovation. Following Senge, Hendricks and Henricks continue:

Surprisingly . . . defensiveness itself doesn't impede business success. The *concealment* of defensiveness does. For example, disagreeing with a colleague's business proposal is quite common and can be a source of creative innovation. Disguising that disagreement with polite nodding or explanations of the colleague's basic misunderstanding of the business issue sidetrack the company's forward momentum and halt the cocreative synergy of teamwork.¹⁹⁷

While the rigidity and the defensiveness it can produce are clear impediments to innovation, the literature of workplace spirituality indicates that the flexibility and openness to change that spirituality can foster innovative results. Employees in organizations with higher levels of spirituality have been shown to be better able to handle change, to be more

¹⁹⁵ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, revised edition (New York: Crown, 2006), 10, 149, 180, 220, 232-238, 240, and 249.

¹⁹⁶ Kathlyn T. Hendricks and C. Gay Henricks, "Operational Integrity: The Gateway to Workplace Harmony and Velocity," in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003): 444.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

flexible, and to be more open to new ideas.¹⁹⁸ Mitroff and Denton¹⁹⁹ in their own research likewise found that organizations with a stronger spiritual sense enabled stronger personal and social values and beliefs, which led to greater flexibility and creativity at work. Similar findings have been made by Gull and Doh,²⁰⁰ Lips-Wiersma,²⁰¹ and Krishnakumar and Neck,²⁰² who have linked the presence of workplace spirituality to greater creativity and intuition. While such creativity is certainly encountered first in the individual worker, it is clearly enhanced when the spiritual values of community and interconnectedness allow for the free and open exchange of ideas and counter-ideas within an organization. Milliman et al.,²⁰³ Walsh et al.²⁰⁴ and Mitroff and Denton²⁰⁵ have especially emphasized the concept of the workplace as a spiritually-based human community that can promote social and societal benefits.

Writers like Jurkiewicz and Giacalone have seen the spiritual value of generativity as also being important to the workplace.²⁰⁶ They note that individuals who are high in

¹⁹⁸ Jan C. Salzman, "Thriving During Organizational Change: The Role of Metaphors for Change, Optimism and Pessimism, and Attributional Style," Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B, vol. 58, no. 5-B, 1997, 2734; P.R. Wagner, "Management During Organizational Change: Optimism versus Disillusionment," Dissertation Abstracts International: Section A, vol. 56, no. 9-A, 1996, 3654. Cited in Carole L. Jurkiewicz and Robert A. Giacalone, "A Values Framework for Measuring the Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Organizational Performance," *Journal of Business Ethics* 49 (2004): 136.

¹⁹⁹ Ian I. Mitroff and Elizabeth Denton, *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America: A Hard Look at Spirituality, Religion, and Values in the Workplace*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999). Cited in Karakas, "Spirituality and Performance in Organizations," 96.

²⁰⁰ Gull and Doh, "The 'Transmutation' of the Organization, 128–139.

²⁰¹ Lips-Wiersma, Dean, and Fornaciari, "Theorizing the Dark Side of the Workplace Spirituality Movement," 288.

²⁰² Krishnakumar and Neck, "The 'What,' 'Why' and 'How' of Spirituality in the Workplace," 153–164. Cited in Karakas, "Spirituality and Performance in Organizations," 94.

²⁰³ Milliman et al., "Spirit and Community at Southwest Airlines," 221–233. Cited in Karakas, "Spirituality and Performance in Organizations," 97.

²⁰⁴ James P. Walsh, Klaus Weber, and Joshua D. Margolis, "Social Issues and Management: Our Lost Cause Found," *Journal of Management* 29 no. 6 (2003): 859–88.

²⁰⁵ Mitroff and Denton, *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America*, 123–141.

²⁰⁶ *Description*: "An adult's interest in and commitment to making a positive and creative contribution to future generations." *Relevance for workplace spirituality*: "Interest in and commitment to

generativity will want to leave something behind; they suggest that this can often express itself in environmentalism. Clearly this is a spiritual value that can also be a foundation for innovation. So, too, of course is a value they loosely describe as humanism (although not necessarily with the agnostic connotations this sometimes has). In a workplace context humanism can be understood as both an openness to the whole of humanity and the desire and responsibility on the part of the individual to bring about humanity's greater good. Organizationally, Mitroff and Denton speak of the socially responsible organization in similar terms.²⁰⁷ Employees imbued with such a worldview are seen not only as likelier to bring their entire selves to their work,²⁰⁸ but also as fostering satisfying and meaningful life experiences for society and significant social outcomes, or perhaps, in other terms, the common good.²⁰⁹ Clearly the sense of such a wider social responsibility can encourage individuals and organizations to think "outside the box" and be innovative, whereas the narrower view of simply servicing organizational ends can diminish such innovative thinking. Reading the research on workplace spirituality is like reading the inverse, if you will, of our topic: it shows how various factors of spirituality are seen to encourage spirituality. Although it does not directly address the relationship between spirituality and the disengagement that gives rise to declining innovation, this may certainly be inferred.

future generations demonstrates transcendence and a desire to create a more meaningful world." In Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, "The Science of Workplace Spirituality," 17.

²⁰⁷ Mitroff and Denton, *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America*, 130.

²⁰⁸ Gordon E. Dehler and M. Ann Welsh, "Spirituality and Organizational Transformation: Implications for the New Management Paradigm," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 9 (1994): 17–26. Cited in Jurkiewicz and Giacalone, "A Values Framework for Measuring the Impact of Workplace Spirituality," 132.

²⁰⁹ Peter Frost et al., "Seeing Organizations Differently: Three Lenses on Compassion," in *Handbook of Organizational Studies*, ed. Stewart R. Clegg, et al. (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 843–866; Walsh, Weber, and Margolis, *Social Issues and Management*; Gull and Doh, "The 'Transmutation' of the Organization," cited in Karakas, "Spirituality and Performance in Organizations," 97.

3.5 Concluding remarks

In 1999 Mitroff and Denton could say, “We believe that today’s organizations are impoverished spiritually and that many of their most important problems are due to this impoverishment.”²¹⁰ While this was no doubt true, and likely remains true, things were clearly changing. In 2003 MIT’s Otto Scharmer was quoted as saying that what is “emerging is a new synthesis of science, spirituality, and leadership as different facets of a single way of being.”²¹¹ Almost a decade later, it is obvious that workplace spirituality has had an impact on the world of work.

Social and economic turmoil combined with greater accountability and the effects of globalization were the particular factors that prompted a search for spiritual solutions. There was a clear turning inward, a turn to interiority, and at the same time, a turn outward, in the sense of a keener awareness of corporate social responsibility. Elements of transcendence and connectedness with the various values they entailed (for example, interiority, spiritual leadership, community, meaning, and ethics) were woven into both the theory and praxis of the workplace giving rise to a new workplace spirituality that usually had little connection to traditional religion.

Despite its broad reach, the literature of workplace spirituality has been slow to deal in any direct way with the problem of disengagement. Having particularly focused on the three symptoms that highlight this problem (toxicity, coping mechanisms, and declining innovation), it was seen that the literature rarely directly comments on these symptoms. On

²¹⁰ Mitroff and Denton, *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America*, 99.

²¹¹ Peter M. Senge et al., *Presence: An Explanation of Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society* (New York: Currency, 2004), 212.

the other hand, it does address patterns of dysfunctional workplace behaviour that touch on each of them. What is evident throughout is that the presence of a workplace spirituality could be foundational in minimizing such symptoms and provide managers and employees with a workplace environment that has meaning, purpose, and worth.

Given that disengagement was identified in chapter one as a problem with a significant emotional content, it seems apparent how the application of emotional intelligence theory can help to some extent and might be useful as part of the response to the problem. At the same time, given the clear demand in the workplace for “something more” that spirituality can provide, it will be important to take up once again some of the issues raised by workplace spirituality to see how some of the particular spiritual principles of the Rule of Benedict might provide a way to complement the response that EI can offer.

Chapter Four

The Rule of Benedict: Its Human, Emotional, and Spiritual Foundations

Other Rules have a more impersonal character, a more concise and formal legislative air: St. Benedict in his first words puts himself in intimate contact with his followers, commencing the code of our monastic life with a loving address.¹

4.1 Introduction

This thesis proposes to demonstrate that to assist in remedying workplace problems such as disengagement, it is important to include—in addition to good business practices and emotional factors—those related to spirituality. Chapter 1 presented a fundamental workplace problem, namely employee disengagement, which is global in scope, widespread among occupations, and has diverse expressions. Two of these expressions, absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation, were chosen for further examination here. Chapter 2 reviewed the efforts to apply current research on the integration of human emotions as a partial solution to these problems. It was concluded that while this could be helpful, something more was needed to address a lack of purpose and meaning in workplace life. This led in chapter 3 to a consideration of the spiritual aspects of human labour and a review of current approaches of spirituality literature to workplace problems, especially disengagement. It was concluded, however, that, despite the burgeoning interest in the field, the current literature has yet to confront in any adequate way the problem of disengagement.

¹ Paul Delatte, OSB, *The Rule of St. Benedict: A Commentary*, trans. Dom Justin McCann, OSB (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Limited, 1921), 1. Benedict begins his *Rule* with the words: “*Ausculata, o fili, praecepta magistri, et inclina aurem cordis tui, et admonitionem pii patris.*”

In chapter 5, this thesis will take up the example of a particular, but representative, North American workplace. Here, the problem of disengagement will be observed in an actual setting and the application of the principles drawn from the research undertaken in the present chapter examined in a concrete situation. The thesis is fortunate enough to have at hand a detailed case study of a mid-size Canadian company, including six smaller units, that would reflect a workplace situation fairly typical of many public and private sector environments. The particular company is no less typical of contemporary situations in that it had recently suffered considerable downsizing. This will provide an opportunity in which the symptoms of disengagement selected here and the rationale for the application in practice of the principles suggested by this study can be seen more clearly in a concrete situation.

Chapter 3 concluded that the value of a spiritual approach to work, both in its own right and as an antidote to problems like disengagement, seems to be indicated clearly. In this case, spirituality would be broadly described as *a deeply personal outlook that shapes one's thoughts and actions according to what one perceives as ultimately important (transcendent) and that connects the individual to other persons and to the broader universe, enabling one to live in a meaningful and purposeful way*. With this in view, the purpose of the current chapter is to examine some of the fundamentals of the sixth century Rule of Benedict.² In particular, it will attempt to discover whether the Rule may be able to supply some of the spiritual and emotional foundations that can begin to provide a

² Timothy Fry, OSB., RB 1980. *The Rule of St. Benedict: In Latin and English with Notes*, ed. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981). Hereafter, the Rule of Benedict is cited as RB, followed by the chapter and verse numbers. The Prologue to the Rule is cited as RB Prol. As is consistent with common practice, the Rule of Benedict is not italicized in this dissertation.

comprehensive approach to a spirituality valid for today's workplace and its often dysfunctional situations.

There are obvious possible objections to this approach. The Rule of Benedict is dated, and it is intended specifically for communities of monks. Moreover, its Christian and theistic foundations can hardly commend it to a global audience that does not accept such beliefs. While these comments have validity, it will be argued here, however, that many of the fundamentals of the Rule have more timeless and universal qualities that still give them current import. It is useful to record the 1896 comments on the Rule by Abbot Edmund Ford:

We find in the Rule of St Benedict not so much a number of details as a few main principles which, working in human nature, have produced that wonderful history of his order: principles which cannot grow antiquated or pass out of date, for they are not peculiar to any conditions of education, or race, or rank, or era, nor intended to meet any passing difficulties or trials in the life of the Church, but are as universal as is the human race.³

In terms of timeliness, it is notable that Chan et al. have even recently observed the organizational usefulness of the Rule for today's workplaces: "In spite of the extensive work in the area of employment relationship in the past century, the relevance of the Rule of St. Benedict (RSB) to modern organizations has been largely ignored and deserves further exploration."⁴ Another recent study examines how the basic governance structures of Benedictine monasteries has allowed many of them to survive for centuries.⁵ Moreover,

³ Quoted in Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1923), 311.

⁴ Christopher C. A. Chan, Kenneth McBey, and Brenda Scott-Ladd, "Ethical Leadership in Modern Employment Relationships: Lessons from St. Benedict," *Journal of Business Ethics* 100, no. 2 (2011): 221–228. Their own approach, however, is limited to dealing mainly with human resources management and not with the broader spiritual dimensions of work.

⁵ Katja Rost et al., "The Corporate Governance of Benedictine Abbeys: What Can Stock Corporations Learn from Monasteries?" *Journal of Management History* 16, no. 1 (2010): 90–115. The stated

it will be argued here that although the Rule has the clear limitations of being designed for believers, and even more particularly for those who chose to adopt a monastic lifestyle, many of its foundations rest on a fundamental appreciation of human emotions that lies beneath its particular theological orientations, but can be abstracted from them. These in turn can provide a basis for a workplace spirituality as described earlier.

In fact, the word *rule* here is a misnomer. As the quotation at the head of this chapter indicates, the Rule is anything but a legalistic text. As Delatte points out, it has not the impersonal character of similar documents, but relies instead on an “intimate contact” between the author and his followers.⁶ Using even broader terms than that, the whole approach of the Rule of Benedict would be described as *personalist*, a view of community and the individual that places its primary emphasis on the human person and his or her dignity and value.

This is crucial if one accepts the well-founded thesis of sociologist Gibson Winter that the cultural foundation of modern society, and consequently of its workers and workplaces, is a *mechanistic* root metaphor that is destructive of human spirituality and that turns people into objects. He writes, “The twentieth century is heir to deadly perils growing out of industrial and technological development.”⁷ To confront this prevailing attitude and to provide an antidote to the ills it creates, particularly in the workplace, this thesis will

purpose of this paper is “to analyse the governance structure of monasteries to gain new insights and to apply them to solve agency problems of modern corporations,” 90.

⁶ Delatte, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, 1.

⁷ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, ix, xi. Joe Holland, in acknowledging Winter, writes that the mechanistic metaphor, in seeing the parts only (vs. the whole) has created “a crisis of meaning” because individuals now see themselves as cogs in a machine and as a result feel more and more powerless. See “Linking Social Analysis and Theological Reflection,” in *Tracing the Spirit: Communities, Social Action, and Theological Reflection*, ed. James Hug (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 179.

argue that the root metaphor most needed instead is a *personalist* one. It will submit that this is the underlay, in terms of the practical humanity and respect for human dignity, for the spirituality of the Rule of Benedict, although ultimately this is developed with specifically Christian and monastic overtones.

Consequently, this chapter will examine the Rule from a personalist optic, since it is the predominance of this characteristic that allows many aspects of the Rule to be transposed to other ages and situations. It will thus attempt to recognize and accept differences of context, and leave aside the temporal, Christian, and monastic particularities that limit the applicability of Benedict's approach. Moreover, it will try to draw out from his Rule those fundamental principles whose timelessness gives them contemporary value, and whose appreciation of fundamental human emotions gives them broad application, especially for the contemporary workplace situation. Before addressing Benedict's text, however, it is useful to look more generally at the concept of root metaphor, and how this can be applied in the current context.

4.2 A personalist root metaphor

This thesis has indicated that it will attempt to identify certain key aspects of the spirituality of the sixth-century Rule of Benedict to provide a spiritual foundation for work, which, taken together with a healthy respect for emotional intelligence and the best management techniques, can help counteract the problems of disengagement in the contemporary workplace.

How does one examine such a text with such a purpose? The Rule is centuries old, based on Christian theology, and designed to govern monastic life and a monastic community. To transpose some of its key principles to the contemporary workplace, one needs to adopt a particular optic that will respect both contexts. As mentioned, in this case it is proposed that the root metaphor of personalism will be used. Clearly, the notions of both root metaphor and personalism, together with some indications of how that metaphor will be applied, need to be considered.

4.2.1 Root metaphors

Winter bemoans the fact that people lack a healthy integrative method to make sense of a technological age.⁸ In other words, they lack coherence in establishing a vision of meaning for themselves. Our age is filled with contradictory notions and constant shifts. In this context, people would need to describe themselves as “people of the metaphor,” that is, a collective and usually unconscious way by which life is imagined as making sense.⁹ Such a basic, or root, metaphor is what Winter, reflecting on Paul Ricoeur, calls “comprehensive” because it allows people to establish “a sense of coherence.”¹⁰ Such “metaphoric imagery . . . gives the clue to the archetypal energies that generate the world of meaning.”¹¹ A root metaphor, therefore, is what can be used to provide an understanding of the world around us.

⁸ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, ix.

⁹ “Unconscious” is meant in its initial sense until reflection and later analysis enter one’s understanding.

¹⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 64 ff.

¹¹ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 8.

When there is turbulence or a shift in metaphor, people experience aspects of *crisis*: breakdown and possibility. The need is for a stabilizing image, in short, an “intuition,”¹² of how life can make sense and has meaning. Winter acknowledges Edmund Husserl, stating that “perception is a meaning-conferring act which intends a totality . . . [and] is an analogizing act of imagination.”¹³ Such an “analogizing act appresents . . . unsensed portions which are not directly present,”¹⁴ and opens the metaphysical door to acknowledging that “everyday things . . . mediate higher-order realities . . . within the encounters of everyday life.”¹⁵ This makes the notion of metaphor particularly useful in dealing with Benedict’s Rule, for while very explicitly dealing with everyday realities, it is constantly invoking a higher order. The question is what term will best characterize the root metaphor most useful in examining his Rule, so that some of its key principles can be understood and applied to another context.

Winter cites three epochal metaphors: first, the *organicist* or pre-modern way of life with its hierarchical order and treating the whole above the parts, and second, the *natural* and rhythmic cycles of time and living and dying.¹⁶ These have been superseded by an industrial or *mechanistic* worldview, which is a material, atomistic sense of how life works

¹² Edward Farley, *Ecclesial Man: A Social Phenomenon of Faith and Reality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 199 ff. Located in Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 33.

¹³ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 32.

¹⁴ These “unsensed portions” are, for Farley, a priori structures that are “more like an intuition than a hypothesis of inference,” in Farley, *Ecclesial Man*, 199 ff. Located in Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 33.

¹⁵ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 34.

¹⁶ Gibson Winter writes: “Traditional peoples, and most of the older higher civilizations, operate with some variant of a biological or organicist-imagery of life and cosmos. They live in a world of more-than-human powers, ordered according to the rhythms of biological or organic growth and decay.” *Ibid.*, 2.

operating “on a linear, mathematical time line that often has little to do with personal or biological rhythms.”¹⁷

This mechanistic ideology stresses individual interests and capacities, views the community as the sum of its parts, and refuses to budge from its instrumental reasoning that a person is simply another useful tool. The downside of a mechanistic ideology is that it has also brought us to the edge of possible extinction with damage to our environment, it prioritizes the survival of individuals to the detriment of community, and promotes linear thinking in the pursuit for more, where “success” takes precedence. The machine age offers much, but there are tensions between what it means to be a person and to live within a mechanized worldview; these two aspects are dangerously at odds. Winter’s notional replacement metaphor is that of “human dwelling,”¹⁸ one that needs to “include practical, moral, and religious issues.”¹⁹ For him, the emphasis on the *human* element opens the doors to creativity, liberation, and transformation, and offers to the world a new sense of hope.²⁰ While accepting both Winter’s suggested direction, and the urgent need for it, and acknowledging his more poetic nomenclature of “human dwelling,” it is proposed instead to use here the more classical term *personalism*.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1–2.

¹⁸ In the previous chapter, it was noted that Wuthrow had also proposed the spiritual notion of “dwelling” or “habitation” that included the elements of stability and relationality. See Wuthrow, *After Heaven*, 4–5.

¹⁹ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, x.

²⁰ Ibid., 23.

4.2.2 Personalism

Discussing the concept of personalism, Hans Urs von Balthasar attributes its essential understanding to both Jewish and Christian roots; it is also a concept common to Eastern religious traditions.²¹ Indeed, although the term is relatively recent, the concept is a central one to both classical and scholastic philosophy. A personalist root metaphor accepts the absolute uniqueness of the human person and the innate dignity of each one. In recent times, it became a key feature of the writings of Karol Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II), who specifically applied the concept to the workplace in his encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*,²² where he argued for the primacy of subject over object (mechanism) in the consideration of human labour.²³

In this thesis, a very precise meaning of “personalism” is being used.²⁴ It is an emphasis on human persons as spiritual, as oriented towards transcendence. It is opposed to individualism in that it recognizes the sociality of the person. Most important, however, it stands in contrast to a mechanistic understanding of persons, and it is this aspect that links

²¹ Thomas D. Williams and Jan Olof Bengtsson, “Personalism,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring, 2014 edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed December 10, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/personalism/>.

²² Jean Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (1984). Section 15 is specifically entitled “The ‘Personalist’ Argument,” and reads in part as follows: “The Church’s teaching has always expressed the strong and deep conviction that man’s [sic] work concerns not only the economy but also, and especially, personal values. The economic system itself and the production process benefit precisely when these personal values are fully respected.”

²³ Ibid., Section 5: “However, it is also a fact that, in some instances, technology can cease to be man’s [sic] ally and become almost his enemy, as when the mechanization of work “supplants” him [sic], taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility, when it deprives many workers of their previous employment, or when, through exalting the machine, it reduces man [sic] to the status of its slave.”

²⁴ Judith Merkle, “Personalism,” *New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 737–873.

this precise understanding of personalism with Gibson Winter's "root metaphor" methodology and his call for an artistic metaphor of human dwelling.²⁵

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* provides five distinctive characteristics of personalism useful for the present study. A sixth, which might be advanced in a Christian theological context, is the similarity of the human person to those of the Trinity,²⁶ but because of its uniquely Christian character it is perhaps less useful here. The *Stanford* characteristics "include an insistence on the radical difference between persons and non-persons and on the irreducibility of the person to impersonal spiritual or material factors, an affirmation of the dignity of persons, a concern for the person's subjectivity and self-determination, and particular emphasis on the social (relational) nature of the person."²⁷ Each of these can be treated briefly.

Uniqueness. Personalists hold that the difference between the human being and other entities is one of kind and not of degree, a difference usually ascribed to the ability to reason. Moreover, as William Stern wrote: "Despite any similarities by which persons are identified as members of humankind, a particular race or gender, etc., despite any broad or narrow regularities which are involved in any personal events, a primal uniqueness remains, through which every person is a world of its own with regard to other persons."²⁸

Dignity. Central to personalism is an affirmation of the dignity of the person, a quality that constitutes a unique excellence. Dignity refers to the inherent value of the

²⁵ Gibson Winter, *Liberating Creation: Foundations of Religious Social Ethics* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 6–10.

²⁶ Thomas D. Williams, "What Is Thomistic Personalism?" *Alpha Omega* 7, no. 2 (2004): 179.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁸ Williams and Bengtsson, "Personalism," citing *Person und Sache: System des kritischen Personalismus*, vol. 2, (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1923/1924).

person as a ‘someone’ and not ‘something’; this confers an absoluteness not found in other beings. Human dignity does not depend on intelligence, physical or social skills, nor indeed, on moral merit. Dignity demands specific moral requirements, notably the quality of justice.

Subjectivity. Only persons are true subjects. As rational subjects, persons exercise a creativity that affects both the surrounding world and the person him or herself. The person is not only acted upon and moved by external forces, but also acts from within the self. This conscious self-presence is human interiority; personality signifies interiority to self.

Self-determination. In contact with the world the human person acts not only mechanically or deterministically, but as a subjective ‘I,’ with the power of self-determination. Free will means that the human person is their own master (*sui iuris*). Self-mastery and freedom characterize personal beings. No one can substitute their own act of will for another’s.

Relationality. Persons, who are by nature social beings, find their fulfillment only in communion with other human beings, and therefore rely on others. Personalism therefore rejects both individualism and collectivism. While recognizing the social nature of the human being in introducing the idea of communion, personalism goes deeper and includes the idea of love, which only persons can give and receive. Relationality also embraces the idea of self-transcendence that takes the person out of any notion of individualism and into what might be considered a theological horizon. Moreover, it obviously has a wide social dimension that connects one not only to other persons, but to the totality of the universe.

These characteristics lie at the heart of a personalist approach, and are the foundation for human reason, emotionality, and spirituality. In viewing the Rule of

Benedict from a personalist optic, this thesis will seek to identify these elements, for their association with human nature itself allows them to transcend time, place, and condition.

4.2.3 Methodology

As part of the overall problem-solving methodology used in this thesis, certain basic interpretative guidelines will be presented that need to be kept in mind as one reflects on how the method will be implemented. These guidelines have been summarized from the work of Paul Ricoeur outlined by Winter,²⁹ as well as from essays on interpreting the Rule of Benedict from Michael Casey.³⁰ These will assist the reader to visualize a clearer context within which the personalist method can be employed in transposing key features from the Rule to a contemporary secular setting such as the workplace.

In Winter's understanding of Ricoeur's notion of reading a "text,"³¹ its meaning becomes "lived out in the interpretations of people's lives" rather than something merely linguistic. Texts are like the grammatical coding and interpretations of life's events beneath our consciousness. Such interpretations can be called the subtexts, the unspoken word(s) that form consequent interpretations of life's events. Distinguishing the coding from its message results in the opening up of new possibilities of meaning. This can be a challenge, since the interpretation is embedded in cultural expression and ideology, which, if not unpacked, can lead to biases and wrong judgments.³² Ricoeur proposes a way to 'read' a

²⁹ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 80–89.

³⁰ Michael Casey, OSB, *An Unexciting Life: Reflections on Benedictine Spirituality* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 2005), esp. 29–53.

³¹ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 64 ff.

³² *Ibid.*, 81ff.

societal text: (a) *guessing or discerning*, not arbitrarily, what the character of a text means, until a sense of the text comes into focus; (b) through *analysis*, teasing out an explanation that most probably best accounts for the text; (c) *comprehending or understanding* what ‘world’ the text holds as it projects its meaning despite personal and/or societal biases. A valid method of interpreting the Rule will assume these steps, unpacking the root metaphor that permeates it. While Winter’s is explicitly attuned to religious social ethics, it appears very adaptable to the present thesis which, while not specifically ethical, will attempt to provide a human and spiritual foundation for ethical decisions.

Two socio-historical principles³³ of Michael Casey provide a broader picture within which to locate a personalist metaphor. Casey observes that: (a) during what is known as the Benedictine centuries, godliness meant becoming more human, while sin meant that one became alienated from oneself; and (b) human values in the Benedictine perspective were not intended to support an autonomous humanism but rather to foster responsiveness to the spiritual. This should offer further support in realizing that the personalist features identified in the Rule provide a rationale for their relevance in being transposed to a contemporary setting.

4.2.4 The literature

³³ Casey, *An Unexciting Life*, 102. Specifically, a human being was [*f*]ormed in the image of God, *deformed* through loss of likeness, *reformed* by being *conformed* to Christ in grace, ultimately to be *transformed* in glory.”

Clearly, to study the Rule of Benedict and to transpose some of its key principles to the contemporary world requires an analysis of the interpretative literature. A synopsis of the different categories of literature used in writing this thesis follows.

The first category consists of classical commentaries. The oldest is perhaps that of Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel (760–840 CE),³⁴ who wrote in the hope of the renewal of Benedictine practices. A much more recent classic is that of Paul Delatte (1848–1937),³⁵ who prioritizes the humanness of Benedict. Another is that of Dom Cuthbert Butler (1858–1934), who writes, “St Benedict's Rule has been one of the great facts in the history of western Europe, and that its influence and effects are with us to this day. . . . one of the most potent factors in the formation of our modern Europe . . .”³⁶

These classics, while still important, have been succeeded by several modern works. First is that of Timothy Fry, *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict*,³⁷ a trusted standard commentary with many textual notes. Adalbert de Vogüé's, *The Rule of Saint Benedict* has a doctrinal and spiritual emphasis.³⁸ More recently, Terrence G. Kardong's *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary*,³⁹ provides not only an interpretation, but also a contemporary translation. There is likewise the work of Mayeul de Dreule *The Rule of Saint Benedict* that incorporates perspectives from other traditions such as pre-Christian,

³⁴ Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel, *Commentary of the Rule of Benedict*, trans. David Barry, OSB (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2007).

³⁵ Delatte, *The Rule of St. Benedict*.

³⁶ Cuthbert Butler, "Preface," in *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule*, 2nd ed., (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1924), no page number.

³⁷ Timothy Fry, OSB, ed., *RB 1980. The Rule of St. Benedict: In Latin and English with Notes* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981).

³⁸ Adalbert de Vogüé, *The Rule of Saint Benedict: A Doctrinal and Spiritual Commentary*, trans. John Baptist Hasbrouck, Monk of Our lady of Guadalupe Abbey (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1983).

³⁹ Terrence G. Kardong, OSB, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996).

Hindu, Buddhist monasticism, and Judaism.⁴⁰ The German scholar, Aquinata Böckmann has produced three overlapping works that together form a commentary on the Rule's major segments: *Perspectives on the Rule of St. Benedict*,⁴¹ *Around the Monastic Table – RB 31–42*,⁴² and *A Listening Community*,⁴³ the last dealing comprehensively with the prologue and chapters 1 to 3.

Many recent studies are not comprehensive commentaries, but take up various aspects of the Rule and its spiritual contributions. Among the more notable are studies by two Anglican authors, Andrew Marr and his work *Tools for Peace*,⁴⁴ which generates a conversation between Benedict and René Girard on the theme of *pax* (peace); and Esther de Waal, a lay woman and historian whose study engages the Benedictine and Celtic traditions.⁴⁵ Michael Casey's *An Unexciting Life* presents a selection of articles on the Rule that include an important essay on interpretation.⁴⁶ Joan Chittister has authored many books and articles with key applications for the modern person generally.⁴⁷ Numerous other authors have likewise written with the general purpose of bringing Benedict's spiritual

⁴⁰ Mayeul de Dreuille, OSB, *The Rule of Saint Benedict: A Commentary in Light of World Ascetic Traditions*, trans. Mark Hargreaves, OSB (New York/Mahwah, NJ: The Newman Press, 2000).

⁴¹ Aquinata Böckmann, *Perspectives on the Rule of St. Benedict: Expanding Our Hearts in Christ*, ed., Marianne Burkhard, OSB, trans. Matilda Handl, OSB and Marianne Burkhard, OSB (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 2005).

⁴² Aquinata Böckmann, *Around the Monastic Table – RB 31–42: Growing in Mutual Service and Love*, ed., Marianne Burkhard, OSB, trans. Matilda Handl, OSB and Marianne Burkhard, OSB (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009).

⁴³ Aquinata Böckmann, *A Listening Community: A Commentary on the Prologue and Chapters 1–3 of Benedict's Rule*, trans. Marianne Burkhard, OSB (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015).

⁴⁴ Andrew Marr, OSB, *Tools for Peace: The Spiritual Craft of St. Benedict and René Girard* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2007).

⁴⁵ Esther de Waal, *Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1984, 2001); *Living with Contradiction: An Introduction to Benedictine Spirituality* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1989, 1997).

⁴⁶ Casey, *An Unexciting Life*.

⁴⁷ Joan Chittister, OSB, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1990); *The Rule of Benedict: Insights for the Ages* (New York: Crossroad, 2005); and *The Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21st Century* (New York: Crossroad, 2014).

perspective to a wider audience, including Guillaume Jedrzejczak,⁴⁸ Thomas Merton,⁴⁹ Norvene Vest,⁵⁰ and Wulstan Mork.⁵¹ While not always on the same level of scholarship as the previously mentioned commentaries, these works are still valuable in providing a useful modern interpretation of the Rule.

Still, it is vital to note that almost all the works just cited have as their primary aim either to enrich the monastic life or to provide spiritual guidance within the Christian tradition. Accordingly, while they offer scholarly insight into the Rule, and often some indication of how it can be interpreted in a contemporary light, for the purpose of this thesis they are to be approached critically, and from these works the elements that allow the application of Benedict's principles to a contemporary secular context will be "liberated." The fact that, in following Benedict, these works respect monks as persons in the fullest sense makes that transition easier.

A fourth category of studies, although largely popular, has already attempted to bring the Rule into a new context. Some bear mentioning, including two small books by Will Derkse, who insists that both individuals and organizations can profit from emulating Benedictine spirituality.⁵² Quentin R. Skrabec has produced a guidebook for an

⁴⁸ Dom Guillaume Jedrzejczak, OSB, *Sur un chemin de liberté: Commentaires de la Règle de Saint Benoît jour après jour* (Montréal: Anne Sigier, 2006).

⁴⁹ Thomas Merton, *The Rule of Saint Benedict: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 4*, ed. Patrick F. O'Connell and preface by Joan Chittister, OSB (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009).

⁵⁰ Norvene Vest, Oblate OSB, *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary on the Rule of Benedict* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing (A Continuum imprint), 1990); *Acedia & Me: A Marriage, Monks, and a Writer's Life* (New York: Riverhead Books (Penguin Group), 2008).

⁵¹ Wulstan Mork, OSB, *The Benedictine Way* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1987).

⁵² Wil Derkse, *The Rule of Benedict for Beginners: Spirituality for Daily Life*, trans. Martin Kessler (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003); and *A Blessed Life: Benedictine Guidelines for Those Who Long for Good Days*, trans. Martin Kessler (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2009).

“organization’s productivity, culture, and overall success.”⁵³ Craig S. Galbraith and Oliver Galbraith III have interpreted the Rule as “the first complete management system of the Western world.”⁵⁴ Finally, a recent case study by August Turak proposes how Benedict’s monks can be an inspiration for developing corporate purpose and service.⁵⁵ These various categories of studies will be used, where appropriate, as interpretation aids for the Rule itself.

4.3 The Rule of Benedict: An overview

For over 1,500 years, the western tradition has acknowledged the inspiration of a layman named Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480–ca. 547).⁵⁶ His contribution is all the more remarkable since his was an era of anarchy. In the middle of war and destructiveness emerged one who was to become a beacon of hope and a leader, a prophetic genius who was both profoundly human and deeply spiritual. As a young man in his teenage years in Rome, he gave up his studies in preparation to be a government official. He wanted to move away from the decadence that he observed around him. Benedict eventually moved to Monte Cassino, where he built his first monastery and wrote his Rule over the period of his lifetime and experiences. His particular genius was that he not only saw the presence of

⁵³ Quentin R. Skrabec, Jr., *St. Benedict’s Rule for Business Success* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2003), back cover.

⁵⁴ Craig S. Galbraith and Oliver Galbraith III, *The Benedictine Rule of Leadership: Classic Management Secrets You Can Use Today*, (Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2004), back cover.

⁵⁵ August Turak, *Business Secrets of the Trappist Monks: One CEO’s Quest for Meaning and Authenticity* (New York: Columbia Business School Publishing, 2015). (Much of the material was previously published in *Forbes*.)

⁵⁶ While most scholars use these dates for St. Benedict, Benedictine scholar and commentary, Georg Holzherr, OSB, writes, “The traditional birth- and death-dates (480–547) are probably too early,” in “Introduction to the Rule of Saint Benedict,” *American Benedictine Review* 61, no. 1 (March 2010): 50.

God at work everywhere, but that he could write about what that meant in simple terms that were both elegant and eminently practical.

The Rule of Benedict (probably composed around 530 CE) is a spiritual approach that sought to integrate life, work, and prayer and was intended as a hands-on guide to the realism of Christian monastic life for the monks of Benedict's day.⁵⁷ Compared to earlier monastic rules, one element of the Rule that stands out is its brevity. Benedict was a great synthesizer of ideas and a man who could express them concisely. His Rule was original. He wrote it with the traditions of his predecessors in mind but clearly complementing these with his own subtleties and modifications.

Harmony and efficiency would be the fabric of Benedict's community, and his Rule is filled with practical tips on how to live a personal life that is holy and healthy. It also contains values of organization, accountability, care for people, respect for the emotional fabric of the community, intensity of focus and purpose, and the importance of healthy interpersonal and community relationships. Rank was renounced. Here, the linkage of life, prayer, and work became a particular Benedictine value, and the Benedictine tradition generated by his Rule is clearly identifiable in the development of the history of the concept of work.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ John Chamberlain, ed., *The Rule of Benedict: The Abingdon Copy*, Toronto Medieval Latin Texts (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982), 1. Scholarly opinion today generally agrees that what was known as the *Rule of the Master* (RM) preceded the writing of the Rule of Benedict (RB), which shows a great reliance on it, but also Benedict's ability and skill at omitting what he did not think fit his purpose or adding something more in line with his purpose. The RM is often long-winded and severe in approach compared to the humanness of the RB. For scholarly reference arguing for the RM before the RB, see David Knowles, OSB, "Regula Magistri and the Rule of St. Benedict," in *Great Historical Enterprises: Problems in Monastic History* (New York: Nelson, 1963).

⁵⁸ Herbert Applebaum, "Work and the Monastic Movement," in *The Concept of Work: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (New York: State University of New York Press (SUNY), 1992), 195–209.

Benedict was straightforward in crafting leadership and self-management principles for the community to follow under the overall leadership of the abbot. At the same time, personalism required a flexibility and a responsibility that created a Benedictine principle of subsidiarity, the principle that in an organization problems need to be tackled at the level that is closest to the problem (see RB 3.3 also).⁵⁹ Every individual participated in the management of the whole community, and none was to be reduced to a mere “human resource.”

As was mentioned, care is required not to transpose our contemporary understanding of the term *rule* to Benedict. His work is better understood as a guiding support. Böckmann says that the aspect of obligation should not be overly stressed. In terms that are far from legalistic, she describes the Rule in the following terms: “It is a signpost that keeps us from making laborious detours, and it is a railing that, on difficult paths, keeps us from falling into a precipice.”⁶⁰

In conclusion, some general observations can to be made: Benedict’s Rule is about a *way of living*;⁶¹ it is a guide immersed in Benedict’s deep sense of realism, and was written out of his real-life experience. It is *not* an iron-clad prescription of do’s and don’ts, but a combination of order with a freedom that allows for personal development. In that sense,

⁵⁹ Birgit Kleymann and Hedley Malloch, “The Rule of Saint Benedict and Corporate HRD: Employing the Whole Person,” *Working Papers Series 2009–CST–01*, Lille, France: IÉSEG School of Management (Catholic University of Lille), April 2009, 7, accessed April 12, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/6396841/The_rule_of_Saint_Benedict_and_corporate_management_employing_the_whole_person.

⁶⁰ Böckmann, *Perspectives on the Rule of St. Benedict*, 127.

⁶¹ “The Latin word ‘regula’, normally translated ‘rule’ comes originally from the word for ‘trellis’, a framework to enable ordered growth. These are not arbitrary ‘rules and regulations’ but a tried and tested framework upon which a willing soul can grow and flourish by God’s good grace.” Ampleforth Abbey UK, accessed October 15, 2015, <http://www.abbey.ampleforth.org.uk/the-community/the-rule>.

the Rule has the *artistic* dimension that leads to freedom and creativity, a dimension that as a counter to mechanism would “strive for a society which will be a communal and religious work of art.”⁶²

To extract a synthetic overview of Benedict’s spirituality from the concrete provisions of his Rule, the author has developed a five-fold template that respects Benedict’s view of the spiritual life as a journey: *Context*, the kind of world into which Benedict invited people; *Calling*, Benedict’s expectations; *Challenges*, his awareness of spiritual difficulties; *Comprehensiveness*, how Benedict integrated human emotionality; and *Culmination*, what for him gives this spiritual experience its present and ultimate value. This template will say what these key spiritual principles were and were not, and will identify what can be transposed from them to a contemporary situation.

4.4 Components of spirituality found in the Rule

4.4.1 Context

With his Rule, Benedict invites us into his world. He offers us a “little book for beginners” (RB 73.8) with a spirituality that is a practical, down-to-earth way of living, what de Vogüé calls “a matter of a rule of life.”⁶³ Chittister calls Benedict’s Rule more “an attitude of mind than . . . a set of religious prescriptions,”⁶⁴ and Fry calls it “a notable rejection of what were then regarded as contemporary values and a deliberate choice of a way of life at sharp variance with accepted mores.”⁶⁵ Still, it is vital to note that Benedict

⁶² Holland, “Linking Social Analysis and Theological Reflection,” 170–191, esp. 170.

⁶³ Adalbert de Vogüé, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 6.

⁶⁴ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 15.

⁶⁵ Fry, *RB 1980*, 149.

did not set out to write a treatise on the individual spiritual life, such as *An Introduction to the Devout Life* of Francis de Sales (1567–1622). His was instead a guidebook for behaving spiritually within a community setting, yet at the same time for individual growth within that setting in all its ordinariness, taking into account human strengths and weaknesses, both those of the self and those of others. Even in the Rule itself Benedict was eminently flexible. “Lifestyle, like the monastic habit, is to be adapted according to local conditions and climate and measured to fit the person. . . . There is no suggestion that one size suits everybody.”⁶⁶ These elements of human understanding and flexibility contribute greatly to Benedict’s uniqueness and enduring value.

Knowing Benedict’s practical understanding of human nature facilitates our understanding of his spirituality. Human nature, emotions, trust, respect, flexibility—all these with a basis in scripture—form much of the contours of his context. Applying a personalist metaphor, one can see a Rule that has two main divisions: Benedict’s spiritual doctrine (Prologue and chaps. 1–7) and his regulations (chaps. 8–73), the first being far more important for the purposes of this study. Within his regulations are such chapters on deans and the dormitory, the penitential code, material goods, food and sleep, satisfaction for faults, work, prayer and external relationships, guests, new members and community order, the porter, and an appendix that deals with community relationships. Even here, however, one can detect a consistent thread of personalism. The Rule focuses on how monks should live, their duties and responsibilities, the hierarchy to be observed, and

⁶⁶ Examples of flexibility include: distribution and personal need (RB 34.2); pastoral demands balanced with work demands (RB 53.19–20); and age taken into account (RB 30.1). In Casey, *An Unexciting Life*, 85.

orderly administration. Lewis Mumford describes its overall context in a rather poetic manner: “Shared work and the benefits of shared mind.”⁶⁷

Clearly the totality of Benedict’s perspective found its vision and purpose only in a Christian, monastic, and, even for its times, a countercultural context that cannot simply be transposed to the contemporary period. It is equally obvious that its very concrete provisions usually have little applicability outside monastic walls. Yet underlying these everyday guidelines and pervading the totality of Benedict’s Rule are keen insights into human nature and human interaction that can have timeless value and that can enhance human life and work. Although it is eminently practical, the Rule is not legalistic, instrumentalist, or mechanistic. On the positive side, its provisions value human dignity and allow for the freedom and creativity that current contemporaries seek, yet all within the basis of order and mutual respect.

4.4.2 Calling

What kind of life is Benedict inviting us into? It has been seen that the Rule is not a rule book in the traditional sense of the word, but more like a railing that keeps one steady on difficult paths, especially when there is danger of falling into a precipice. With its central emphasis on divine presence and power, Benedict’s calling obviously involves the transpersonal quality foundational to spirituality. Benedict truly wants his monks to think about what it is they want, and what it is they seek, both now and *ultimately*. He puts out the call: is there anyone who can say yes to a yearning for life and a desire for good days

⁶⁷ Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine: Technics and Human Development* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Janovich, 1967), 265.

(RB Prol. 15)? His prologue is devoted to the urgency of this yearning and desire, and in that sense the urgency for a spiritual, interior life.

While it will have its challenges, the awaiting journey will fill his followers with incredible joy even *here and now* (RB Prol. 49). The ultimacy that lies at the Rule's root does not detract from its sense of present well-being or from day-to-day realities. It is clear that Benedict's spirituality has an eschatological outlook, but also partially a realized one, and not merely the teleological eschatology that characterized, for example, the anonymous contemporary text *Rule of the Master*.

At the same time, just as Benedict's spirituality was shaped by an eschatology that is both future and realized, it was shaped also by a notion of a divine power that was not only transcendent but immanent as well. The presence of God shaped everything he saw, touched, thought, and did. Since God was present within the individual, and within the world, Benedict's spirituality begins with an invitation to open up oneself to the *inner life*. For him, this intrapersonal dimension was foundational. With his first word, "*Obsculata*," Benedict calls his monks to begin a *listening* journey, a deep listening to the voice of God within (RB Prol. 9-10). Kardong's commentary concludes: "Benedict has virtually defined the monk as a 'listener' from RB Prol. 1 onward."⁶⁸ With this key spiritual principle, Benedict calls upon the individual to discover their own *interiority*, their own interior world. Such a discovery will allow the person to learn to be at home with their own self. A parallel line of reflection can be observed in the contemporary philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, a line of reflection that echoes the personalist root metaphor that is the

⁶⁸ Kardong, *Benedict's Rule*, 177.

interpretative lens for this study of the Rule. For Levinas, the field of interiority unfolds as a dwelling. In such a dwelling, one can be at home with oneself and thus gain perspective on the meaningfulness of work, possessions, intimacy, and hospitality.⁶⁹ Benedict has used a similar image with his focus on interiority as the Lord's dwelling place or tent (*tabernaculum*, RB Prol. 22). In a moving passage, Benedict declares that such an *interior* dwelling place will grow the person to one "who walks without blemish, . . . and is just in all his dealings; who speaks the truth from his heart and has not practiced deceit with his tongue; who has not wronged a fellowman in any way, nor listened to slanders against his neighbor" (RB Prol. 25; Ps. 14[15]:2-3). It is crucial to recognize that here the notion of individual calling and the interior life is linked inextricably to the wider community and to justice. Calling is inherently both personal and social, and it is the journey of a lifetime (RB Prol. 41).

From a Benedictine perspective, Michael Casey asks, "What does the centrality of patience have to teach a generation that lives in the wake of the nineteenth century's myth of progress and in an age which cherishes achievement above all?"⁷⁰ The title of Casey's collection, *An Unexciting Life*, says it all, inferring that Benedict's notion of calling is simply that: day-to-day living within the ordinariness of life. Yet, as Winter notes, it is from everyday things that higher order root metaphors are drawn.⁷¹ Christian ideas of 'vocation' or 'calling' have very often been associated with states of life and have

⁶⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh, PN: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 110. See also Winter, *Liberating Creation* for further discussions on "human dwelling."

⁷⁰ Michael Casey, *An Unexciting Life: Reflections on Benedictine Spirituality*, 65.

⁷¹ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 34.

overtones of permanence or at least semi-permanence. Still, at their most basic, Benedict's notion of calling is far more fundamental, and, with his notions of both transcendence and immanence, his understanding of calling may perhaps best be described as living fully in the present, in the day-to-day, with others in mind, and with ultimate purpose, amidst the most ordinary events of everyday life.

In conclusion, some basic observations are germane. As intended by the Rule itself, calling is an invitation from Benedict to be a monk in the monastery, to follow the guidelines as written in the Rule, and to walk through the ordinary life of a journey in community until death. It has a sense of permanence. The practical provisions of the Rule around that notion of calling are intended for a monastic life, and within a Christian tradition. Few of them have direct application outside that context. But because it is rooted in the day-to-day, Benedict's sense of calling has deeper spiritual roots that can be transposed to ordinary experience wherever it is lived: roots of presence, transcendence, and community directed to both current and future well-being. Here calling reflects the personalist characteristics of both subjectivity and relationality. In that sense, even in an impermanent world, its very ordinariness has deep spiritual value.

4.4.2.1 *Stabilitas*: Essential rootedness

Given that Benedict's main purpose for which his Rule was intended was an awareness of the divine presence, and thus the transcendence of human life and activity, he established three *tactical requirements* for its fulfillment: *stabilitas*, *obœdientia*, and *conversatio morum*. The first requisite, *stabilitas*, was intended to ensure that a monk would attach himself to a particular monastic community for life. As one author put it, "the

ideal was physical permanence or *stabilitas loci*, as it was sometimes qualified.”⁷² In his classic commentary, Cuthbert Butler notes that this ideal was closely attached to the notion of a supportive community.⁷³ Still, behind the physical attachment, there lay a more important emotional quality: “This was, if we accept an Evagrian-Cassianic approach, primarily a *stabilitas mentis*, a solidity or steadiness of mind. *Stabilitas loci* or stability of place, staying in one community or monastery, was one means to this end; it was not itself the goal.”⁷⁴ There was even here the idea that *stabilitas* was connected to Benedict’s theme of the monastery as a workshop, wherein the monk became an artisan, creative, crafting his spiritual life.⁷⁵

Although the notion of monastic stability was not at all new, Benedict was the first to make it a formal vow or promise.⁷⁶ In fact, promising “to persevere in stability” was an essential requirement of the novice at an early stage, and of visiting priests and monks who sought to join the monastery (RB 60.9 and 61.5). This was attached to the reading and understanding of the Rule that would guide them. Kardong notes that while the term “to persevere in his stability” does not entirely make grammatical sense, it is “sustained by the best manuscripts.”⁷⁷ He further comments: “No doubt monastic stability was ultimately

⁷² M. M. Hildebrand, *The External School in Carolingian Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 32.

⁷³ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 125–126.

⁷⁴ Michael Casey, OCSO, “Strangers to Worldly Ways: RB 4,20,” in *An Unexciting Life: Reflections on Benedictine Spirituality* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede’s Publications, 2005), 164.

⁷⁵ Walter H. Melion, “Convent and *Cubiculum Cordis*: The Incarnational Thematic of Materiality in the Cistercian Prayerbook of Martin Boshmann (1610),” in *Image and Incarnation: The Early Modern Doctrine of the Pictorial Image*, ed. Walter H. Melion and Lee Palmer Wandel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2015), 452.

⁷⁶ Anselmo Lentini, OSB, *San Benedetto: La Regula*, 2nd ed., (Monte Cassino, Italy, 1950), 521.

⁷⁷ Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 497.

based on the NT virtue of *hypomone*, patient endurance (Luke 21:19). This was seen as the primary virtue of the martyr.”⁷⁸

Böckmann summarizes the Rule’s notion of *stabilitas* under five main headings. (1) One needs *stability of heart*, that is, to hold firmly to God. Once one has chosen the path, one sticks to it (RB Prol. 49-50).⁷⁹ (2) *Stability of feet* (RB 64.2) is clearly an expression of physical stability, but it went much further. Böckmann uses Jungian language: “This means: face your own shadow, stay with yourself without seeking excuses, accept yourself and trust in God. Learn to love the people around you, see them with the eyes of God, and accept them as God does.”⁸⁰ Staying put physically was not a legalistic idea; rather, the key insight is to not elude one’s responsibilities. (3) *Stabilitas* thus meant also a *stability under obædientia*, a concept in the Rule closely connected to the Benedictine keyword of *listening*. (4) As noted, here stability also meant *stability under a Rule*, one that had been read and understood. There is present in the notion a sense of order. (5) Finally, there is a definite idea of stability *in community*, because *stabilitas* was essentially a bonding of the individual with a particular community.

Michael Casey’s summary is much briefer. “The vow of stability,” he concludes, “works against the immediate gratification syndrome.”⁸¹ Yet Böckmann’s analysis makes

⁷⁸ Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 470. In RB 60:8 there is a promise also to observe the Rule and stability (“*propria stabilitate*”). He points out that even though the personal pronoun (“*propria*”) doesn’t work well in English (i.e., “his stability”), Benedict did make such a term part of his diction.

⁷⁹ Here Böckmann refers back to Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–395): “This the most marvelous thing of all: how the same thing is both a standing still and a moving. . . . I mean by this that the firmer and the more immovable one remains in the Good, the more he progresses in the course of virtues. . . . It is like using the standing still as if it were a wing while the heart flies upward through its stability in the Good.” In *Life of Moses*, II. 243–244.

⁸⁰ Böckmann, *Perspectives on the Rule of St. Benedict*, 135.

⁸¹ Michael Casey, OCSO, “The Benedictine Promises,” in *An Unexciting Life: Reflections on Benedictine Spirituality* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede’s Publications, 2005), 222.

it clear that Benedict's perception goes far beyond the surface ideas of permanence and physical stability that were found in earlier rules, and at its foundations provides an essential sense of rootedness in the present time and situation. *Stabilitas* is a willingness to attend to the present, and to work and live *here*, not someplace else. It is an acceptance of the ordinary, the day-to-day, yet it is visibly a deeply spiritual notion, founded on a sense of *purpose*. It is also an emotional insight that growth is linked to rootedness and to relationality. Stability can even engender a vulnerability that can allow relationships to mature.⁸² Stability is *not* inflexibility. This is clear from the various other provisions of the Rule. Nor is stability support for the idea of the *status quo*. Indeed, quite the contrary, since it is linked to the two other key requirements of the Rule, *obædientia* and, above all, *conversatio morum*, which demand a constant openness to change.

Obviously, the religious motivations behind stability—its Christian and monastic underpinnings—and the physical permanence it sought are important for the Rule's intended purpose. Nevertheless, these particulars by no means exhaust the substance of Benedict's requirement, nor do they detract from its usefulness even in far different contexts. What can be transposed to contemporary times, and indeed, so often is needed, is the Rule's substantial underlying foundation of self-determination, with its rootedness, regularity and, day-to-day "staying power" as a spiritually fulfilling and emotionally helpful way of living with purpose.⁸³

⁸² Tomlinson, "A Relational Human Development Perspective on Benedictine Spirituality," 93.

⁸³ Jane Tomaine, *St. Benedict's Toolbox: The Nuts and Bolts of Everyday Benedictine Living* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2005), 45 ff.

4.4.2.2 *Obædientia*: Deep listening

Benedict's concept of *obædientia* is on the surface very clear: it means, says Butler, a promise "to keep the Rule in all things, and to observe all commandments laid upon him" (RB 58).⁸⁴ But Butler is here quoting from the chapter on the admission of novices, and his statement needs the context of Benedict's more general comments on the nature of *obædientia* in RB 5. Here Benedict says immediately: "The first degree of humility is obedience without delay,"⁸⁵ but he then connects this first to the quality of ultimacy, since all obedience is, in the end, obedience to God, and secondly, to the quality of hearing or listening. Treating this key paragraph, Butler identifies two core principles: the *theory* ("as if the command came from God"; the transcendent quality of the promise) and the *practice* ("without delay"). He seems, however, to have overlooked the third, the *means* ("hearing"), especially since this is so closely linked to "*Obsculta*" ("Listen"), Benedict's keyword for his entire Rule (RB Prol. 1). In analysing this opening verse, Böckmann even explains it by saying that it "describes obedience as listening and putting into practice what was heard."⁸⁶

Butler also quotes Augustine Baker, OSB (1575–1641) to contextualize the quality of the Benedictine promise and to remove from it any notion of arbitrariness: "The authority of superiors is not illimited, but confined to certain conditions, as that it must be

⁸⁴ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 2nd ed., 139.

⁸⁵ "*Primus humilitas gradus est obedientia sine mora. Haec convenit his qui nihil sibi a Christo carius aliquid existimant. Propter servitium sanctum quod professi sunt seu propter metum gehennae vel gloriam vitae aeternae, mox aliquid imperatum a maiore fuerit ac si divinitus imperetur moram pati nesciant in faciendo. De quibus Dominus dicit: Obaudit auris oboedivit mihi (Ps 17[18]:45). Et item dicit doctoribus: Qui vos audit me audit (Luke 10:16). Ergo hi tales, relinquentes statim quae sua sunt et voluntatem propriam deserentes, mox exoccupatis et quod agebant imperfectum reliquentes, vicino oboedientiae pede iubentis vocem factis sequuntur, et veluti uno momento praedicta magistri iussio et perfecta discipuli opera, in velocitate timoris Dei, ambae res communiter citius explicantur (RB 5.1-9).*"

⁸⁶ Böckmann, *A Listening Community*, 7.

iuxta Regulam, neither besides nor above the Rule, and that this must be *ad edificationem* and not *ad destructionem*.⁸⁷ In other words, obedience is situated within the whole Rule itself, a Rule to which its adherents have freely and consciously committed.

In this same vein, Butler—noting that it is “the temper of obedience, much more than the actual obediences, that is of value”⁸⁸—identifies four key elements that characterize it. In his summation: (1) *obedience is “sweet to man”* in the sense that the superior’s command is a type of vote of confidence in the subject’s abilities, and should promote their well-being; (2) *obedience is interior*, not just the physical exercise of the charge; (3) *obedience even addresses the seemingly impossible* (RB 68), in that the monk should have confidence in both his own abilities and that the superior has chosen wisely (RB 68.4), not only for the community but for the individual; (4) *obedience is mutual*, in that Benedict explicitly encompasses within the notion not only the commands of superiors, but even the requests of others (RB 71).⁸⁹ Indeed, connecting obedience to Benedict’s stated quality of listening, one commentary says: “In fact, the vow of *obædientia* remains valid for the *abbot* also. When important decisions are to be made it is *his* turn to listen very carefully to the brothers’ comments.”⁹⁰

With Benedict’s first word in the Rule, he suggests that to listen is to listen with the ear of one’s heart. (RB Prol. 1) The emphasis here is to “incline” or bend the ear to the deepest core (“heart”) of the one who is speaking. Like *stabilitas*, *obædientia* was intended

⁸⁷ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 2nd ed., 141, quoting Augustine Baker, *Sancta Sophia*, 325. De Vogüé argues that since “monastic life is a charism imparted by the Spirit, perhaps it has not done well to imprison itself in [a] legal harness.” In de Vogüé, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 282, 284

⁸⁸ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 2nd ed., 140

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 139–140.

⁹⁰ Wil Derkse, *The Rule of Benedict for Beginners*, 29.

ultimately, as Butler notes, to foster an inner disposition, as well as an intrapersonal and transpersonal dimension of spirituality. For Benedict it is not just a listening posture he calls for but a posture that goes deep into the heart of a person. The monk through *obædientia* is in a daily process of discernment, of keeping his ear to the ground, so to speak, of listening to what is truly important. The quality of listening intently, and being governed in life by what one hears, is in the Rule attached to the notion of hearing God's word, but, even outside such a context, it can retain a quality of transcendent attentiveness. Delatte points out that Benedict's notion of obedience even has a certain universalism, for it meant in the broadest sense being in harmony with the whole of creation as the plan of the Creator unfolded.⁹¹

In Benedict's spirituality, the importance of obedience as a listening posture is better appreciated when it is understood that monastic silence is its context. Like obedience, silence is a *relational* factor in the Rule of Benedict. While Benedict insisted on a spirit of silence, his attitude was quite unlike the physical silence of *La Grande Trappe*. In practice, he did not restrict free conversation, because he realized that monks were also social beings. His emphasis is on *when* and *how* the monks speak. When one does speak, it is with the interior qualities of reverence and humility, reasonably (RB 31.7, 61.4, 65.14), with gravity (RB 42.1), with self-restraint (RB 22.6, 42.11), and gentleness (RB 22.8) that indicate the *manner* of any conversation. But *listening*, with its openness to others and to the divine, is even more important.

⁹¹ Delatte, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, 84.

In the Rule of Benedict, *obœdientia* is not the pure militaristic notion it might have been otherwise, and that it sometimes became in religious communities.⁹² Obedience even specifically allows for appeal (RB 68). Indeed, it is not simply a hierarchical notion, since respect for the requests of one's peers is also involved. Foundational to Benedict's *obœdientia*, however, and what gives his notion enduring worth, are the factors of *attentiveness* and *listening*, not merely as practical norms, but as characteristics enriching the subject and at the same time having both interpersonal and transcendental value. While Benedict respects individual uniqueness, he recognizes that relationality and communion form a two-way process.

4.4.2.3 *Conversatio morum*: Creative openness

Fry describes the third of Benedict's spiritual promises, *conversatio morum*, as the "most important promise,"⁹³ for it reflects an interior commitment to ongoing transformation. In 1907 the Benedictine Presidents wrote: "By it [*conversatio morum*] the monk binds himself to assiduous and unwearied labour at the reformation of his moral or habits according to evangelical perfection, rejecting what is worldly and directing his actions according to the Rule of St Benedict."⁹⁴

Actually, the Presidents wrote at a time when the original text of the Rule (RB 58) was becoming established, and their explanation still conveys a slightly moralistic tone.

⁹² Delatte writes: "Obedience so described is a far different thing from the obedience that reproduces the passivity and inertia of a corpse, or the unthinking docility of the stick that we brandish in our hands." Ibid., 87.

⁹³ Fry, *RB 1980*, 465.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 2nd ed., 134.

The original Rule had used the word *conversatio*, but the word *conversio* had commonly been substituted from quite early times, and this has a very different meaning. The word *conversio* usually referred to “a single act or group of acts, usually the turning from paganism to Christianity, or from sin to repentance, or from the world to the monastic life; its application to a lifelong process of self-discipline and religious formation would be an improper use of the word.”⁹⁵ The original word, *conversatio*, had quite different connotations. One author explains the differences succinctly: “Unfortunately, in the course of time *conversatio morum* slipped into *conversio morum*, and it began to look as if Benedict was looking for a conversion in moral conduct when someone entered the monastery. What Benedict expected was not a single moment of conversion [*conversio*] but a lifelong way of living [*conversatio*].”⁹⁶ In fact, the word, used ten times in the Rule, clearly connotes frequency and repetition, so that the Benedictine phrase *conversatio morum suorum* can probably best be translated as something close to “continuing conversion of his ways of living.”⁹⁷ In sum, the Latin expression contains the conjoint elements, first, of leading the life to which one is committed, and, second, of constant openness to change.

To summarize, therefore, one can say that Benedict’s *conversatio morum* is the opening up of self on an ongoing basis to the ways that will shape one’s heart, thinking, and behaviour: “*conversatio* refers to the whole lifestyle of a person.”⁹⁸ Here, the personalist

⁹⁵ Ibid., 136.

⁹⁶ Joseph F. Conwell, *Impelling Spirit: 1539, Ignatius of Loyola and His Companions* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1997), 215.

⁹⁷ Lucy Beckett, *In the Light of Christ: Writings in the Western Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 138.

⁹⁸ Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 219.

metaphor is still operative, for while the subject is self-determining, relationality can enrich that personal process. Thus, *conversatio morum* is a constant dialogical activity that provides an antidote to ideological fixation. This continuing adaptation and transformation attitudinally calls for a posture of receptivity and an ongoing adoption of a new self-image (receiving). Commentators see it as providing a balance to the corresponding promise of stability.⁹⁹ *Conversatio morum* calls not just for acceptance of change, but *an openness to* and *an embracing of change* to affect one's life for the good. Obviously, this incorporates also an openness to others¹⁰⁰—their views and even their needs—and an openness to “alternative possibilities.”¹⁰¹ A particular strength of Benedict's spirituality is that his *conversatio morum* recognizes even the experience of constant failure, as well as success, and the consequent learning from that process. Implied, of course, is the commitment to live out the calling in spite of any personal weaknesses.¹⁰²

What the Rule's notion of *conversatio morum* offers in a quite different context is the message that not only external behaviour but, even more importantly, internal dispositions constantly need to be shaped by and for the (healthy) community itself, indeed, by and for the real world in which the community exists. It is obviously a recognition that the culture holds a major influence in shaping a person's way of thinking and acting. At the same time, it is anything but a promotion of conformism. Indeed, it is a liberation, a healthy openness to the unpredictable and creative in life: in the case of Benedict's monks, to God's unpredictability with a willingness “to live provisionally, ready to respond to the

⁹⁹ Tomaine, *St. Benedict's Toolbox*, 82.

¹⁰⁰ Jedrzejczak, *Sur un chemin de liberté*, 372.

¹⁰¹ Casey, “*Quod Experimento Didicimus*,” 85.

¹⁰² Tomaine, *St. Benedict's Toolbox*, 86.

new whenever and however that might appear.”¹⁰³ To some, the juxtaposition of a fundamental openness to change with a commitment to stability might seem paradoxical; to Benedict, it was the balance of equal necessities.

4.4.2.4 Interpersonal relationships: Community first

Earlier it was noted that any adequate approach to spirituality for the workplace would not only embrace the deeply personal or interior dimension, but would extend to life’s relationships. For Benedict, this interpersonal dimension was essential. As Butler puts it, “Benedict was a collectivist in the spiritual order . . . the sanctification of the monk was to be sought by his living the life of the community.”¹⁰⁴ Though it was Benedict’s preference when young to be a hermit, he came to realize the wisdom of *community first*. Interestingly, he even demanded that community become the testing ground for any future entrant. In community, he saw the monk’s mettle as being tested. There he would come face-to-face with himself, with relationships, and with his strengths and weaknesses.¹⁰⁵

While it is hierarchical in its organization, Benedict’s vision for community is structured on an egalitarian footing, that is, one’s rank—no matter what one’s previous background, slave or official—is determined by the date of entry. In the process of decision-making, each professed member has an equal vote. Skrabec notes, “Benedict’s Rule builds community before structure.”¹⁰⁶ At the heart of Benedict’s notion he identifies

¹⁰³ De Waal, *Seeking God*, 69–70.

¹⁰⁴ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 202.

¹⁰⁵ This explains the reluctance of the abbot to simply let a monk who wanted to become a hermit do so.

¹⁰⁶ Skrabec, *St. Benedict’s Rule for Business Success*, 15.

three principles. There was camaraderie, communal welfare, and stability with universalist overtones not reduced to that of a local group. This was a “total system or universe. In this respect, everything and all of daily life are community.”¹⁰⁷ In other words, “community” first embraced the intimate group, but in its wider context.

Still, community in Benedict’s understanding was not intended to downgrade the individual; rather, from the beginning Benedict recognized that the mutuality of the common life could bring many fruits to each of its members.¹⁰⁸ No doubt, jealousies, conflicts, and interpersonal feelings would play a major role. Benedict’s approach was to focus on respect for the humanity and the personal dignity of each of his monks, and “to set down nothing harsh, or oppressive” (RB Prol. 46) as a matter of principle.

The result was an approach to community interaction that is essentially collegial and tending toward mutuality. Benedict requires that the monks are not only to obey the abbot but also one another, depending on seniority, but this out of respect (RB 71). In a keen assessment of human emotions, Benedict also requires empathy, since life in community often demands great patience because of the weaknesses of others, whether in body (sickness) or in behaviour (RB 72.5). From a Benedictine viewpoint, to maintain community the rights and needs of others have to be taken into account. “The deadliest enemy of community life,” writes Kardong, is “to be focused on personal wants and projects . . . [and to be] correspondingly closed to the views of others.”¹⁰⁹ Ultimately, if

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰⁸ Tomlinson observes that contemporary relational theories “can possibly reveal dynamics of Benedictine spirituality that can be elucidated by a relational, developmental perspective of the human person.” In “A Relational Human Development Perspective on Benedictine Spirituality,” 89.

¹⁰⁹ Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 107.

implicitly, Benedict's spirituality of community rested not simply on promoting better interpersonal relationships, but on a higher and transcendent principle, a respect for the divine presence in each individual and the connectedness to others, to creation, and to God that this presence entailed.

In the Rule, community is the container, the *temenos*,¹¹⁰ or in Winter's terms, the "human dwelling," that was both central and sacred to Benedict. Chittister says that the notion and practice of community itself may be the special gift of Benedictine spirituality to today's world: "Community is the only antidote we have to an individualism that is fast approaching the heights of the pathological and the sinful in this world."¹¹¹ Even setting aside the moralistic language here, it can be recognized that the particular gift of the Rule was not only its advocacy of respect for the rights and personhood of every individual who formed the group. Equally important was its insight that individual growth and development themselves could only be enhanced by the openness to the views of others that true community and mutuality created. Here are combined the personalist elements of human dignity and relationality, and yet also a sense of uniqueness that does not allow for collectivism.

¹¹⁰ In Jungian thinking and in dream analysis, the *temenos* establishes a boundary, a sacred space for the analyst and analysand in which the analysis takes place. In the alchemist metaphor of tending the fire, too little heat meant no transformation of the base metal into gold, too much heat cracked the vessel. The analysand's work during the process of analysis was to "tend the fire." See James A. Hall, *The Jungian Experience* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1987), 78.

¹¹¹ Chittister, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*, 41.

4.4.2.5 Leadership and decision making

In any organization, the decision making process will reflect a style of leadership. The two are intimately connected almost invariably. The kind of leadership culture that is operative has practical implications not just regarding the maintenance of the organization but especially on its emotional and spiritual infrastructure and thus on the actual (as distinct from the notional) decision making process that is in play. The Rule demands leadership that is both humane and spiritually well grounded; its decision making processes reflect the same principles. At the same time, its principles have proven to be effective.

In Benedict's Rule, leadership is shared, and to some extent it is even compartmentalized, but at its centre is the abbot. As a spiritual figure, a broad picture of Benedict's abbot comes from Butler,¹¹² who ascribes to him six idealized titles: the abbot is "Christ's vicegerent"; "*dominus*"; "Father"; "Wise Physician"; "Master"; and "Dispenser". Obviously, in practice to be faithful to each of these images simultaneously would take some delicate balancing. Still, in sum, the Benedictine leader is one who has real authority, but is also just and reasonable and settles "everything with foresight and fairness" (RB 3.6).

While Butler suggests that an abbot could be someone akin to a "benevolent monarch,"¹¹³ the Rule itself seems to suggest qualities with a far greater degree of mutuality. Indeed, Benedict specifically deals at some length with the personal qualities required in a section on the selection of an abbot (RB 64). Benedict's first criteria for selecting the right candidate immediately combine both the spiritual and the human. One should be chosen, he writes, "for the merit of his life and the learning of his wisdom."

¹¹² The following descriptions of the abbot come from Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 184–194.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 193–194.

Butler interprets this as being “endowed with good sense and wise direction.”¹¹⁴ In his own commentary, Delatte notes that it does not necessarily imply an absence of defects and failings.¹¹⁵ The Rule further notes that the abbot should be “learned in the law of God,”¹¹⁶ but this is not to constitute a traditionalist. On the contrary, this serves so that he can “bring forth new things and old” (RB 64). Delatte makes the point that the “new” refers especially to application, “which changes from day to day.”¹¹⁷ In other words, the position of leadership demands an ability to quickly make adjustments.

Benedict obviously brings into his criteria the notion of community of which the leader is part. He makes the general remark that the person to be chosen ought to profit his brethren rather than preside over them (RB 64.8). Still, he becomes even more detailed. He adds a long list of qualities that deal mainly with the relationship between leader and community. One needs to be chaste, sober, and merciful, as well as not violent, anxious, exacting, jealous, suspicious, or headstrong. There is a pronounced emphasis on the qualities of balance: prudence, consideration for others, discretion, and moderation. Still, one of Benedict’s most telling remarks about leadership comes when he deals with the necessity of correcting a subordinate. Here the Rule again strongly counsels prudence and the avoidance of excess. Any correction should serve to improve rather than to diminish. The final comment in this paragraph could in fact be a motto for leadership generally: “let [the leader] study to be loved rather than feared” (RB 64.15).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 186.

¹¹⁵ Delatte, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, 446. The abbot’s own acceptance of frailty is raised later in the passage.

¹¹⁶ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 186.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 449.

The style of governance and the process of decision making that were central to the Rule also exhibited these same characteristics of mutuality. Benedict provided that the abbot was to respect the diversity of individuals within the community: accommodating and adapting himself to each person's character and intelligence so that he will not only keep those already entrusted to his care from leaving, but will rejoice with the increase in new members (RB 2.32). To describe this style, one author uses the image of a stethoscope since the effective leadership of souls is basically a diagnostic skill demanding "special talents relative to attentive listening and responding adequately."¹¹⁸ Benedict saw the need for the ability to discern the essential in a person or a situation.¹¹⁹ The abbot or abbess as leader, acting with discretion (e.g., RB 68), provides for both guidance and feedback. A monk has two opportunities to discuss a matter further with an abbot. Only then, when the abbot has made his final decision, would the monk obey and follow through as best he can (RB 68.4-5).

There is implicit here a "strong sense of contextuality."¹²⁰ What is a good decision in one context may not be in another. Benedict knew that order brought peace to the monks and to the community itself, but he recognized also that change was a part of life. The quality of spiritual discernment was essential to recognize when one should have priority over the other. It was equally necessary to bring out the best in every individual, a transformational model not dissimilar from the servant leader often advocated in the

¹¹⁸ Wil Derkse, *The Rule of Benedict for Beginners*, 45.

¹¹⁹ In RB 64 Benedict describes the qualities needed in choosing an abbot, all of which demand that he act with tremendous prudence and discretion, "the mother of all virtues" ("*matris virtutum sumens*," RB 64.19). To be discerning, the abbot needs to embody a profound sense of tranquility (RB 64.16).

¹²⁰ Kleymann and Malloch, "The Rule of Saint Benedict and Corporate HRD," 6.

literature of workplace spirituality.¹²¹ In the end, Benedict's leader was to be an exemplar of both connectedness and transcendence. The abbot or abbess would keep in focus the overall order and harmony of the community, the reality of change, the fact that the community is a learning environment, and the preservation of mutual respect, since "all are together" (*nos pariter*, RB 72.12) on the spiritual journey.

In an age known for its autocratic ways, Benedict shows a different outlook. When considering the provisions of the Rule concerning decision making, there can be observed factors that could be called openness to feedback and the practice of subsidiarity. One author observed, "Benedict shows a much greater spirit of collegiality and genuine respect for what his fellow monastics might have to say."¹²² His Rule is characterized by a spirit of cooperation versus one of competition. The abbot, of course, is elected by the whole community (RB 64), and it is that same body that gathers to express their views on major decisions (RB 3). Not only that, but the abbot is a *member* of the group decision body. While the final decision is that of the abbot, everyone is able to express their opinion (RB 3.4). To preserve community harmony, Benedict asks only that speakers not try to defend their positions "obstinately." In fact, Benedict reaches out not only to the whole community in general, but specifically seeks to involve its younger members, since their views can be different and important (RB 3:1-3). Here, the spirit of the Rule is seen in its *balance* or its spirit of *moderation*; it is constantly to be applied "according to the dictates of equity" (RB Prol. 47).

¹²¹ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.

¹²² Marr, *Tools for Peace*, 60. The comparison refers especially to *The Rule of the Master*.

Obviously the Rule's concept of leadership, especially if it were seen as anything close to Butler's notion of a benevolent monarch, would be given far too transcendent a standing to be useful in any broader context. Nevertheless, it can be argued immediately that in placing his emphasis on the single individual, Butler is ignoring the communitarian dimensions that are so essential to the Rule, the co-relation that is essential between leader and community. In fact, given the Rule's detailed provisions, the image that seems best to reflect its style is probably that instead of a servant leader, one who *profits* the community rather than *presiding* over it. (RB 64) Authority, while real, ultimately takes second place to the service that is for the good of the whole body. Moreover, in the Rule this mutuality that is involved in leadership itself is carried over into its decision making processes: real and broad consultation and input, and, above all, real listening.

4.4.2.6 Essential dimensions: Respect, dignity, and hope

Throughout Benedict's Rule and permeating all its provisions is the key dimension of his *respect for humanity and personal dignity*. With many persons living together in community, Benedict knew that orderly rituals around time, space, and relationships set boundaries and established commonality. Nevertheless, he recognized that in every situation where people came together there would often be jealousies and conflicts, and that individual interpersonal feelings would play a real role. Here again, balance was vital. While in his Rule the community was essential, equally so was the individual. The overriding purpose of the Rule was to provide for the governance of the whole body, but it is not without purpose that both the very first words of the Rule's prologue (RB Prol. 1)

and the Rule's very last words (RB 73.8) are addressed to the individual.¹²³ The prologue also introduces from the beginning the concept of *æquitas*, which means doing “what is proper, giving each one what he is entitled to or needs, not simply a rigid application of the law to individuals, but consideration of the personal situation.”¹²⁴ Actually, here is recognized not simply the common dignity of each member of the community, but even their individuality and uniqueness. Within the community, Benedict “arranges things so that there will be order, and yet so that the rank of the brethren will be, as far as possible, *based on no human dignity or human preference*.”¹²⁵ If there is *æquitas*, there is also an *equality* or “commonness” based on the transcendent value of the person. The Rule effectively appreciates that there can be no healthy community without a genuine respect for each person who comprises it. Moreover, this is both a general principle for community governance, as well as one that regulates the day-to-day interpersonal relationships of its members.

In contradistinction to the *Rule of the Master*, Benedict's Rule also introduces as foundational a clear sense of *optimism and hope*, a dimension of realized eschatology versus the *Master's* emphasis on persevering in the monastery until death brought the rewards of eternity.¹²⁶ Benedict clearly offers hope for the here-and-now, not just in an afterlife: “But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, *our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love*” (RB

¹²³ Böckmann, *Perspectives of the Rule of St. Benedict*, 12.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹²⁵ Thomas Merton, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 104. Italics in original.

¹²⁶ *The Rule of the Master. CS86. Regula Magistri*, trans. Luke Eberle (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 104.

Prol. 49; italics added). Obviously, Benedict believed also in the eschatological hope of final glory, but here he is almost unique. Delatte suggests in his commentary that the Rule is designed to become a means of liberation, to “empty us and free us of encumbrance.”¹²⁷ Benedict’s is not a theology based only on the cross but on resurrection. This dimension of hope—both now and future—brought to daily life a clear sense of the transcendent that obviously gave a true purposefulness to the individual’s activity and a real sense of freedom in carrying out life’s daily activities.

Overall, the spirit that permeates Benedict’s Rule is apparent, even if someone is tempted to emphasize its structural dynamics. The ascetical dimension that is his spiritual doctrine of hope and transcendence is foundational (RB Prol., chaps. 1–7). Inner dispositions are central. Thus the reader of the Rule finds general statements of behaviour rather than tedious details because Benedict is more concerned with why things get done. This inner motivation was, for Benedict, a clear signal of the immanence of the divine presence and yet the transcendence of human dignity and activity, and quite distinct from any rules-and-regulations approach. Both the ensuing concept of human equality that is tempered by *æquitas* and the sense of growth and hope that is made possible by a freeing of the individual from emotional encumbrances seem to be as important for a contemporary world as they were when Benedict wrote his Rule.

¹²⁷ Delatte, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, 22–23.

4.4.3 Challenges

To see Benedict's spirituality is to recognize how it is put into practice, both exteriorly and, more especially, interiorly. It is not good enough that a monk obey, for example, in an exterior fashion but still have a closed mind and heart within. The question that needs to be asked in relation to the *challenges* of Benedictine spirituality is as follows: what hurdles will a person encounter in responding to the world that Benedict opens up? While Benedict's calling held out high ideals, his practicality and sense of realism led him to recognize its challenges. If an internal sense of transcendence and connectedness was to lead to purposeful action to convert the self and to affect an individual's relationships with other persons—indeed, with the totality of the universe that surrounds him or her—this would not take place without difficulties. Within Benedict's spiritual counsels, three of these difficulties were paramount: going beyond self-will, maintaining commitment, and serving others.

4.4.3.1 Beyond self-will

In dealing with *obœdientia*, Benedict writes that monks will forsake their own wills and hasten to follow the voice of another (*relinquentes statim quae sua sunt et voluntatem propriam deserentes*, RB 5.7-8). Here Benedict includes the quality of immediacy (RB 5.1 ff.), that what he proposes is a “narrow road” (RB 5.11), and that it cannot be lived half-heartedly but must be lived gladly in a heartfelt manner (RB 5.14-17). Chittister

summarizes such counsel this way: that the monks “no longer live by their own judgment, giving in to their whims and appetites.”¹²⁸

Butler says that self-denial, or the curbing of selfishness and self-will, is the root of Benedict’s spirituality.¹²⁹ Benedict was not promoting bodily austerities as was quite common in monastic traditions. His formal teaching on spirituality and moral concepts—the Instruments, as Butler calls them—rests on the Rule’s chapter 4, “The Tools for Good Works” (RB 4.1-75). “Worthy of note,” says Butler, is that “there is nothing monastic or ‘religious’ in the technical sense: they are all mere Christianity, elementary morality, fundamental religion.”¹³⁰ What is remarkable, says Butler, is that Benedict does not follow Cassian’s use of the word *mortificare* and *mortificatio* with regard to self-will, as if one should seek to destroy it.¹³¹ The reason is that Benedict believes that self-will or wanting our own way is part-and-parcel of who we are as human beings. To advance beyond self-will is rather to redirect the self to the rights and needs of others. His attitude was not, in regards to denying one’s self-will, a denial of affection and the promotion of austerities, but rather a human sense of tolerance. Benedict’s notion of advancing beyond self-will is fundamentally two things: first, knowing what our priority is in itself (ultimacy and transcendence) and for others (the common good) and, second, avoiding making decisions simply for our own benefit (private good only). The goal is to become “ex-centric,”¹³² to go beyond one’s own self-world to that of the other and to what is ultimate for us.

¹²⁸ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 58.

¹²⁹ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 50, 51. Butler says that “Benedictine life is not, and is not intended to be, what is called a ‘penitential life’,” 25–26.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Derske, *A Blessed Life*, 58.

Anglican abbot Andrew Marr says succinctly: “We *are* commanded to renounce acting on our own will at the expense of others.”¹³³ Benedict wants his monks to want what God wants for them and for others. What Benedict meant by re-directing self-will is very much in line with what each person deals with every day: curbing self-interests in light of the common good. Benedict’s notion of advancing beyond self-will is not the promotion of self-hatred; that would be pathological. Rather, it is a vital component of the openness to others that is demanded by the constant process of *conversatio morum*. In the Rule’s dealing with self-will, what can be beneficial beyond monastic or even religious confines is its purposeful putting aside of self. As Benedict recognized even then, such a decision can avoid a potentially disordered ego, becoming instead “an ascetical path to freedom from the tyranny of self-will and the means of living an adult life of integrity and consistency, one that conducts us toward the goal we have chosen.”¹³⁴

4.4.3.2 Commitment

Benedict sees commitment very realistically as a critical spiritual challenge. It was seen earlier how *stabilitas* grounds the person. Benedict’s spirituality is purposeful. His call is clearly a call to action. This is apparent even in his prologue, where its urgency is emphasized. The Rule sees every thought, word, and action as having serious consequences (RB 7.21). The spiritual life is a constant journey, a process of becoming both a learner and

¹³³ Marr, *Tools for Peace*, 75.

¹³⁴ Michael Casey, OCSO, *The Road to Eternal Life: Reflections on the Prologue of Benedict’s Rule* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 18.

disciple. One *learns*; then one *acts*. Without action a supposedly spiritual life will lack the purposefulness and commitment that will make it fruitful.

With Benedict's opening word, *Obsculta*, or to listen with the ear of the heart (RB Prol. 1), the first part of the challenge of commitment is set forth as being open to such awareness and learning. In this process, one becomes present, rather than drifting away or withdrawing (RB Prol. 2). Benedict later speaks of this being present as an "awakening" from "forgetfulness" (*oblivionem omnino fugiat*, RB 7.10). His challenge in this call to action is that the individual gain a sense of internal and external congruency in thought and in action.

Clearly then, the second part of the challenge of commitment is to translate the fruits of listening into concrete deeds. For Benedict this is nothing short of hard work. Ongoing commitment and working hard is about "going the extra mile"¹³⁵ and in the process becoming more of who we are truly meant to be (RB Prol. 9). Benedict stresses persistence (RB Prol. 48). Butler notes, however, in commenting on the Rule, that the resort to action is not a substitute for a reflection on purpose.¹³⁶ That is why Benedict says it is time now to get up and become awake (RB Prol. 8). When speaking of commitment Casey observes, "We are committing ourselves to the serious pursuit of self-knowledge, the practice of virtue, and the abandonment of all arrogance and laziness."¹³⁷ The one thing that can hurt is a hardness of heart (RB Prol. 10), that is, a barrier to openness. At the same time, what can be supportive for commitment and engagement is the community. The call

¹³⁵ Ibid., 32, an attitude missing in employee disengagement.

¹³⁶ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 102.

¹³⁷ Casey, *The Road to Eternal Life*, 54.

to action is a communal affair (RB Prol. 11). The call to commitment is deeply personal, demanding insight and action, yet at the same time it has dimensions that are truly interpersonal and transcendent.

Benedict's notion of commitment puts the promise of *stabilitas* into daily practice. It is a necessary rootedness needed for transformation to take place. It is lived within a structure of authority and accountability following upon the notion of ongoing listening. It is a daily reminder that personal transformation is ongoing and constant. Understood today, and apart from the confines of religious life, it involves the notion of follow-through with one's responsibilities and even going beyond the call of duty, if needed. Still, it also involves, as a first step, the development of a sense of self-purpose that is at the same time both true and open.

4.4.3.3 Serving others

The third great spiritual challenge for Benedict, linked to that of re-directing self-will, is to transcend the self in serving others. Marr's comment is that "Benedict envisions a community where everybody tries to outdo everybody else in caring for everybody else. . . . Benedict reminds us that God wants all of us to win our battles by making a winner out of everybody else."¹³⁸ In this simple explanation lies the heart of the challenge Benedict poses: that having been receptive to the call of God, having committed oneself to the journey and the hard work that lies ahead, one realizes that the goal of our life-long quest is

¹³⁸ Marr, *Tools for Peace*, 79.

attained by losing self, by going beyond our own self-boundaries and ego satisfactions so as to be there for others.

To accomplish his goal, Benedict sets up his monastery as “a school for the Lord’s service” (RB Prol. 45). Serving others begins with serving God first. Monastic life, as Kardong says, is exhibiting personal loyalty to Christ and not simply blind duty (RB 18.24), in imitation also of Christ’s servanthood (RB 5.3; see also RB 16.2).¹³⁹ In RB 2.20, one is to bear arms in this service of the Lord.¹⁴⁰ While the military language may be distasteful to us today, Kardong says that Benedict instead wants to emphasize “a common service of Christ, our Lord.”¹⁴¹ Another meaning that Benedict has is that of adapting (*servire*) to the variety of persons and their temperaments, sometimes coaching them, sometimes reproofing them, sometimes encouraging them when it seems appropriate (RB 2.3). Kardong writes, “*Servire* can also have the meaning of putting aside one’s own interests and preoccupations to heed the needs of another . . . which is exactly what is meant here [RB 2.31].”¹⁴² When it comes to kitchen service (RB 35.1), one can see that service here is *mutual service*. The idea here is not running an efficient kitchen, but providing “a framework in which charity can flourish”,¹⁴³ there, as Böckmann points out in relation to RB 35.1-6, the service of one another becomes tangible.¹⁴⁴ Benedictine service is

¹³⁹ Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 105.

¹⁴⁰ The word “*militare*” had lost much of its martial connotation in Late Latin, and that in fact it really just meant ‘serve’,” *ibid.*, 513.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9. Kardong also writes elsewhere (56), “While the image of Christian life as servitude may not be flattering to modern ears, it is an indispensable basis for the Church: we are all subjects of Christ – and of no one else!”

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 290.

¹⁴⁴ Aquinata Böckmann, OSB, “Von den wochendiensten der Küche,” *Erbe und Auftrag* 67 (1991): 271.

explained by another commentator: “The fine art of being aware of the needs of others at table is symbolic of a life lived in service to the needs of the community.”¹⁴⁵

For Benedict there was no “blind service”; the ideal had to be tempered by reality. Because he knew human nature so well, he made all kinds of allowances, from being patient (RB 43.4), giving extra chances (RB 29), and offering special attention when people are sick (RB 36). While Benedict provides the vision, Marr draws our attention to René Girard’s concept of mimetic desire or imitation, where two people desire what the other wants. From a negative perspective, this could look like the keeping-up-with-the-Jones syndrome, effectively, mimetic rivalry with its relationship entanglements. Still, there is also a constructive or positive phase of mimesis as, for example, when one imitates what one desires as an ideal. This anthropological approach needs to be kept in mind since Benedict’s framework is to guide his monks in and through community. Benedict, in his own genius, was familiar with the relational dynamics in community that could and would interfere with the monks serving one another (mimetic rivalry, contagion, games, favouritism),¹⁴⁶ as well as “acquisitive mimesis of material goods” (an “evil practice,” RB 33.1). Benedict knew that such entanglements of desire would be destructive.

The challenge of serving mimetically for Benedict was that monks would willingly and lovingly do what they saw as necessary (RB 48.3). “To work at what is truly useful is not an expression of individual ascetical endeavor, but rather one that feeds into practical charity. By doing what is needed, one responds to the needs of each member of the

¹⁴⁵ Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 315.

¹⁴⁶ Marr, *Tools for Peace*, 54–55.

community, for all depend on certain tasks being accomplished.”¹⁴⁷ To serve in such a way requires an inner attitude linked to the outward behaviour. It no longer has this competitive aspect of “two people negotiating acts of service as if they were commodities.”¹⁴⁸ Instead, this challenge of service becomes a mutual caring for one another to bring out the best in the other, what Marr calls “practical ways of ‘willing the subjectivity of others’.”¹⁴⁹ At its most basic, it involved putting the *needs* of others before the *wants* of self.¹⁵⁰

What can be useful from Benedict’s Rule in terms of today’s society are the ideas of servant leadership and mutual support, especially in need. While in the Rule the basis for these is clearly a theological one, there are valid human foundations for the same ideas, including the personalist notions of the common good and mutual relationality. The clear presence of this metaphor allows these principles to be transposed to other, quite different contexts. At a further level, to accomplish such an ideal means going *beyond* one’s natural reach, ultimately allowing self-determination to become open to self-transcendence. While the challenge of service will remain in every domain, the Rule makes the case that its spiritual fruits for both the unique individual and the common good are very real.

4.4.4 Comprehensiveness

Our question regarding the *comprehensiveness* of Benedictine spirituality is as follows: what richness of being human will we experience in the world that Benedict

¹⁴⁷ Kardong, *Benedict’s Rule*, 399.

¹⁴⁸ Marr, *Tools for Peace*, 178.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁵⁰ Michael Casey, *Truthful Living: Saint Benedict’s Teaching on Humility* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2001), 149.

invites us into? Chapter 2 discussed the subjective experience and concept of a healthy emotional life as an essential bridge to the spiritual. This is central to Benedict. In her extensive commentary on the first chapters of the Rule, Böckmann offers this overall insight: “What is true for Benedict is also true for his Rule, namely, that spiritual depth ensures the human element.”¹⁵¹ The converse is no less true; it is easy to see in the Rule that human understanding supports spiritual depth.

Still, in approaching the matter of Benedict and human emotionality, it is important to note clearly that Benedict had no understanding of psychology in its modern sense.¹⁵² At the same time, his spirituality, being realistic and broad in scope, touches the many facets of human life. In fact, Benedict was unusually comprehensive in addressing the different dimensions of the human person. His Rule is not only a spiritual guidebook; it is a ‘rule’ for life that provides for the monk’s physical needs, but also the development of their cognitive needs in providing for their learning, and it recognizes that community is formed of people with a range of ordinary human emotions.

Key for our purposes is Benedict’s keen awareness of emotions and relationships. In a somewhat lengthy summation, Fry characterizes Benedict as a person

who understands human nature, both its grandeur and its weakness, respects it and wants to facilitate its organic growth. He knows that human persons and their actions are of infinite variety and complexity, and that individual problems require individual solutions. Unlike the Master, he does not attempt to regulate everything in advance, to foresee every possible case. He trusts the abbot to make prudent decisions as the need arises; it is enough for the Rule to enunciate the principles. . . . Respect for persons appears also in Benedict’s sense of community. He has modified the almost exclusively vertical vision of the RM by

¹⁵¹ Böckmann, *A Listening Community*, 73.

¹⁵² Dermot Tredget, OSB, “‘The Rule of Benedict’ and Its Relevance to the World of Work,” *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 17, no. 3 (2002): 219. Tredget recognizes that Benedict was probably familiar with the term in its more ancient sense of dealing with the *psyche* or soul.

emphasizing the relationships of the monks to one another. . . . It is respect for persons and for the mystery of freedom . . . that lies behind St. Benedict's concern for inner dispositions of the heart. Indeed, a rule must legislate for exterior behavior, and St. Benedict has little tolerance for outward observance that is careless, singular or perfunctory. But he knows that conformity alone is not enough and that legislation cannot solve all problems. . . . St. Benedict often contents himself with general statements that leave all kinds of details at loose ends. He is more concerned with why things are done and how they are done than with precise regulations. The motivation behind the observance is the object of his interest—the individual's submission to the action of grace within him. Thereby the whole tone of monastic asceticism is elevated to a lofty spiritual plane. . . . St. Benedict shows an extraordinary understanding of weakness, a compassion for those who fail or are troubled or distressed, a delicate patience even with the hard of heart. In this respect . . . his Rule is deeply human and evangelical.¹⁵³

While Benedict would certainly not have known the concept of emotional intelligence, nevertheless, of special note is Fry's comment that "Benedict was a keen observer of human nature."¹⁵⁴ This is a judgement that few, if any, would challenge. Indeed, in at least two places in the Rule, Benedict seems to recognize a distinction between the natural and the supernatural as joint components in the spiritual life, and consequently the place of the natural order in the understanding of spirituality. At one point he says, "What is not possible by nature, let us ask the Lord to supply by the help of his grace" (*et quod minus habet in nos natura possibile, rogemus Dominum ut gratiae suae iubeat nobis adiutorium ministrare*, RB Prol. 41). His implication here is that the spiritual way of life is broadly founded on human endeavour as well as on divine gifts, that grace supports natural endeavours. Benedict understood that in the spiritual journey human nature and human emotions had a valid and important place. His approach to human emotions

¹⁵³ Fry, *RB 1980*, 93–94.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 12. Elsewhere Fry expands on this observation that "[t]he author [Benedict] understands human nature . . . to facilitate its organic growth," 93.

would seem to coincide well with current suggestions that these in fact can form a bridge to the spiritual.

Benedict's keen insight into the nature of emotion linked to human behaviour and relationships is seen, for example, in his instructions regarding the selection of an abbot. Many of the qualities seen above that Benedict has ascribed to a suitable candidate in fact form a catalogue of human emotions, some to be encouraged and fostered, some to be avoided as unhealthy or unhelpful:

He should not be restless and troubled, nor extreme and headstrong, not jealous or over suspicious; for then he will have no peace. In his commands he should be farsighted and thoughtful. And whether it is a question of spiritual or material matters, he should give prudent and moderate orders. . . . Taking heed of these and other passages that extol discretion, the mother of virtues, he should arrange everything so that the strong are challenged and the feeble are not overwhelmed.¹⁵⁵

Beyond the question of leadership, discretion or discernment and good decision making will be absolutely essential to a healthy spiritual approach. But Benedict recognized that before all else one needs to learn to manage internal emotions (for example, restlessness, feeling troubled, going to extremes, being headstrong, jealousy, and being overly suspicious); otherwise, they will have no peace (RB 64.16). Here there is a clear understanding of the primacy of the intrapersonal factors, and qualities that can be seen to be associated with self-actualization; for Benedict these, in turn, can lead to the development of interpersonal qualities. He does not gloss over human fears or human weakness. The word *weak* (*infirmus*) shows up frequently in the Rule.¹⁵⁶ He encouraged his

¹⁵⁵ RB 64.2, 8 ff., in Kardong, *Benedict's Rule*, 527.

¹⁵⁶ Two examples: (1) "For he [the abbot] should know that he has undertaken to care for weak souls, not to exercise tyranny over the strong" (RB 27.6); (2) "he [the abbot] is to regulate everything so that the strong have something to yearn for and the weak are not frightened away" (RB 64.19). Kardong writes: "

followers not to be fearful (*perterritus*, RB Prol. 48), in spite of any suffering encountered. His humanness and empathy are seen in his vision of “a school of the Lord’s service” (RB Prol. 45), which is not to demand anything “harsh or oppressive” (*nihil asperum nihil grave*, RB Prol. 46), again showing the insistence of the Rule on balance, moderation, and avoiding unnecessary suffering. Benedict’s emotional sensitivity leads also to his provisions that the monks were to receive what they needed, entirely without favouritism (RB 2.16). Similarly, in many of his detailed provisions an empathic feeling is clearly introduced, in that “infirmities [weakness] should be taken into consideration” (RB 34.2).

Benedict recognized various factors that would have some relationship to the constructs of emotional intelligence theory: the primary importance of the inner life (Intrapersonal), the role of healthy human relations in a well-functioning community (Interpersonal), the need to be open to change continuously, or *conversatio morum* (Adaptability), and the ability to persevere (Stress Management) so that even here-and-now the life of the monk was sustained by joy (General Mood). Benedict’s concern for an emotionally healthy sense of self-regard comes through clearly in his chapter on the instruments of good works that the monk needs: one loves God (the transpersonal or transcendent), oneself (the intrapersonal), and neighbour as oneself (the interpersonal) (RB 4.1-2).

Benedict’s awareness of another intrapersonal component, assertiveness—the expression of one’s feelings in non-destructive ways—is also seen as a characteristic of his Rule. When he discusses the qualities needed for an abbot, Benedict identifies leadership

Benedict creates a memorable dictum on the subject: challenge the strong, but do not crush the weak,” *Benedict’s Rule*, 243.

with the ability to express constructively emotions and expectations of what needs to happen. However, this will entail a *new model of authority*, not one of authoritarianism or aggressiveness,¹⁵⁷ but one of servant leader (RB 64.15). Benedict's deep respect for the human person meant that he saw authority not as power but as service,¹⁵⁸ a concept that was in his time especially countercultural. In his Rule, the relational replaces the forceful, but such relationality is grounded on interiority.

In intrapersonal terms, Benedict clearly expected that each monk would be “a mature person, free and ready to move past mastery to self-gift,”¹⁵⁹ hence, the emotional competency of independence. An aspirant was obliged to persevere through the deliberate delays (months of testing) after admission. Within this crucible of emotional maturation, community relationships, and the deep listening that was required, the individual would gradually envision and deepen a calling to be all that they could become. This is, in fact, self-actualization, something that today has been recognized as a key emotional *bridge* to the spiritual.¹⁶⁰ In the same way that Benedict calls the monks to attune themselves to a higher calling, so they should also, in a self-transcending manner, attune themselves to others. His Rule is calling for self-actualization in the most profound sense: self-transcendence.

That Benedict embraced the *interpersonal* element is seen in his key notion that the monastic journey was made together (*nos pariter*, RB 72.12). Benedict knew that this kind

¹⁵⁷ Assertiveness disconnected from empathy (an Interpersonal component) becomes aggressiveness.

¹⁵⁸ de Dreuille, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 364.

¹⁵⁹ Kardong, “Benedictine Spirituality,” 88.

¹⁶⁰ Based on his own statistical analysis Bar-On has stated that “spiritual development is self-actualization on steroids.” Personal email, Dr. Reuven Bar-On, April 19, 2011.

of common journey would have its struggles—even, or perhaps especially, within a closely-knit community. He recognized that relationships and empathy were crucial, as was supporting “with the greatest patience one another’s weaknesses of body or behaviour, and earnestly competing in obedience to one another” (RB 72.5-6) and even outdoing “*one another in showing honour*” (RB 72.4).¹⁶¹ Again putting things in emotional terms, the Rule demanded that the abbot “avoid extremes” in any necessary correction of a subordinate to prevent that in scraping off the rust, he would break the vessel (RB 64.11, 12).

The Rule’s emphasis on the interpersonal extended even beyond the monastic confines. Its embracing of the notion of hospitality reflects personal recognition and human dignity and again demonstrates Benedict’s awareness of emotions, in this case that of social responsibility. In this the Rule takes up the broad Christian tradition of hospitality in which the stranger is seen in a new light and not categorized by cultural constraints, roles, and expectations. Benedictine hospitality saw worthiness in the stranger even when the rest of the culture did not.¹⁶² What is especially obvious is Benedict’s genuine openness to all guests or strangers and his avoidance of the suspicion toward them that is characteristic of the contemporary *Rule of the Master*.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Italics in text; reference to Rom. 12:10.

¹⁶² Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 62. Henri Nouwen writes, “Hospitality . . . means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy.” In *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Image Books (Doubleday), 1975), 71.

¹⁶³ *The Rule of the Master*, 240–243.

“Order with flexibility: that is typically Benedictine.”¹⁶⁴ Benedict constantly reminds leaders of the importance of emotional flexibility, a constant readiness to adapt their approach and style to the many subordinates they lead and serve.¹⁶⁵ Different personalities demand different approaches and Benedict knew that effective management requires managing and adapting to a variety of personalities. There would be needed skills in coaching, correcting, and positive reinforcement. A known track record of this was in fact one of the best ways to attract newcomers (RB 2:31-32).¹⁶⁶ Leadership demands not only great awareness and flexibility, but that those in authority adapt to others, not the reverse. This principle is intensified in the Rule’s model because of the subsidiarity that the monastery organization encouraged. What Benedict expects is leadership in service (“rather to profit . . . than to preside over”; RB 64), and for this the abbot is accountable (RB 2.38).

Benedict also knew that the journey would demand the emotional ability to handle stress and to persevere no matter what (RB Prol. 50, RB 58.7-9), even under “difficult, unfavourable or even unjust conditions” and when necessary, enduring suffering “without weakening or seeking escape” (RB 7.35). Even in stressful situations, he shows us another emotional competency, impulse control, when he tells the monks that they are not allowed

¹⁶⁴ Derkse, *The Rule of Benedict for Beginners*, 73.

¹⁶⁵ In the Rule, emotional flexibility is also demanded in relation to time. Monks learn “the art of quitting” and “the art of beginning,” as they take up or put down their tasks. Flexibility around time, for Benedict, demands figuring out quickly and constantly what is important in life and what is not.

¹⁶⁶ “The abbot must be flexible and adapt himself to each situation. There is no room in the Rule for rigidity and for lack of creativity on the part of the abbot. Rather, the abbot must take the time to look deeply into a situation and to pray about what to do and then try to choose a course of action that is truly according to the Gospel and the monastic tradition as he seeks to draw each monk deeper into the monastic life.” In “Study the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 2: Qualities of the Abbot,” Commentary by Philip Lawrence, OSB, Abbot of Christ in the Desert, accessed October 29, 2015, <https://christdesert.org/prayer/rule-of-st-benedict/chapter-2-qualities-of-the-abbot/>.

to quarrel or to show physical violence (RB 70). Benedict, in effect, is showing us that he “simply does not allow a culture of violence . . . ”¹⁶⁷ or internal strife.

In summary, Benedict recognized that human emotion was part and parcel of the daily monastic journey and was a necessary foundation for the spiritual life. This underlies his concept that the monastery was “to establish a school for the Lord’s service” (RB Prol. 45). It was also Winter’s idea of “human dwelling.” Benedict’s would be a learning environment that was both human and spiritual, an ongoing workshop with a specific learning design where the monks could attain deep levels of wholeness and holiness. In so doing, they would experience true satisfaction and delight—in other terms, personal well-being—even in the face of obstacles and personal weakness, and they would create a metaphor that gave human life a context. With the Rule’s comprehensive vision of spirituality, this day-to-day “dwelling” would be an ongoing workshop for physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional development. This gave Benedict’s spirituality a realism and a holistic character that enables it even today to make a broad transition, for in Ford’s words (cited at the beginning of this chapter), Benedict’s principles “are not peculiar to any conditions of education, or race, or rank, or era . . . but are as universal as is the human race.”¹⁶⁸

4.4.5 Culmination

Whether in its origins, in its living out, or in its culmination, Benedict’s spirituality is *theologically grounded*. It is deeply Christian. Benedict’s basic reality was Christ and his

¹⁶⁷ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 175.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, 311.

ways. Recognizing human frailties, he was concerned, even pessimistic at times, about the quality of monastic life that could be possible. However, this concern contributed in part to his “healthy sense of realism.”¹⁶⁹ It also led him to recognize that in the spiritual life a certain sense of happiness was needed to sustain it. Benedict realizes that if there is a large community, help is to be given so that no one feels overburdened or “perturbed or saddened in the house of God” (RB 31.19). Benedict’s pattern is unmistakable: focusing on Christ; setting standards to follow Christ *all together* in the “school” called the monastery; demanding respect for all, even the least; and emphasizing that joy rather than sadness should be evident in the experience.

While for Benedict the spiritual life was begun and rooted in the reality of a divine power, it derived its transcendence also from this same goal or end. It would have its rationale not only in the fruits of well-being it produced in the present, but also in the eternal life to which it ultimately led. On Benedict’s spiritual journey it is an eternal God who provides both the transcendence that elevates it, and the connectedness needed to live it out, bringing to human life itself the “something more” that is so often sought.

Obviously, these same concepts cannot as such be transferred to an entirely different context. They involve a particular religious faith. At the same time there is inherent in them the qualities of purposeful self-transcendence and interconnectedness (the latter both by virtue of a common humanity and with the universe in its entirety), and it is these broader personalist qualities that stand in contrast to any mechanistic view of either work or world.

¹⁶⁹ “The Rule of Benedict: The Content of the Rule,” in Fry, *RB 1980*, 94.

4.5 Concluding remarks

Benedict concludes his Rule by dismissing it as a “little rule . . . for beginners” (RB 73.8). No doubt, it had a character of simplicity. But looked at another way, it was a detailed, relatively sophisticated organizational manual based on lengthy experience. It made responsibilities clear, described daily duties, and laid out the norms for personal interaction. From an entirely secular viewpoint, the monastic communities the Rule created could be considered cooperative corporate entities with its members as equal shareholders. Their work over time increased the value of the monastery both qualitatively and quantitatively. Moreover, the work involved was diverse. In the early days, there was agriculture, building, the copying of books, and the practice of the arts generally, as well as the internal requirements of administration, health care, hospitality, and food service.

Still, to see the influence of the Rule only in such terms would be to ignore its foundational underpinnings. It worked because it respects personal uniqueness, dignity, subjectivity, self-determination, and the human need for communion. It worked effectively only because it had ingrained human and spiritual values that together created a metaphor that made human life—with its constancy and its changes—understandable. In integrating work into this whole, as Lewis Mumford observed, the Rule was at least in part responsible for the transformation of the notion of work from “a slave’s curse” to “part of a free man’s [sic] moral commitment.”¹⁷⁰ It was liberating. It viewed those who chose to be governed by it not as resources, but as persons, each with a proper dignity and an equal right to justice and respect. Indeed, it saw persons as unique individuals, with specific gifts and even

¹⁷⁰ Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, 264.

eccentricities. It offered no monetary reward. Still, although it was faith-based, it did not offer only salvation. It created possibilities for personal growth and development, and it made every effort to offer the security of physical, emotional, and intellectual human well-being.

As in all things in the Rule, this involved seeing the workplace as a community, a common “dwelling,” and not as a forum for competition. Within that setting, it demanded a rootedness in what one was doing, a real commitment to listening, and a creative openness to change. Because the communities were relatively small, perhaps then comprising on average thirty or so members,¹⁷¹ and because its members not only worked together but lived together, there was a degree of intimacy that is unusual elsewhere. Nonetheless, the Rule foresaw relationships within the community that were not necessarily on terms of friendship, but based rather on a broader notion of communion. It anticipated problems, and allowed for them. Its provisions expected good order, they demanded wholesome and flexible leadership, they promoted healthy emotional factors, and they intended to produce harmony.

Above all, the Rule attempted to create a sense of a mutual common purpose in *what* was being done together day by day, and a sense of balance in *how* it was done. As a monastic rule, it has had a remarkable longevity.¹⁷² Because its personalism is consistent enough to constitute a root metaphor, and because it is immersed in the ordinary and the human, a world-view can be distilled from its original monastic context and transposed to

¹⁷¹ The minimum was 12.

¹⁷² See Katja Rost et al., “The Corporate Governance of Benedictine Abbeys,” 90–115. This paper studies the longevity (500+ years) of several European monasteries.

the secular workplace. There it can counter mechanistic and instrumental tendencies by promoting healthy interpersonal workplace relationships, and, for the worker personally, a self-transcending sense of purpose and value in work itself. It is the application of this root metaphor and these factors that will be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

A Personalist Vision for Today's Workplace

Than es per wark worth mikyl mede.¹

5.1 Introduction

As the quotation above from a metrical version of Benedict's Rule indicates, the Benedictine workplace was a genuine worthplace, a situation where dignity, respect and cooperation were evident, and the worker and their work truly valued. In this concluding chapter, the vision of the Rule is taken as a starting point to bring meaning and value to work in the contemporary world.

Here, the goal is not to simply summarize the research presented earlier. Instead, it seeks to present a view of the workplace/worthplace that reflects the personalist core metaphor drawn from the Rule of Benedict, which might provide the structures and values to create the conditions and culture for a contemporary workplace that lacks much of the negativity identified earlier. This will be applied in particular to the problem of workplace disengagement.

Chapter 1 discussed the global problem of employee disengagement and discovered that it was seen at its root as a lack of emotional commitment on the part of employees to their work. Chapter 2 then examined the fundamental concept of emotional intelligence, the

¹ "Then their work is made great worth." *The Northern Metrical Version of the Rule of St. Benet*, in *Three Middle-English Versions of the Rule of St. Benet and Two Contemporary Rituals for the Ordination of Nuns*, ed. Ernst A. Koch, published for the Early English Text Society (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Limited, Paternoster House, Charing-Cross Road, 1902), 73, line 922. (*Cotton MS. Vespasian A. 25*, *British Museum*.)

assistance this could offer, and its limitations. Chapter 3 studied how employees' yearning for "something more" than EI might be accounted for from workplace spirituality research. Yet, to date, the spiritual approaches that are advocated seem to be lacking in truly effecting meaning and purpose.

At this point, chapter 4 turned instead to the sixth century Rule of Benedict, whose deeply human and spiritual vision commended itself as a possible approach. Viewing the Rule from a personalist optic allowed us to identify a number of key principles that could be transposed from the Rule's own time and context and could offer valuable insights into life and work today. These personalist features offered a possibility to challenge the mechanistic root metaphor—with its linear and quantitative impositions—that has more recently dominated western consciousness.

In the present chapter, our first task will be to integrate these various personalist concepts drawn from Benedict's Rule into a more synthetic view of the worker and the workplace, one that embraces the ethic of personalism and that speaks to the depths of each human being: uniqueness, dignity, subjectivity, self-determination, and relationality. Lewis Mumford spoke of the positive contribution of Benedict in liberating the concept of work from slavery.² Here, it is suggested that a vision drawn from this same Rule has the current potential to liberate work from the shackles of drudgery. Working from this personalist vision of work, our second task will be to apply it to the particular facets of employee disengagement selected for consideration, having as our context an actual case study.

² Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, 264.

Thus, the first part of this chapter will be synthetic in its approach. It will draw together into a spiritually-oriented vision of work the pertinent elements from the Rule of Benedict studied in the previous chapter, where the application of a personalist root metaphor allows us to transpose these elements to a different time and context. The use of such a metaphor in grounding what is ultimately a spiritual vision allows respect for the sphere of human emotionality that chapter 2 judged to be essential, and yet provides the potential to discover the “something more” that was seen to be needed. Our task is to transpose Benedict’s insights into meaningful attitudes and practices, that is, approaches that can promote and enhance meaning for the contemporary worker. This is possible because Benedict’s stance is grounded in a personalism that is fundamental to embracing and living in a spiritual manner. Working from a personalist dynamic, our synthesis needs to give priority to the worker as subject rather than to work’s products. Yet engagement and productivity are hardly incompatible concepts. While the development of an overall vision of work that is integral to life, something akin to Winter’s “human dwelling,” will be the focus of this section, it will not neglect the day-to-day practicality that pervades the Rule.

Actually, we must recognize that the situation of disengagement is an *effect* – with a wide variety of causes that are most often external to the individual affected. Still, we can speculate that a disengaged monk in the 6th century and a disengaged employee in the 21st century have similar interior emotional and spiritual challenges. The monastic had to struggle with a listlessness or *acedia*; so do many contemporary employees. Such listlessness could lead to depression and disengagement from community practices and living. This possibility was so apparent that Benedict had monitors or “senpectae” who would oversee the monks. (RB 27.3) Taking a personalist approach, it can be argued that

the interior emotional and spiritual situations of individuals in Benedict's time and those of persons today may not be very dissimilar. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that there is a huge gap between the economic, social and religious situations of the 6th century and that of the contemporary world. Consequently, while the personal effects of disengagement may be very similar over the centuries, the *causes* that produce these effects – the social and economic situations in which people work and the religious values they hold – are obviously hugely different. This thesis deals with the internal effects of disengagement. Its causes, however, certainly deserve further study.

Taking up the example of a representative North American workplace that is quite typical of many others in both the public and private sectors, the second part of this chapter will deal more explicitly with the particular symptoms of employee disengagement that have preoccupied us from the beginning, the core problems of absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation. Methodologically, however, this discussion will be tied to the model of worker and workplace that was developed in the first section. At the same time, it will suggest a workplace context in which the effects of the application of spiritually healthy attitudes and structures can better be seen. In particular, it will attempt to apply to disengagement in a very concrete setting the personalist approach to work that the Rule can offer. Moreover, it will do this while recognizing that at least to some extent workplace disengagement is rooted in a competing mechanistic root metaphor that deprives work of meaning and for which an alternative is urgently needed.

5.2 Seeing work and worker through a personalist metaphor

The examination in chapter 4 of key features of the spirituality inherent in the Rule of Benedict allows the retrieval and transposition of elements of his Rule and their application to both workers and to work itself. In this, our governing principle will continue to be the personalist root metaphor and its characteristics as identified in chapter 4. Because of their universal nature and their timeless character, such personalist principles can still be applied outside the monastic situation to current life and work contexts.

In so doing, it is vital to keep in mind that transformative *attitudinal change* is needed both for the worker personally and at the organizational level. In suggesting a spirituality *of* and *in* the workplace, there is a constant two-fold responsibility. First, the organization has a responsibility to create structures and processes that treat employees with dignity and respect. Second, for the same reason, employees need to bring to their workplaces attitudes and dispositions that daily enhance both their spirit of enterprise and that of their colleagues. Only with such a two-fold approach can there be hope in having engaged employees, ones who aim for excellence in working and who work in an environment that is consciously dedicated to bringing out the best in each employee.

Certainly, to respect Benedict, what is most fundamental to transposing and creating a more meaningful view of work is his idea of transcendence, or “serving a purpose bigger than yourself.”³ In chapter 3, the opening quote from the movie *Fight Club* reminds us that people are not defined by their jobs, as is often the prevalent self-concept today. Both employees and their employers need a vision of that “bigger than yourself” that is rooted in

³ Turak, *Business Secrets of the Trappist Monks*, xvi.

the immediacy of day-to-day work, yet sees beyond it. It is by allowing one to claim one's self-transcendence and develop an interiority in accord with this higher purpose that work stands a chance of providing true meaning. That zone of interiority will reside in a sense of presence and attending to the moment and ordinariness of work, yet the appreciation of purpose within this interiority is not absent. Benedict constantly focused on the ordinariness of life and work; his Rule is occupied with the details of daily living. Still, he recognized that it is precisely in the here-and-now that transcendence can be experienced, with a vision that sees beyond.

With such a transcendent vision, today's worker and employer know who they are (self-knowledge) and why they are doing what they are doing (serving a purpose bigger than themselves). A true sense of transcendence will provide meaning, but its focus is *now*—the ordinariness of being and of working. As mundane as it sounds, Benedict wanted reflection on what needed doing *now*, and more importantly, *why* it needed doing—which is the mission of any business. Its rooting of transcendence within the ordinary is one of the key reasons why the spirituality of Benedict can profitably be transposed to far different contexts.

Drawing from the current literature on workplace spirituality provided the earlier description of spirituality as *a deeply personal outlook that shapes one's thoughts and actions according to what one perceives as ultimately important (transcendent) and that connects the individual to other persons and to the broader universe, enabling one to live in a meaningful and purposeful way*. The interiority that accompanies any notion of self-transcendence ought to create at least an incipient notion of a personal spirituality, living according to what one perceives as purposeful. While Benedict's own teleology is

deliberately theistic and Christian, and his way of living monastic, the ordinariness and humanness in which for him both life and purpose are rooted allow for a sense of self-transcendence and interiority that can encompass a far broader spectrum.

To accept transcendence, including self-transcendence, clearly involves seeing beyond one's own self-absorbing interests, for it demands a profound awareness that one is not the entirety or the centre of the universe. The acceptance that the self is transcendent consequently involves humility, one of Benedict's central virtues, at its most basic a humility before the unknown. Humility in turn engenders interiority and includes a fundamental openness to learning. In one way, both the worker and the manager are called to first *descend*, that is, to have their feet on the *terra firma* of who they truly are, and only then be able to *ascend* to loftier goals. The late Jungian analyst James Hillman saw the importance of "growing down" to illustrate the sense of connecting with reality more and more as a person develops, to touch a transcendent self where one thinks of others and takes responsibility.⁴ At every level in the workplace, humility, understood in this manner, can be a great remedy for problematic situations.

Nevertheless, while its spiritual insights can and need to affect work, it would be inaccurate to see Benedict's Rule as offering a workplace spirituality. As has been seen, life and work were for Benedict integrated notions, the latter an essential and enriching function of the former. In the same way, his notion of spirituality was obviously a comprehensive one that engaged the whole of life, with work seen within that context. While so much of Benedict's approach is applicable to work, it is always within that overall

⁴ James Hillman, *The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 1997), 41–62.

context of life itself. This has implications that not just theoretical. To recognize this can be personally profitable, for the sphere of work is not seen as something alien, cut off from the rest of life. It can also be an underpinning for organizations to recognize that its employees have a broader existence that has to be taken into account.

What the Rule offers to individuals is a way of *life*, an attitude of mind, that the worker needs to put on, so to speak. Chapter 4 makes it clear that such an attitude requires a person, in a monastic context or otherwise, to develop a deeper awareness of self as a spiritual starting point. While self-awareness is vital in any area of life, it is particularly vital to work, especially if work is problematic. David Whyte writes, “Work is where we can make ourselves; work is where we can break ourselves.”⁵ Awareness provides in turn for the development of the personalist characteristic of self-determination. As the person grows more and more into self-awareness there is also a development of a subjective ‘I’ with its accompanying self-mastery and freedom. This sense of self-determination evokes a key concept of emotional intelligence, referred to as Emotional Self-Awareness, which is often considered the engine of emotionality. It is by such an attitude that one can be “liberated”, using Winter’s term⁶; this self-liberation also opens the doors to workplace liberation that “serves as a location where human beings interpret life’s meanings.”⁷

Since work involves both person and locus, it is clear that what is true of the individual applies analogously to the organization. The organization also is called to put on a new attitude of mind, one that gives itself a clear sense of meaning and purpose, and

⁵ David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage to Identity* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2001), 12.

⁶ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 124.

⁷ Pava, *The Search for Meaning in Organizations*, 5.

creates a symbiotic relationship with the employees for whom it is the location or dwelling where they live out in part their own meaning and calling. From the perspective of the Rule—and while other values are also important—what is here most essential is that human dignity is honoured, and the freedom and creativity of individuals become cherished values, obviously with due allowance for order and mutual respect.⁸

The preceding paragraph referred to the individual's sense of calling in terms of work. This calling or vocation, to which monastic work was integral, was essential to Benedict's Rule. In transposing the notion to a contemporary secular setting, however, the Rule's life-long and religious connotations are clearly inoperable. What is germane is the fundamental characteristic of the Rule by which this calling is lived out on a day-to-day basis. This was Benedict's notion of *stabilitas* or *rootedness*, which in the very ordinariness of life provides the needed staying power. In substance, stability calls for commitment to the task at hand and attentiveness to the present moment. Stability clearly refers to being physically focused, but it also involves being interiorly anchored, perhaps the most basic element of Benedict's notion of calling. In chapter 4, the Evagrian-Cassianic understanding of *stabilitas* was introduced, primarily that of *stabilitas mentis*, a solidity or steadiness of mind, or a living with purpose. On the negative side, Benedict recognized that loss of focus and lack of attention promoted *acedia*, a disinterest that led to listlessness and ultimately to depression. With the impermanence of many workplace situations and the changes in employment that may occur over an individual's lifetime, a sense of calling involving the

⁸ Telephone conversation with Randy Lube, Business Solutions Consultant, Omaha, Nebraska, Gallup Inc., Friday, January 22, 2016.

worker fully in the here-and-now of their work remains basic to individual fulfilment.

Indeed, these same conditions may make this even more essential.

As was noted, in the Rule the promise of *stabilitas* was accompanied by the promise of *conversatio morum* (openness to change), which can be seen as its converse. Here, the Benedictine term connotes frequency and repetition, a constant dialogical activity that provides an antidote to ideological fixation. Transposed to a workplace situation, *conversatio morum* calls not just for acceptance of change, but *an embracing of change* not only for the good of one's own life and activity, but also to promote the common good. Obviously, this incorporates both an openness to fellow workers, their views and their situations, as well as an openness to the "alternative possibilities" that the workplace may offer.⁹ Here too, as has been seen, Benedict's notion recognizes even the experience of failure as a learning process.

For the worker, the application of Benedict's principle will call for both external behaviour and internal dispositions that are constantly shaped by the workplace community itself, as well as by and for the wider society in which that community exists. Still, it is quite the opposite of the promotion of workplace conformism; it is a healthy openness to the unpredictable and creative. As a personal attribute of the worker, *conversatio morum* can represent another aspect of the liberation that Winter sees as needed to combat a prevailing mechanistic metaphor. For the individual worker, and in a workplace situation, the juxtaposition of stability and openness to change can only create a healthy balance, as it does within the Rule itself.

⁹ Casey, "*Quod Experimento Didicimus*," 85.

The 1981 encyclical *Laborem Exercens* crucially noted that work has two essential aspects. One is an objective sense that focuses on economic activity and the means and results of production, whether these be manual, mechanical, physical, technological, or intellectual. But the encyclical argues that “even in the age of ever more mechanized ‘work,’ *the proper subject of work continues to be man* [sic].” In the words of that document:

As a person, man [sic] *is therefore the subject of work.* As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity.¹⁰

Indeed, the encyclical goes on to argue that this subjective quality of work holds precedence over an objective view and that the primary basis for any valorizing of work ought to be the human being. The Rule of Benedict, as has been seen, holds a similar view. Benedict refused to disdain the objective side of work as a means of production that supported the individual and the monastery and that benefitted the wider community by its profits. But for him it was the worker—to whom work contributed purpose and meaning—who had priority over the results of work.

Following Benedict’s lead, a healthy contemporary vision of work has to involve a significant shift in emphasis from today’s emphasis on the objective elements (human resources, the bottom line, etc.). There needs to be a renewed awareness of the subjects whose labour is essential to positive results. While the workplace is obviously commodity-based (production), it needs also to become more meaning-based. The very dignity of work

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 6 (see also 5).

stems from the individual's sense of personal accomplishment gained by their labour.¹¹ This will involve a shift from seeing human labour only as something mechanistic and instrumental, to seeing it also in personalist terms as creative and a source of personal enrichment. In fact, as was suggested in chapter 4, there is every reason to assume that greater worker engagement can only lead to greater productivity. Obviously, a shift in emphasis toward increased attention to the subject of work will involve significant re-thinking on the part of employers. At the same time, it will involve change also on the part of employees, who often see themselves only as "cogs in the wheel" or engaged in a "rat-race." A Benedictine view requires instead a vision where, no matter what the tasks, workers think of themselves as artisans whose labour is creative and enriching of self and others.

Such a re-valuing of work connects closely with Benedict's notion of the indispensable nature of human dignity. Personal dignity and value in the view of today's society often consist of a precarious *extrinsic*, mechanistic, and basically transitory notion of self-worth. On the contrary, Benedict's approach upholds worth and dignity as essential qualities of each human person. Moreover, his sense that work is creative and reinforces that dignity reflects Winter's notion of *artistic* process. Winter writes: "The technological process readily obscures this artistic quality, especially since much of its creative effort is harnessed to industrial and military organizations. Nevertheless, the deeper reality

¹¹ "In the Christian conception, work both expresses and fosters the transcendental dignity of human beings. The dignity of work stems from the individual's sense of personal accomplishment acquired by fulfilling his [sic] tasks and functions," in Michel Dion, "Business Ethics and Spirituality among Jews, Christians, and Muslims," in *Ethics and Spirituality at Work: Hopes and Pitfalls for Meaning in Organizations*, ed. Thierry C. Pauchant (Westport, CT, Quorum Books, 2002), 166.

of human dwelling is that it thrives upon creative, metaphoric disclosures and decays when such powers degenerate into mechanical repetition.”¹² The artistic process opens up “vistas of humanization” that foster creative insights not previously envisioned.¹³ On the other hand, today’s mechanism often shuts down a worker’s sense of self-transcendence with its fruits of creativity and possibilities. Even more importantly, in doing so it detracts from the personal uniqueness and core human dignity of the worker.

Chapter 4 notes that Benedict’s Rule was first directed to the individual subject. Yet, in another illustration of Benedict’s appreciation of balance, it saw that subject within the context of community. There was no conflict between the two. Indeed, the Rule envisages that the individual can be, and needs to be, nourished by the community of which he or she forms part, and, in turn, nourishes that same community. This notion of community is essential to Benedict’s spirituality. Moreover, it is in keeping with the personalist metaphor adopted here: personal uniqueness is vital to the notion of a ‘human dwelling,’ but so too are relationality and communion. Indeed, these are especially important in the workplace because while here the uniqueness of each employee is required to be honoured, this will be within the context of interpersonal relationships. For Benedict, in terms of work, the individual and the community were correlatives. Work gave meaning and purpose to the individual, but it was also a communal activity. As noted earlier, Lewis Mumford captured the essence of Benedict’s vision when he spoke of it as being “[s]hared work *and* the benefits of shared mind.”¹⁴

¹² Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 22.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, 265. Italics added.

While for Benedict the primary zone of community was the particular monastic grouping, it had also a wider application. The community was located within a broader social fabric outside its walls, and indeed had a universal breadth. Benedict's relationality encompasses a *temenos* or sacred value of community, where social awareness of others and creation are essential. When community is taken in its broadest form, this is a deep spiritual insight; it in fact accords with the component that emotional intelligence calls Social Responsibility. In a vision of the workplace, these same values are today essential, even if only because any particular workplace serves some wider social purpose and has ethical responsibilities to a wider society. These Benedictine concepts accord with the broad personalist notion of relationality where there is both self-transcendence and a clear social context.

In terms of work, the Rule also envisioned the community not only as a workplace where individual labor was performed in juxtaposition, but one in which there was also a real sense of communion and relationality. As Mumford observed, Benedictine work involved a sense of *sharing*. To some extent, today's workplaces attempt to recognize this by emphases on teamwork and interdisciplinary approaches. But to truly acknowledge the Benedictine notion of community, such efforts need to be truly collaborative, and untinged by any spirit of competitiveness that effectively reduces them to individualism.

We saw in the last chapter that what is central to the Rule's notion of community is its insistence on listening. Kardong concluded that Benedict had virtually defined the monk as a "listener."¹⁵ This in fact represents one of his most original spiritual insights. For

¹⁵ Kardong, *Benedict's Rule*, 177.

Benedict, this was a broad notion. It invoked transcendence and required listening both to the inner self and the signs of the times around one. Such listening is not merely external; it first involves listening “with the ear of one’s heart.” It also implies a daily process of discernment, of keeping “one’s ear to the ground,” of sifting out what is truly important. Benedict’s listening even has a certain universalism, for in its broadest sense it meant being in harmony with the whole of creation.¹⁶

Any vision of work that respects Benedict’s principles needs to be imbued with this same notion. Obviously, interior listening will help both the worker and the workplace leader to ‘see beyond,’ enhancing not only the meaning of the labour being performed, but also inviting new ideas and approaches that are not bound up with established practices. In its more mundane application, listening will contribute to the notion of work as a collaborative effort. On a horizontal level, this involves listening to one’s fellow workers, even those junior or less experienced. This involves hearing not only what they say, but who they are; otherwise one will not have heard fully. On a vertical level, it will involve listening to management and their perspective, respecting their different insights and their experience. Still, since for Benedict listening involves communion, it is a two-way proposition. There will be an equal and ongoing responsibility for management to listen to employees, not in any superficial sense, but with adequate opportunity to hear what the other is really saying.

The aspect of community that pervades the Rule of Benedict almost certainly calls for a rethinking of the models of workplace leadership. To effect community, especially

¹⁶ Delatte, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, 84.

one with true personalist relationality, the leader is integral. What Benedict is really discussing is the profile of the servant leader, which is increasingly spoken of in workplace literature, although the realization is often fragmentary and unclear. Benedict perhaps best summarizes the concept when he says of the abbot: “It behooves him rather to profit his brethren than preside over them” (RB 64:8). In other words, a truly effective leader will be one who can bring out the best in those he or she leads, who can identify and evoke their unique gifts and talents. In the fullest sense, such leadership is personalist. It will create the experience of moving beyond a mechanistic vision of commodity interplay to one of community interplay, noticing “practical ways of ‘willing the subjectivity of others’,”¹⁷ transcending one’s own self-interests for an enhanced sense of the common good. While Benedict’s leadership is decisive, it is also reflexive, and involves a sense of authority as purposeful (authority *for*) rather than authority as controlling (authority *over*).

Benedict saw his Rule not only as one that would be spiritually uplifting for the individual, but also as one that would be practically effectual for community. Time has proved him right on both counts. While his principles—especially because they recognize fundamental human emotions and needs—could be valid for any time, they are perhaps even more helpful today, when overall employee disengagement has risen to such high levels.

Benedict’s personalist vision of work elevates it and endows it with a character of ultimacy; it eventually makes work purposeful because work becomes seen as directed toward an ultimate end. At the same time, work’s transcendent character reinforces its

¹⁷ Marr, *Tools for Peace*, 175.

connectedness. It is a community effort, but much more than this, since in the end work involves a responsibility not only to the immediate neighbour but to the entire universe, literally to all that exists. While other approaches to workplace spirituality certainly contain some of these elements, they usually fall far short of seeing work in terms of such genuine majesty.

The following section of this chapter will take a particular company situation as a case in point, and see what different practices, based on Benedict and a personalist rather than mechanistic metaphor, may have been helpful. To conclude the chapter, there is a more detailed look at the two symptoms of disengagement chosen for study—absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation—that are clearly present in the company in question. This concluding section will examine in particular how the application of the “something more” of Benedict’s vision, combined with a basis of emotional intelligence, could do much to offer an effective remedy.

5.3 Taking an example

In the course of the development of this thesis, it was thought useful to take the particular example of a representative North American workplace, typical of many other public and private working situations in both size and the composition of its six smaller units, to which the principles of Benedict’s approach to work and the workplace could be applied. It was also considered helpful to see what concrete practices, drawn from the fundamentals of his Rule and based upon a personalist root metaphor, might be helpful in remedying any problems identified there, especially practices that might counteract the

particular symptoms of disengagement on which this study has been concentrating: absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation. The company chosen for study is a real Canadian company, although the name used here, Dominion Travelogics Unlimited, is a fictitious one. Its having suffered downsizing also makes this company's circumstances very typical of other contemporary workplace situations.

5.3.1 A case study: Dominion Travelogics Unlimited (DTU)¹⁸

Since the 1980s and the 1990s and now into the new millennium, the reality of downsizing has gained enormous strength. For many companies and organizations, it feels like a default management strategy. For example, between 1987 and 1991 alone, 85 percent of Fortune 1000 companies downsized. Two main reasons often given are that the organization has already reached its potential and needs to "slim down" or because economies of scale are simply not profitable any more.¹⁹ One author writes, "Since the 1980s, about 10 million jobs have been eliminated in a downsizing trend that continues as companies hope to cut costs and improve performance. Yet research has shown most of the anticipated economic and organizational benefits of downsizing aren't achieved."²⁰

¹⁸ The case study is taken from Stephen H. Applebaum, Manon Leblanc, and Barbara T. Shapiro, "The Aftermath of Downsizing: A Case Study of Disengagement, Disidentification, Disenfranchisement and Disenchantment," *Journal of Management Development* 17, no. 6 (1998) 402–431.

¹⁹ A Wyatt Company survey (1991) of 1,005 downsized businesses found that only about 33 percent reached a profitability they expected, that expenses did not go down, but also that serious employee morale problems began emerging. Again, another article found that there is a 50-50 chance that the situation will improve after downsizing. It summarizes: "There are two things to say about downsizing: It seldom works and is often done incorrectly." Ironically, alternatives, says the author, do exist! See Henry Hornstein, "Downsizing Isn't What's It's Cracked Up To Be," *IVEY Business Journal* (May-June 2009), accessed February 18, 2016, <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/downsizing-isnt-what-its-cracked-up-to-be/>.

²⁰ Freda Turner, "History of Downsizing Imparts Lessons," *Columbus Business First*, last updated October 2, 2000, accessed February 4, 2016, <http://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/stories/2000/10/02/editorial2.html>.

It is clear that downsizing contributes to employee disengagement, the focus of this study. As a case in point, this thesis has chosen to examine one well-documented Canadian company: Dominion Travelogics Unlimited (DTU). Such a choice will help us identify the effects of employee disengagement from such downsizing, and what approaches DTU management took to offset the negative consequences. After presenting the company situation, this section will present the proposals made to correct it, and suggest certain workplace practices drawn from the Rule of Benedict that might have been better applied instead. This case can then provide a reference point for the following section, which will discuss the application of Benedict's personalist view of work to counteract in part the dysfunctionality of disengagement in its particular symptoms of absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation. These are symptoms that from the evidence can be assumed to have been present in DTU.

DTU serviced the packaging and selling of vacation tours and had offices in six major Canadian cities. It had been in business since the mid-1970s and originally had 350 employees. After the downsizing in the early 1990s, there were approximately 200 employees remaining—a drop of almost 45 percent. The employees terminated were usually dismissed without warning and without any clearly defined criteria. Over 50 percent of DTU's remaining staff were female, with an average age of thirty-two; 75 percent of these employees worked in technical support positions. Although salaries were frozen for three years, basic pay levels seemed to be acceptable. Where there was discontent was over the fact that employees now had more work without additional recompense. An issue also was the loss of certain fringe benefits. Culturally, there had been everyday contact among the various offices and the employees had been a tightly-knit

group, seeing themselves more or less as family. Downsizing clearly affected this familial setting, and had created a deep sense of loss and grieving for dismissed colleagues. It also meant that the “survivors” had to adapt to a new culture.²¹

The situation clearly created the conditions for even greater disengagement than might have been the case in a typical workplace. There was “lack of motivation, loyalty, trust and recommitment to the new organization . . . [because of feelings of] being deceived, anger and frustration.”²² Even at the time of the study two years later, the employees were “still very bitter. Instead of moving through ‘aftershock,’ they persist in it.”²³ After two years, morale was actually “down,” not better.²⁴ A summary overview of the survey results at the time showed the following:²⁵

- 66 percent of employees could not plan efficiently, lacking clear goals and objectives;
- 66 percent agreed that implementation of the new vision was “a bust” with the wrong employees often being fired and those left becoming resentful and closed to new learning;
- Over 50 percent of employees said that management did not treat them fairly;
- Over 50 percent of employees agreed that before the downsizing DTU was a challenging place to work. After the layoffs DTU’s management was unable to transition successfully to “soft skills”;²⁶
- 87 percent of employees said that there was not enough emphasis on employer-employee relations; and
- Almost 80 percent said that DTU did not put enough emphasis on accessing and utilizing employee ideas.²⁷

²¹ Applebaum, “The Aftermath of Downsizing,” 401–402.

²² Ibid., 403.

²³ Ibid., 409.

²⁴ Ibid., 416

²⁵ Although the employees were assured of confidentiality, it is speculated that the DTU results may have been more positive than the real situation indicated, since some workers considered the survey a management tool. David Holmstrand and Catharina Sténs, “Survivors: The Critical Factor in Layoffs,” Uppsala University, 2001, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.oocities.org/survivorsickness/final.pdf>.

²⁶ Applebaum, “The Aftermath of Downsizing,” 415.

²⁷ Ibid., 416.

The study notes clearly that in DTU's case, "The loss of energy created disengagement, the focus on the past created disidentification, and the shared anger created disenchantment."²⁸ While percentages tend to fluctuate somewhat over the years, the 2013 Gallup Report shows that just 16 percent of the Canadian workforce is engaged, 70 percent are unengaged, and 14 percent are actively disengaged.²⁹ In the conditions ascribed to DTU above, one might readily assume that the percentage of those who were passively or even actively disengaged at DTU were at least typical of overall Canadian levels. In all likelihood, for DTU the actual percentage was even higher. (As compared with two years earlier, 90 percent of the employees put themselves in the dissatisfaction range.)³⁰ This would have meant that of the 200 workers remaining, somewhere over 150 of them would have been actively or passively disengaged, and with a tightly-knit group, one might probably assume that this disengagement would have been fed by one another.

As regards the particular symptoms of disengagement chosen for study here—absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation—certain factors may be deduced from the company study. Given the serious fears that still persisted regarding job security³¹ and a complete mistrust of management, it is unlikely that absenteeism itself was especially rampant. Employees were probably afraid to provide any excuse for them to be terminated. But presenteeism was likely a very different situation.³² The survey suggests "lower morale

²⁸ Ibid., 409.

²⁹ Jason Cowles, "Engaged Workplaces Have a Productivity Edge in Canada's Booming Finance and Energy Sectors," *Gallup, Inc: The State of the Global Workplace: Employee Engagement Insights for Business Leaders*, 2013, 86.

³⁰ Applebaum, "The Aftermath of Downsizing," 422.

³¹ Ibid., 419.

³² A recent article suggests that presenteeism is an even worse workplace problem than absenteeism because it cannot easily be recognized or measured. Kathryn May, "'Presenteeism' Worse than Absenteeism? Thousands of Public Servants Have Mental Health Issues, Expert Says," *National Post*, June 1, 2015,

and lower productivity,”³³ as well as “loss of energy,”³⁴ and stress.³⁵ It speaks of “less than positive attitudes” on the part of employees.³⁶ In their own study that references DTU, Holmstrand and Sténs note, “Survivors who experience stress are likely to react passively,”³⁷ which would be an indication of presenteeism. One might reasonably assume that in DTU’s case this symptom of disengagement was an especially problematic situation.

In the case of declining innovation, the recognized indications are even clearer. The study notes that “employees lack the readiness to move forward.”³⁸ They want to “cling to what once had been.”³⁹ Not only that, but in this particular case there is a concomitant feeling that “DTU puts too little stress on using employee ideas.”⁴⁰ Given clear problems about the company’s future plans and objectives, no readiness on the part of employees to move forward, and the clear sense that in any event their ideas and suggestions will carry no weight, declining innovation is certain to be another of DTU’s major problems.

5.3.2 Applying the practices of Benedict to the workplace

Given the situation of DTU and its clearly expressed problems, it is very helpful to examine what different practices, drawn from the Rule of Benedict, might assist the company in dealing with the obvious evidence there of employee disengagement. It is

accessed May 31, 2015, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadian-politics/presenteeism-worse-than-absenteeism-thousands-of-public-servants-have-mental-health-issues-expert-says>.

³³ Applebaum, “The Aftermath of Downsizing,” 404.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 409.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 403.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 422.

³⁷ Holmstrand and Sténs, “Survivors,” 15.

³⁸ Applebaum, “The Aftermath of Downsizing,” 410.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 409.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 416.

interesting, at least for purposes of contrast, that the case study of DTU provides an actual action plan that was recommended at the time to the company as a result of the employee surveys:

- The President was to make a direct inspirational speech to employees disclosing reasons for downsizing and criteria used in deciding who was to be laid off. Also, the company mission, vision, and objectives would be outlined within two weeks.
- Employees would be involved in identifying what needed to change after downsizing (within two weeks).
- The company would begin using the new decision-making techniques, but first introducing the prescribed techniques on a small scale and as an experiment, so as to make them less threatening. Feedback on the decision-making techniques was to receive a reply from management (within three weeks).
- Training was to be provided to supervisors on how to motivate and manage survivors (within three months).
- Management was to communicate the incentive program, receive feedback, and initiate a final version of the group incentive program (within three months).
- Management was to involve survivors of downsizing in discussion of DTU's next steps to maximize its potential and in discussions on career management (immediately—tomorrow).⁴¹

While some of the suggestions made above are certainly helpful and others less so, to begin to introduce the new vision of work that can be drawn from Benedict's Rule "something more" is needed. A number of employee fences need to be mended and a renewed sense of transparency needs to occur. Still, the ultimate goal would be to help workers at all levels (management included) develop a sense of meaning and purpose, notions that would be accompanied by a heightened awareness of transcendence/spirituality at the personal level.

Any proposed practices need to recognize the particular situation of DTU, with its high levels of demoralization, grief/loss, and mistrust of management. In the circumstances,

⁴¹ Ibid., 428–429.

two guidelines would seem to be required. First, any approach to employees ought not to be seen to be a new attempt by management to impose a culture, but rather an attempt to help individual employees in a new situation. Any notion that management, like a parent, will now establish a new agenda that employees will be expected to adopt is likely to be perceived negatively. At the same time, it can be recognized that genuine attempts to improve corporate culture, sustained over time, can be a positive influence. Secondly, given the immediacy of the DTU problems, a two-stage approach is likely needed.

In the early stages, the following practices taken from Benedictine roots would seem to be helpful. First, for Benedict the recognition of human emotional factors is a necessary basic step in spiritual development; therefore, all employees need to be given the opportunity for personal EQ assessment.⁴² This could be a common social exercise at each of DTU's six locations, with managers expected to take part. All employees would be assured of personal confidentiality. The results would include the confidential twenty-page personal EQ Report for each employee with an additional individual coaching session (one hour) with a licensed EQ consultant. An anonymous thirty-page EQ Group Report would also be generated and available to all. Such a report could assist in identifying the emotional strengths of the current downsized employee groupings. More importantly, in

⁴² Preferably the Emotional Quotient-Inventory™. A further helpful instrument could be the FIRO-B (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation – Behaviour) for the leadership/management team and possibly even for a corporate culture renewal project. What is significant about the FIRO-B is also its scientific basis. It measures *inclusion* (e.g., involvement), *openness* (e.g., sensitivity) and *control* (e.g., power) and to what extent each is *wanted* (to what extent one wants or accepts the behaviour) and *expressed* (to what extent one initiates the behaviour). In DTU's case it could help build team-member relations and increase the Benedictine spirit of community.

personal terms the results could spur a liberating individual reflection on meaning and purpose⁴³—the doors to transcendence.

The notion of transcendence is not only the heart and soul that *contextualizes* the practices in Benedict's Rule. It also sets the stage to introduce the growing contemporary perception that has influenced much business thinking during the past fifteen years. The EQ Report has provided a natural opening for participants' questions on meaning, what they consider important, tied in with their working lives. This initial emphasis on emotions not only brings to bear Benedict's keen awareness of emotions in a very practical manner, but beginning any process with EQ education and development is also a natural way to engage participants quickly.

Although some of the practices suggested here may seem prosaic, they are directed first toward providing a basis for (as with EI), and the gradual acclimatization of, a notion of transcendence within the workplace, as well as concurrently fostering a gradual shift to a more subjective or personalist view of work. Both elements are central to the Rule. While the notion of transcendence is not new for many people, in DTU's case it would make sense to use it as groundwork, because when introducing practices from the Rule, transcendence is the starting point. It seems likewise to accord with contemporary quests: today "people are increasingly looking for higher meaning in their lives."⁴⁴ Moreover transcendence and spirituality can be distinguished from any religious implications that may be divisive. As Dorr writes:

⁴³ In numerous cases, when participants first receive EQ Reports, a common remark is something like the following: "Oh my! This certainly gives me reason to think about what is important in my life."

⁴⁴ Rajendra S. Sisodia, David B. Wolfe, and Jogdish N. Sheth, *Firms of Endearment: How World-Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose* (Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007), 4.

It is not unusual, nowadays, to find management consultants insisting on the value of spirituality in the workplace. Quite frequently they distinguish sharply between spirituality and religion, favouring the former but not the latter, mainly on the grounds that religion may be divisive. When they refer to spirituality they generally have in mind such values as, harmony, trust, good communication, co-operation, transparency, and honesty.⁴⁵

As the values enumerated by Dorr suggest, any workplace practices that promote the value of transcendence also promote a more personalist view of work. Without negating such values as efficiency and productivity, this shifts the emphasis from the prevailing objective and mechanistic view toward an increasingly subjective approach in which the worker becomes more important. Practices that deal with leadership are particularly vital in this latter respect. Nevertheless, all the practices mentioned below, whether they deal primarily with the workforce or with its leadership, have as their background the introduction of a transcendent outlook and the encouragement of a more subjective approach.

One recommendation of the DTU survey above is an inspirational address by the president to employees. This is likely to have minimal positive effect, not only because it is predictable, but also because it reinforces the top-down line of communication that employees may interpret cynically. A better practice for building the key Benedictine element of community and relationality in a situation where employees obviously feel left out could come from chapter 3 of the Rule (“Summoning the Brothers for Counsel”). The president and other senior management personnel could meet with employees at each of the company’s six locations. They could explain the need for downsizing, acknowledge freely

⁴⁵ Donal Dorr, *Spirituality of Leadership: Inspiration, Empowerment, Intuition and Discernment* (Blackrock, Co Dublin, 2007), 68.

any mistakes, and emphasize the value and contribution of the individual employee. They ought to be open to honestly answering any questions and make themselves available to any employee. Most importantly, they would invite suggestions from all employees, record those that are made, and promise to reply to them within a month. Ideally, they would commit themselves to follow-up meetings every six months. To reinforce the value of community, such meetings could have a social element where the president and others have an opportunity to meet every individual employee not only collectively but individually.

In the meantime, the company would establish a policy of similar local monthly meetings where local management would explain and answer questions about company policy and invite suggestions from all. Again, any suggestions that could not be dealt with on a local level would be forwarded upwards and a reply promised by the next monthly meeting. Just as Benedict was careful about promptness and time, employees would then begin to feel more secure in what to expect. In this process of trust building, predictability would help.

Again, as a means of building community and in line with Benedictine practice, the company might arrange that all senior management and local management have a weekend retreat. This could be offered by a qualified facilitator and have two focal points: 1) the overall company mission, and 2) valuing each employee within that mission. This would be in line with the Benedictine principle that “leadership is [about] . . . providing a mission worth doing in the first place,”⁴⁶ and it would tend to be a personalist offset to a mechanistic view of work. Such retreats could be repeated at least annually. If it were

⁴⁶ Turak, *Business Secrets of the Trappist Monks*, 35.

possible to offer such a retreat for all company employees, this would be even more helpful.

Benedict recognized the spiritual importance of accepting failure as a normal part of life. A Benedictine practice that can be employed in today's workplace is how to "celebrate" failure,"⁴⁷ as one author teaches participants. In that connection, the suggestion in the survey on immediately training managers how to motivate and manage survivors is helpful. In the DTU case, such training would perhaps best be offered by grief counsellors, who would probably be best qualified to deal with the sense of loss that seems at the root of employee disaffection in that context.

In keeping with the emphasis of the Rule on the ongoing need for *lectio divina* to educate and uplift community members, on an early appropriate occasion management might send to every employee (perhaps in conjunction with another tangible gift like flowers, a gift certificate, or a bonus cheque) a hope-filled book on the workplace, such as the newly published *The Business Romantic*,⁴⁸ with a note that they may find it interesting and helpful. Obviously not every employee would read the book, but some of them would, and any discussion of the book in the workplace would also be an encouragement for others.

⁴⁷ Dermot Tredget, OSB, "'The Rule of Benedict' and Its Relevance to the World of Work." *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 17, no. 3 (2002): 226.

⁴⁸ Tim Leberecht, *The Business Romantic: Give Everything, Quantify Nothing, and Create Something Greater Than Yourself* (New York: HarperBusiness, 2015). It begins with the theme of Olympic values ("excellence, friendship, and respect") and has one emphatic sentence: "The flame must never go out." Leberecht insists that business need not be *only transactional* but would include the transcendent, emotions, engagement, the relational, and passion and that, like the Olympics, would "leave space for our imagination [and for] wanting more . . . for the unknown" (xiv). When speaking about Southwest Airline's success with its engaged employees, one author refers to Southwest's power of "relational competence." See Margaret Benefiel, *Soul at Work: Spiritual Leadership in Organizations* (New York: Seabury Books (an imprint of Church Publishing), 2005), 25.

In the longer term, further practices that have their roots in the Rule of Benedict could be adopted by the company. It is fundamental to implementing the principles of Benedict's Rule that organizations "enact their environments rather than adapt to them."⁴⁹ While the Benedictine tradition has been noted for its flexibility and adaptability in changing circumstances, in DTU's case this core personalist and transcendent dynamic was totally absent. A mechanistic management mindset meant that "best practices" were "contingent upon the vagaries of technical change, globalization, demographics, and the emergence of niche markets or changing patterns of consumption."⁵⁰

What would be needed instead are steps to build a DTU model that has a clear, proactive corporate culture and mission, with its ingrained ability to adapt, rather than a reactive one. This in turn will require emphasis on the Rule's central notion of *subsidiarity*, as was seen in the previous chapter. In a sense, subsidiarity would also involve Benedict's notion of a school in which there would be genuine listening and an ongoing *conversatio morum*, since it would involve workers at every level interacting and working with one another. As Kleymann and Malloch write:

A general lesson that might be learned from observing these "Benedictine" types of organisations is that quality of output, quality of work environment, and quality of staff are tightly interlinked. The "good" organization—"good" as a place to work and "good" in what it produces—is one that is staffed by an intelligent and conscientious workforce which is allowed—via the principle of subsidiarity—to engage as "whole persons" in the productive and community life of the organisation.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Birgit Kleymann and Hedley Malloch, "The Rule of Saint Benedict and Corporate Management: Employing the Whole Person," *Journal of Global Responsibility* 1, no. 2 (2010): 220, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/20412561011079362>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

Making the real efforts to devolve responsibility to its most basic level that subsidiarity entails can not only create the flexibility that comes from wider participation and new ideas. It also involves an expression of trust, fortified by a commitment to truly understanding the particular contribution of the other at every level.

A practice drawn from the Rule (as well as an ethical consideration) that could be helpful to DTU involves reexamining its sense of justice and fairness (the Benedictine *aequitas*). In this way a company would seek to treat each person by what is suitable to *that* person, not simply by decisions applied “across the board.” For Benedict this involves not just the individual, but the “good of all concerned” (RB Prol. 47). The case study of DTU suggests that the firm was not unionized, so that there are unlikely to have been formal appeal mechanisms in place. To recognize Benedict’s principle that there be avenues for recourse, it would be helpful that in each of DTU’s locations there would be a formal appeals panel consisting of one management person and one employee elected by the group. This would hear any appeal and make a written recommendation. If they were unable to resolve the matter locally, the matter would go to a company-wide appeals panel, where a management person and an elected employee representative would be joined by an arbitrator. In this case a majority decision would be binding. This process would not only be a means of protecting employee rights; it would also be a mechanism for ensuring that employee considerations are heard.

Benedict’s monks were stakeholders in the work they did. Although DTU had instituted some bonuses for employees, in the longer term, to develop real equity and justice in the workplace, the company might consider the practice of taking steps to make

its employees genuine shareholders in the enterprise, by granting to each employee, proportionately, favorable options to acquire its shares.

A further practice from the Rule that could be useful to DTU comes directly from chapter 53, “The Reception of Guests” or what today could be called customer service. While there is no indication that DTU employees were particularly deficient in this respect, ongoing training and awareness of customer service can be useful in building employee EQ skills and personal responsibility. Although in effect a wholesaler of vacation packaging, DTU was in a very specific people relationship business, where a deeper awareness of emotional skills could be helpful both personally and in terms of the company’s goals.

It goes without saying, given the problems of DTU, that the practice of ongoing work with management is essential to develop the kind of leadership that the Rule envisaged and that seems to be so needed in this particular case. Here, the FIRO-B instrument mentioned earlier could be a useful follow up to the EQ assessment, building a basic emotional awareness and a sense that a company is a community, and not merely a hierarchy. A qualified consultant ideally would work with senior company management over a two- to three-year time frame, concentrating on the broader issues of mission and purpose, of engendering community, and of bringing out the best in each employee both for personal well-being and job satisfaction, but also to develop the innovative outlooks that the company will need to succeed and prosper. The goals here will be to promote Benedict’s organizational principle of order with flexibility and to develop leadership decision making that, in Benedict’s terms, seeks to enrich the company by profiting its employees rather than presiding over them (RB 64.8).

5.3.3 Personally helpful practices drawn from the Rule

While the practices suggested in the preceding section can be helpful in changing the atmosphere of the entire workplace, there are also several practices drawn from Benedict's Rule that can be personally beneficial to the individual in dealing with his or her workplace situation, especially one that is to some extent dysfunctional. The intention in this section is to illustrate how employees can make such practices integral to their working lives. The assumption is that the ongoing use of such practices will support, challenge, and help shape personalist dimensions and qualities that deal with both self and relationality. E. F. (Ernst Friedrich, or "Fritz") Schumacher (1911–1977) made some incisive comments that can readily be applied to such Rule principles and practices:

Everywhere people ask, "What can I actually do?" The answer is as simple as it is disconcerting. We can, each of us, work to put our own inner house in order. The guidance we all need for this work cannot be found in science or technology, the value of which utterly depends on the ends they serve; but it can still be found in the traditional wisdom of [humankind].⁵²

In DTU's case, there can be assumed to exist a deep sense of *acedia*—a negative sense of drifting and passivity—during and after the downsizing. By encouraging people to take personal time for prayer, meditation, centering, and other customs that foster quiet and reflection, the Rule can teach the employee that one needs to develop a craft with prayer habits that develop presence, noticing, and attentiveness. In the case of the individual, these can be potent correctives to any tendency towards disengagement.

Benedict's Rule encouraged contemplation. In harmony with the EI competency and engine of Emotional Self-Awareness, the daily practice of some type of meditation can

⁵² E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered* (London: Abacus, 1973), 297.

both deepen the individual's sense of transcendence and on a purely human level can encourage the personal "liberation" that Winter sees as essential.⁵³ Richard Byrd speculated that "no man [*sic*] can hope to be completely free who lingers within . . . familiar habits and urgencies."⁵⁴ Meditation takes one beyond oneself. Of course, given the many distractions of each day, what seems like doing nothing can be challenging. One can attend to this Rule meditation/contemplation each morning, for example, starting with Benedict's encouragement to listen carefully "with the ear of your heart" (RB. Prol. 1). Such listening is truly attentive inner listening that on the human journey is essential to appropriate inherent personalist qualities.

Precisely to encourage listening and to avoid the distractions or "drifting" that keeps one from being rooted in the present,⁵⁵ silence was a key element of Benedictine life. An appreciation of silence is perhaps all the more important today. A recent author commented: "'Noise pollution'" has settled down into the ecological agenda nearly as firmly as other forms of pollution that threaten our well-being and safety. . . . in our increasingly silence-avoiding culture."⁵⁶ Like daily meditation, just taking a few minutes periodically during the work day to reflect silently, when this is possible, can be very helpful both for work life and life in general. Silent reflection can be especially helpful after any important conversation, to ensure that one has truly "listened" to what the other(s) have

⁵³ Today, recognizing this need for interior reflection, some companies and institutions have provided meditation rooms, or "quiet rooms."

⁵⁴ Richard Byrd, *Alone* (New York: Putnam, 1938), 3–7; quoted by Sara Maitland, *A Book of Silence* (London, UK: Granata Publications, 2008), 36.

⁵⁵ Scharmer calls drifting "flying on the wings of other people"—a distinct image that captures the contemporary experience of *acedia* in the workplace. Besides doing violence to EQ's Social Responsibility such drifting violates relational justice. Scharmer, *Theory U*, 460.

⁵⁶ Maitland, *A Book of Silence*, 3, 32.

said. It is even more essential when such a conversation might contain elements of negativity to allow oneself to see the most positive construction possible. Such silent moments become moments of *metanoia* and “unselfing” that are anything but introverted, but instead encourage stronger relationality and build a moral capacity for ethical virtue.⁵⁷

Another basic practice from the Rule that can enrich an employee privately is to pray a modified version of the Benedictine Breviary. It would not be unusual for some employees to have prayer at home before they begin the day. Glenstal Abbey in Ireland has had tremendous success with a little *Book of Prayer* that follows the Benedictine tradition. It contains an abbreviated form of the Benedictine Divine Office, and it also has simple and short prayers such as “In the morning” to begin the day,⁵⁸ while *The Benedictine Handbook* has a prayer “at the beginning of every work” (RB 35.4).⁵⁹ In keeping with the Benedictine tradition, a personal style of prayer—even using short prayer forms—that attempted to reflect the various moments of each day would be particularly appropriate.

Accompanying such Benedictine prayers that can be said or prayed at any moment, there can be slightly more formal moments and practices of personal and/or group prayer. Using the *Glenstal Book of Prayer*, two or more colleagues with this mutual interest in prayer could decide to meet once or more during the week, on lunch breaks or after work, whether in the office or a coffee shop. The *Glenstal Book of Prayer* contains a simple

⁵⁷ Matthew B. Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 99.

⁵⁸ “I arise with God / May God rise with me. / God’s hand enfolding me / As I sit, as I lie down / And as I arise.” In *The Glenstal Book of Prayer: A Benedictine Prayer Book* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 110. The book is 159 pages and includes a daily calendar of “Saints and Feasts.”

⁵⁹ “O God, come to my assistance; / O Lord, make hast to help me.” In Anthony Maret-Crosby, OSB, “Benedictine Prayers: Prayers from the Rule,” (Introduction) in *The Benedictine Handbook*, ed. Anthony Maret-Crosby, OSB (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 213.

Liturgy of the Hours for morning, evening, and during the day that each might take five to ten minutes. These prayers are “an invitation and an opportunity to pause in the midst of work and turn our hearts to God.”⁶⁰

In short, many practices in a personal Benedictine prayer life can be situated *outside* the workplace. One that was central to Benedict was *lectio divina* or reflective slow reading. Depending on the individual, this might involve the Christian or Jewish scriptures, or the canonical books of other great religious traditions. A suggestion made earlier in the case of DTU was the book *The Business Romantic*; other such inspirational books could be equally helpful.⁶¹ For those more directly involved in the Benedictine tradition, a reflective reading of the Rule itself could be helpful. One commentator has noted, in words that could be applied to any such *lectio divina*, the personalist journey that it involves.⁶² The purpose of *lectio divina* is not to inculcate philosophies, but to engage the person in a reflective manner that opens up the person to *wonder*, and thus to transcendence. It is clear, for example, that a true *lectio divina* based on the Psalms could not help but give an individual

⁶⁰ *The Glenstal Book of Prayer*, 12.

⁶¹ In a similar vein, some have found movie and DVD examples more suitable to their taste. One such example is the one-hour DVD: *The Everyday: Benedictine Life at Mount Savior Monastery*, 2006, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1054482/>.

⁶² “When I first picked up the Rule my immediate reaction was gratitude that it was short. I was expecting it to be largely irrelevant to my life. But . . . it seemed natural . . . to look at the text ultimately responsible for [the] mediaeval buildings which now surrounded me . . . What was the inspiration that led men to create this place? What practical skills could construct underground tunnels for the water supply, and artistic skills could create the fantastic images of the Romanesque capitals in the crypt or the lyrical beauty of stained glass windows? . . . The opening words of the Prologue immediately caught my attention. They were warm and loving, showing a personal concern for me and for my way to God . . . What was clear was that Benedict spoke to my heart and my condition. . . . It was as though my own questions and struggles, only half articulated, were here being clarified and addressed. . . . it was like the start of a conversation with a friend . . . Benedict became friend and guide.” Esther de Wall, “Living the Rule in the World,” in *The Benedictine Handbook*, ed. Anthony Maret-Crosby, OSB (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 300–301.

a sense of the demands of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation that could be a powerful spur to broader outlooks and innovation.

With severe downsizing, the DTU experience was clearly typified by a sense of loss and grieving. One might also assume that if there was not sometimes an outright sense of failure, there were at least feelings of discouragement and lack of accomplishment. A Benedictine maxim states, “I get up, I fall down; I get up, I fall down.” The preceding section referenced workplace practices that would acknowledge, and, in Tredget’s word, even “celebrate” failures.⁶³ What is true of the workplace is perhaps even more applicable to the individual person. Not only is perceived failure disheartening. Jochen Zeitz, the Puma CEO, has pointed out also that the pressure to keep up appearances conflicts, in Martin Buber’s terms, with “being” and personal authenticity.⁶⁴ Celebrating failures, as an explicit practice, in the sense of acknowledging them, learning from them, and “getting up” again, is a thoroughly Benedictine concept that can not only avoid emotional and spiritual harm, but can significantly promote personal development.⁶⁵ Obviously, Benedict was immersed in the Scriptures, not only in relation to Christ’s dying and rising, but also to Biblical notions of the death of old habits, attitudes, and perceptions. Still, it is notable that even in a secular reference to work, Scharmer describes the point of *letting go* as

⁶³ Tredget, “The Rule of Benedict,” 226.

⁶⁴ Jochen Zeitz and Anselm Grün, *The Manager and the Monk: A Discourse on Prayer, Profit, and Principles* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (A Wiley Imprint), 2010), 159.

⁶⁵ Grün makes an important distinction here. He writes: “That doesn’t mean that we all have to belittle ourselves and make excuses for our many weaknesses. It is a question more of openness and calmness, not fooling anyone, and creatively handling weaknesses as well as strengths,” in Zeitz and Grün. *The Manager and the Monk*, 15.

“Presencing: Connecting to Source (What Is My Self? What is My Work?)”, where “deep diving,” “redirecting attention,” and “opening the heart” are essential.⁶⁶

Benedict put great emphasis on Lent as a time of retreat, that is, a time for stepping back and re-examining ourselves (RB 49.3). A modern and helpful translation of part of his passage suggests that during the days of Lent, one might look carefully at the integrity of one’s life “and get rid . . . of any *thoughtless compromises* which may have crept in at other times.”⁶⁷ The words “thoughtless compromises” speak to contemporaries in a very forceful way, especially since their very thoughtless nature suggests a certain amount of having drifted into them. Within Lent, or at any time during the year, the retreat times that are readily available to most people, whether day retreats, weekends, or longer, afford the same opportunities to examine the “thoughtless comprises” that often creep into individual lives to personal detriment (lack of Reality Testing, Assertiveness, and Impulse Control, for example, in emotional terms) as well as their obvious effects on relationality.

A time for silence and contemplation is in the end not optional. Engaging in personal or group practices of prayer and reflection, therefore, opens up the possibilities of the renewal of the hearts and minds of both employees and managers. Moreover, they become privileged opportunities for individuals to perceive and to create meaning around who they are and what they do. Such practices can be short, engaging, or done in a timeframe that suits the person. One thing is sure: all change begins *inside out*. Wisdom says it may often be better to engage in consciousness awakening at our own speed than to have it imposed on us through circumstances. Being proactive is probably the best antidote.

⁶⁶ Scharmer, *Theory U*, 246.

⁶⁷ Marett-Crosby, *The Benedictine Handbook*, 72. Italics added.

5.4 Applying a personalist outlook to workplace disengagement

This study began with an analysis of the large-scale, globally prevalent problem of workplace disengagement. Such disengagement involves several symptoms, but the two particulars chosen for this study were the somewhat dissimilar ones of presenteeism/absenteeism and declining innovation. Disengagement, as was seen, is also called a “disconnect,”⁶⁸ in the sense that workers fail to develop any “intimate connection with their companies.”⁶⁹ It was observed that employee *emotions* are disconnected from their work. Employees may *know* (the cognitive aspect) what they are supposed to work at; they may be able to “go through the motions,” but they will definitely lack the passion to get engaged in what they do.

This thesis proposes that an understanding of the principles of the Rule of Benedict, with its personalist and integrated view of work, does indeed offer an approach to offset the contemporary mechanistic metaphor that results in problems of disengagement. Chapter 1 has presented a thorough analysis of employee disengagement, and subsequent chapters have presented the possible strengths and shortcomings of approaches to address the two symptoms from the standpoints of EI and contemporary workplace spirituality. Having analyzed the Rule in chapter 4 for its potential personalist outlook that can be transposed beyond its own particular setting, the present chapter began by presenting an approach to work derived from Benedict’s insights. To help appreciate the actual application of such an outlook, the thesis used a company case study and suggested some concrete principles

⁶⁸ Peter J. Frost, “Handling the Hurt: A Critical Skill for Leaders,” *Ivey Business Journal*, January-February, 2004, 1, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/handling-the-hurt-a-critical-skill-for-leaders/>.

⁶⁹ Kirdahy, “Wooing The Workforce.”

consonant with a Benedictine approach that could have been helpful in its situation. To appreciate better the contribution that the insights of the Rule can offer in this context, it is useful to re-examine the two symptoms of disengagement chosen for study.

5.4.1 Absenteeism/Presenteeism

The first symptom, and perhaps the most prevalent one, that reflects the problem of employee disengagement is that of *absenteeism/presenteeism*. Chapter 1 established that while absenteeism from a business management perspective means that employees are not present *physically*, it was, as an expression of disengagement, a reflection not only of *external* behaviour but also of *internal* feelings of dissatisfaction. An accompanying part or flipside of absenteeism was that of presenteeism, where workers may be physically present but absent emotionally to the task at hand. Attridge et al. wrote that “when health, emotional, worklife, or personal problems interfere with an employee’s ability to perform at acceptable levels of productivity, this is considered a presenteeism problem.”⁷⁰ Basically it was seen in our earlier analysis that presenteeism is the situation of those who simply put in time while in the workplace. The mistrust and unsettled situation observed in the case of DTU suggested that while outright absenteeism in the company may not have been a major problem, there was an especially high likelihood of presenteeism.

⁷⁰ Mark Attridge, Joel B. Bennet, Mark C. Frame, and James Campbell Quick, “Corporate Health Profile: Measuring Engagement and Presenteeism,” in *Employee Assistance Programs: Wellness Enhancement Programming*, ed. Michael A. Richard, William G. Emener, and William S. Hutchinson, Jr., 4th ed., (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher Ltd., 2009), 229.

The title of Paul Hemp's article, "Presenteeism: At Work—But Out of It,"⁷¹ captures quite well the sense and personal dangers of presenteeism. Here, the characteristics of subjectivity and self-determination so central to Benedict's personalist vision are sorely missing. The employee's sense of self-presence resulting from interiority and the employee's sense of self-determination in being a subjective 'I' capable of self-mastery and freedom are totally lacking. Instead, a corporate mechanistic mindset that ignores personalist qualities violates the uniqueness and dignity of the employee. In other words, with absenteeism/presenteeism the person himself or herself is existentially discounted; mechanistic thinking is preeminent even in shaping an employee's own self-perceptions.⁷² The employee effectively fills a slot. With a mechanistic metaphor in the ascendancy, it is unsurprising that absenteeism and presenteeism are so prevalent.

The pressures and stress of the workplace can often be absorbed only for so long before the employee *absents* their work duties through illness of some sort (absenteeism) or *presents* themselves for work effectively in body only (presenteeism). Certainly, in the case of DTU, the stress of downsizing became a major factor. It is no accident that the Rule mentions how one or two senior monks are to "walk around" to ensure the monks were actually working at what they were supposed to be doing (RB 48.17-18). Clearly it recognized that real idleness or not sticking with the task at hand could become problematic. This was not just a practical measure; the Rule recognized the basic

⁷¹ Paul Hemp, "Presenteeism: At Work—But Out of It," *Harvard Business Review*, October, 2004, accessed April 12, 2016, <https://hbr.org/2004/10/presenteeism-at-work-but-out-of-it>.

⁷² Matthew Crawford has a new and frightening comment on this mechanistic mindset (e.g., results-based or performance-oriented) mentality where the person is not acknowledged by and in the work they do. He claims that business has shifted eerily so from such a blunt means-ends use of the worker and "has become a place of moral education, where souls are formed and a particular ideal of what it means to be a good person is urged upon us." Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 126.

connection between work and the realm of the spiritual. The measure sought to ensure that any idleness or inattentiveness did not develop into the larger problem of spiritual disinterest.⁷³ For Benedict, “Idleness is the enemy of the soul” (RB 48.1). The notion of sloth links itself to the notion of neglecting one’s spiritual responsibility: the task of ongoing conversion to engagement and its urgency at every moment. As pointed out, absenteeism/presenteeism, like any form of disengagement, constitute a “disconnect.”⁷⁴ Here the appreciation of Benedict’s notion of rootedness (*stabilitas*) is crucial. Although employment circumstances may change and one may hold a variety of jobs over the course of a lifetime, it is very difficult to give one’s full attention when one does not experience a connectedness with what one is doing here and now. Being engaged, in the sense of being present in any activity, is basic.

The lack of such attentive presence is at root a spiritual *dis*-ease that plagues the workplace, ranging from mild to destructive forms. While the management literature can have up to nine different definitions of presenteeism,⁷⁵ typically it constitutes a mirror image of physical absenteeism. With Benedict’s personalism at work, one is *never* absent from any kind of work and one can *never* simply be at work in an absent-minded manner. One *attends* to all work with all one’s spirit and soul. This involves the personalist concepts of human dignity, interiority, and self-determination, where a person rejects the notion that they are simply a cog in the workplace machine, but endowed with a higher calling. The

⁷³ Delatte, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, 315.

⁷⁴ Frost, “Handling the Hurt,” 1. “Max Caldwell, a managing principal at Towers Perrin, said this trend may have begun when employees of all ranks stopped developing an intimate connection with their companies.” Kirdahy, “Wooing the Workforce.”

⁷⁵ Gary Johns, “Presenteeism in the Workplace: A Review and Research Agenda,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 31, no. 4 (May 2010): 521, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/job.630/epdf>.

apparent tendency of the DTU survivors to act passively effectively expresses instead a mechanistic outlook.

To facilitate a meaningful conversation between Benedict's personalist vision and the deep-rooted problem of absenteeism/presenteeism, one has to accept as an overall starting-point that managerial and employee self-consciousness is absolutely critical. Crawford states that such a starting point "requires a kind of 'unselfing.'"⁷⁶ He points out that this attempt at consciousness "is never fully successful, because we are preoccupied with our own concerns. But getting inside her own head is the task the artist sets herself, and this is the mechanic's task, too."⁷⁷ Both artist and mechanic, if good at their craft, use their imagination, "'not to escape the world but to join it, and this exhilarates us because of the distance between our ordinary dulled consciousness and an apprehension of the real.'"⁷⁸ Such a process is exactly what is required in order for the disengaged employee to become engaged. This process of "unselfing" also allows an employee a chance to "respond to the world justly" but, as was suggested, an employee needs to see it clearly, "and for this you have to get outside your own head."⁷⁹ It is for this reason that it was suggested that in the case of DTU, the encouragement of practices that could lead to a sense of self-transcendence—beginning with EI usage—could be especially helpful.

Benedictine monk Anselm Grün expands on this needed shift to *consciousness*. He too sees it as a personalist perspective that acknowledges that *all change begins inside out*.

⁷⁶ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 99. He quotes Iris Murdoch, who writes that anything that "alters consciousness in the direction of unselfishness, objectivity and realism is to be connected with virtue" because this shift to embrace virtue "is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is." *The Sovereignty of Good*, (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), 82, 91.

⁷⁷ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 100.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 103. Crawford is quoting Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 88.

⁷⁹ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 103.

In other words, “when we *see* things differently, they *become* different for us, too.”⁸⁰ As has been seen, emotional intelligence supports the need for such self-awareness, even seeing it as the emotions’ engine. In contradistinction to a mechanistic perspective, Grün specifically connects consciousness and self-awareness to the personalist dynamic that involves subjectivity and self-determination:

Consciousness or awareness, then, means first of all being aware and assured about your own self, knowing your own light and shadow sides, and accepting them. . . . Actually the term means that I not only know something but also am aware of knowing it—it is a collaborative knowledge, a conscious knowing. Conscience⁸¹ is the highest standard for an individual’s decision making . . . Our conscience must develop first, however. It is our task to cleanse our conscience of our own moods and desires and the demands of our so-called “superego.”⁸²

The various practices suggested for DTU that would engage management’s sense of mission and put leaders in more meaningful contact with their employees can enhance this sense of consciousness and counteract the tendencies toward presenteeism. Grün points out that many managers in particular really do not know who they are. In other words, they are lacking key aspects of personalism, relying only on mechanistic strategies. In so far as “they do not perceive themselves, they will also not notice their employees as distinct people. They will regard them merely as human capital or as cogs in the wheels of machinery, but won’t see their special character as human beings. Because they have no relationship to their own selves, these managers cannot form a real relationship to others or the company”⁸³—an obvious reference also to the lack of relationality and community.

⁸⁰ Zeitz and Grün, *The Manager and the Monk*, 159. Italics in original. For Grün, a Benedictine monk, this means ongoing development of consciousness through contact with the Bible and through prayer and meditation. In the contemporary workplace this development would mean an appreciation of attending concretely and realistically to the task at hand, whatever that might be, because no work or task is profane.

⁸¹ Ibid., 161.

⁸² Ibid., 161–162

⁸³ Ibid., 160.

An appreciation of the sphere of human emotions is, as was seen in the previous chapter, central to the Rule of Benedict. A principal reason for suggesting the use of an emotional intelligence assessment as a basic step in the case of DTU was the contribution that the individual's solid understanding of his or her emotional tendencies can contribute in such a situation where a disconnect leads to a disinterest. Key to any transformation of consciousness are two key core emotional competencies: Emotional Self-Awareness and Reality Testing. The first means that an employee recognizes and understands their own emotions, is able to differentiate between them, and know what caused them and why. At this point, through an inner psychological process, undifferentiated emotions can be transformed. Any disconnect is better understood. When that happens, one can *respond* to a situation or person, not simply *react* as would happen with raw emotion. For many employees this means learning a new *craft*, the craft of true feeling and the chance to begin to see reality as it truly is. It is paramount that a disengaged employee knows about, learns, and embraces such a dynamic because only then will there be any hope of liberation from the listlessness and boredom that they often experience.

The tendency towards workplace presenteeism probably involves a drifting rather than a conscious choice. In DTU's case especially, it likely relates to a sense of passivity. Reality Testing is that factor that provides employees with the ability to evaluate, and distinguish between, what they are experiencing (the subjective) and what in reality exists (the objective). This latter process is quite challenging if an employee's emotional self-awareness is cloudy or simply a bundle of emotions that might lead to a state of passivity or drifting. Reality Testing, by focusing on here-and-now practical and realistic matters (tasks, emotions, feelings, situations, contexts, etc.), can steer an employee's tendencies away

from distraction and *un*-consciousness or lack of self-awareness, as well as from unrealistic expectations. Combined with the consciousness that is engendered by emotional self-awareness, reality testing can be at least a major first step in combatting presenteeism.

Here, happiness is not necessarily the primary element. A study that included the noted psychologist Roy F. Baumeister suggests that some can be happy but live a meaningless existence, while others may live a life rich with meaning but not feel happy. According to the researchers, “takers” were people who “felt happy in a superficial sense, when they got what they wanted, and not necessarily when they put others first, which can be stressful and requires sacrificing what you want for what others want.”⁸⁴ More specific to our discussion on absenteeism/presenteeism, the researchers wrote:

When individuals adopt what might be called a meaning mind-set—that is, they seek connections, give to others, and orient themselves to a larger purpose—clear benefits can result, including improved psychological well-being, more creativity, and enhanced work performance. Workers who find their jobs meaningful are more engaged and less likely to leave their current positions.⁸⁵

These conclusions clearly tie in with the personalist notions of relationality and of community that Benedict would stress, and Winter’s sense of a “human dwelling” that encompasses a wider world, while recognizing that meaningfulness no less involves being rooted in the present.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Emily Esfahani Smith and Jennifer L. Aakerov, “Millennial Searchers,” *New York Times*, Saturday Review, November 30, 2013, accessed February 22, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/01/opinion/sunday/millennial-searchers.html?_r=0.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Anand Giridharasajan writes poetically of being “thickly in one place, not thinly everywhere,” in “Exploring New York, Unplugged and on Foot,” *New York Times*, January 24, 2013, accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/25/nyregion/exploring-red-hook-brooklyn-unplugged-and-with-friends.html>.

The expression of a personalist workplace where there would be far less chance of absence or disinterest can manifest itself in certain particular qualities that can be encouraged in any setting. Pfeffer's research on workplace spirituality outlined four eminently personalist qualities involving the "vital force" (or 'spirit') that employees seek in the work they do.⁸⁷ He suggested four factors: (1) that work be interesting, that is, allow them to develop more of who they are as people so they experience a sense of competence and mastery (self-determination); (2) that work express for them a sense of meaning and purpose (self-determination); (3) that work foster connectedness with those with whom they work (relationality); and (4) that work allow them to experience a sense of coherence, an integration of not only *what* they do but also *who* they are (uniqueness, dignity and subjectivity) .

In the research, the most important of the four qualities was the one that gave employees "meaning and purpose in their jobs" with the ability to realize their "full potential as a person."⁸⁸ In short, work is called to provide self-development, meaning, connectedness, and integration, with meaning as primary. All four factors were considered spiritual qualities as understood in terms of workplace spirituality, and all four can readily be seen to spring from the EI concept of self-actualization—the *bridge* itself to the spiritual or, as Maslow recognized just before he died, his "new" sixth level, self-transcendence.⁸⁹ Clearly, the lack of these qualities is a contributing factor to any failure of employee

⁸⁷ Pfeffer, "Business and the Spirit," 31–32.

⁸⁸ Ian I. Mitroff and Elizabeth Denton, "A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace," *Sloan Management Review* (Spring 1999): 85, accessed April 12, 2016, http://strandtheory.org/images/Spirituality_in_the_workplace-Mitroff_Denton.pdf.

⁸⁹ Mark E. Koltko-Rivera, "Rediscovering the Later Version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Self-Transcendence and Opportunities for Theory, Research, and Unification," *Review of General Psychology* 10, no. 4 (2006): 302–317.

“presence” in the workplace and specifically to the low morale that was experienced at DTU.

Clearly one of the difficulties with absenteeism/presenteeism is the perceived un-Benedictine divide between work and the rest of life. Not only meaning, but connectedness and integration enter into the situation. Contrary to what absenteeism/presenteeism imply, within Benedict’s personalist vision work was not something that draws us apart from what is important in life, but something that draws us into life in its fullness. In the face of any kind of *absence*, Benedict’s personalism portrays for the contemporary workplace a whole and a new vision of *presence*.

The absence, physical or emotional, and inattentiveness inherent in absenteeism or presenteeism is literally soul-draining, at root a spiritual problem that demands a spiritual remedy. These symptoms are nothing less than destructive of the person. They are also destructive of right relationships. As Baumgartner’s research implies, because they are attitudes of non-caring, absenteeism and presenteeism take on deeper meaning. The implication is that workers of every kind need to see their work not only as a component of their own calling, but also as contributing to the true good of humankind. It is with such an ethical understanding that work’s spiritual meaning is appreciated most fully.⁹⁰ Within this broader understanding of calling, a person can experience a full commitment, elevating the character of work and endowing it with a transcendent quality that provides meaning, connectedness, purpose, and worth.

⁹⁰ Giuseppe Gaburro and Giancarlo Cressotti, “Work as Such—The Social Teaching of the Church on Human Work,” *International Journal of Social Economics* 25, no. 11/12 (1998): 1622.

5.4.2 Declining innovation

The ironic but sharp interplay between employee disengagement and the need for innovation stands in bold relief when the words of economist Enrico Moretti are read: “For the first time in history, the factor that is scarce is not physical capital but creativity.”⁹¹ Yet Gallup’s 2013 *State of the Global Workplace* report records that only 13 percent of employees worldwide are fully engaged at work.⁹² In a largely mechanistic contemporary universe, from a personalist perspective, the challenges that lie ahead become obvious.

Moretti’s incisive quote emphasizes a second symptom of workplace disengagement that this study is addressing: *declining innovation*, or the lack of production and adoption of new ideas.⁹³ As mentioned earlier, “Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.”⁹⁴ Obviously, even passive disengagement produces very different results. By contrast, in a work situation when employees do feel engaged, the feeling is contagious and thus fuel for innovation. But with the global enormity of disengagement, such fuel is often low, to say the least. In our initial analysis of disengagement in chapter 1, it was clear that the overall problem markedly affected employee attitudes to creativity. In scenarios of declining innovation employees lacked commitment to the enterprise, they lacked connectedness, and they lacked openness to change. In the case of DTU, what stood out in particular was that “employees lack the readiness to move forward” and want to

⁹¹ Enrico Moretti, *The New Geography of Jobs* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), 11.

⁹² *The State of the Global Workplace*, 11.

⁹³ See also Rosabeth Kanter, “When a Thousand Flowers Bloom: Structural, Collective, and Social Conditions for Innovation in Organizations,” in *Research in Organizational Behavior*, vol. 10, ed. Barry M. Staw and Larry L. Cummings, (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1988), 169–211.

⁹⁴ Attridge, “Measuring and Managing Employee Work Engagement,” 387.

“cling to what once had been.”⁹⁵ For its part, the DTU management was also closed to employee ideas. Yet the literature recognizes that declining innovation, like absenteeism/presenteeism, is not just a management problem. It is at least in part symptomatic of something much deeper, an emotional disconnect. And here, too, the workplace literature recognizes that for true creativity, “something more” is needed.

Although it is often considered in general terms and without an explicit connection to disengagement, researchers have noted the important relationship between the spiritual and the innovative.⁹⁶ MIT’s Otto Scharmer writes that “profound innovation requires a spiritual place—a sense of purpose for coming into being.”⁹⁷ The research recognizes that innovation will most likely take place where there are opportunities to feel a sense of commitment and personal growth. Teasdale writes: “work orders our life’s purpose and the resources we require. Our work contains an innate dignity when it is truly connected to us—when our creativity finds concrete expression in what we do, how we shape our environment, in the fruits of our efforts.”⁹⁸ Frost specifically recognized the importance of community when it came to the development of innovative solutions.⁹⁹

As was seen in the preceding chapter, community and the personalist dimension of relationality are central elements in a Benedictine approach to work. Within the context of the Rule, it is almost impossible to overemphasize their practical, emotional, or spiritual importance. In fact, in his own study of work, Mumford even went so far as to describe the

⁹⁵ Applebaum, “The Aftermath of Downsizing,” 409.

⁹⁶ Neck and Milliman, “Thought Self-Leadership,” 9–16.

⁹⁷ Scharmer, *Theory U*, 431.

⁹⁸ Teasdale, *A Monk in the World*, 97–98.

⁹⁹ Frost, *Toxic Emotions at Work*, 213.

atmosphere created by Benedict's personalism as one of "emotional communion."¹⁰⁰ When the disengagement symptom of declining innovation is encountered, one can almost certainly assume that one of its causes is the absence of a solid community dimension.

In addressing the symptom of declining innovation, it is vital to recognize that the notion of community for Benedict has, both practically and spiritually, two distinct implications that come from a common root. The first, and most immediate, is a local interconnectedness, where work is seen as a common undertaking, and the key Benedictine trait to be encouraged is the mutual and deep listening that the Rule considered so important. Within that context, listening has a double importance. It becomes not only a responsibility toward the other, but an essential element in personal and spiritual growth.

Innovation at the company level, whether it concerns new approaches or product lines, or more simply how to deal with new ideas, usually involves the exchange of information and insights that can only come from serious listening. This exchange will improve when the listening is not only at a horizontal level, but is mutual in terms of management and subordinates. The neglect of DTU management to listen to the insights of their employees constituted a huge barrier to innovation, even without company downsizing. Adler and Heckscher write, "in organizations that are competing primarily on their ability to respond and innovate, knowledge from all parts of the organization is crucial to success, and often subordinates know more than their superiors. Innovation and responsiveness cannot be rigorously preprogrammed, and the creative collaboration they

¹⁰⁰ Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, 265.

require cannot be simply commanded.”¹⁰¹ Key here is the personalist factor of relationality because of the *community* of persons that contextualizes most workplaces. Still, there is much ongoing work to do to build and shape these personalist practices to enable workplaces to be collaborative communities that can halt declining innovation. Recalling Maccoby’s idea of “social character” from chapter 1, Adler and Heckscher link both the idea of community and trust:

Community requires the internalization of motives in a stable self, because only if one can grasp others’ motivational patterns can one have confidence in how they will act in the future. Thus character is always central in the generation of trust. Social character is the core aspects [*sic*] of character produced within social groups, through common socialization mechanisms, that enable people to count on the fact that others will react predictably.¹⁰²

Reinforcing our discussion of the personalist lens that is needed to create and foster the meaning-based aspect of work, Adler and Heckscher are very clear on both the unique and the relational nature of employees that are critical elements for a collaborative community. The authors write:

The collaborative community demands . . . not only that a person be an individual, but that she draw on that individuality to make distinct contributions in multiple social projects and settings. It is not enough to be unique; uniqueness has value only in terms of its relations. Thus it requires a personality that has internalized an ethic of contribution and that is able to relate to multiple identities in various groups.”¹⁰³

From these comments by Adler and Heckscher, it becomes obvious that true innovation finds its primary basis in a personalist context and is almost certainly diminished in an organization that operates under a mechanistic metaphor.

¹⁰¹ Paul S. Adler and Charles Heckscher, “Towards Collaborative Community,” in *The Firm as a Collaborative Community: Reconstructing Trust in the Knowledge Economy*, ed. Charles Heckscher and Paul S. Adler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 28–29.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 55.

The difficulty is that under a mechanistic approach the concentration is on getting things done efficiently without due regard for the persons who are doing these things, or for the broader rationale behind doing them. This is often exacerbated by a competitive rather than a collaborative approach that is totally at odds with Benedict's notion of work as a common effort. This is why one of the practices from Benedict's Rule that would be strongly recommended in the case of DTU would be regular meetings between management and workers that would imitate Benedict's chapter meetings where all could have a say. These would not be only to assist individuals to get to know and appreciate one another better. They would also be a forum for the exchange of reflections and ideas that could ultimately promote innovation. Such meetings would be all the more effective if they were supported by the practice of subsidiarity that seems at the heart of the reflections of Adler and Heckscher.

Still, even apart from the factor of mutual listening that creates workplace unity and community and tends in time to give it a common purpose, listening for Benedict had a more universal side that in terms of innovation is equally important. The Rule's clear sense of connectedness, which seems particularly supported by the EQ competency of Social Responsibility (RE), allows individuals to look beyond any narrow bureaucratic confines to observe the wants and the needs of the world around them. In this sense, listening extends from listening to others to listening to the "signs of the times." Effectively it is a recognition that community includes not only the local grouping, but that this is situated within a broader universal community. Corporate work is then directed not only to its own immediate needs, but also to the service of the common good. Its purpose becomes something larger, as does the basis for the evaluation of ideas and proposals. In as much as

a concept of transcendence accompanies this, community even takes on an ultimacy of purpose. At every level, however, a genuine notion of community challenges any kind of instrumentalism—of simply serving the requirements of the organization—and promotes the broader thinking and exchange of ideas that innovation requires.

It is notable that while Adler and Heckscher emphasize a collaborative community, they also respect the place of the individual within the community. This of course entirely reflects the approach of the Rule of Benedict, and it is a vital consideration in promoting innovation. It is obvious that too dominant a community, one that effectively acquires a super-ego and requires conformity, can be destructive for the individual and for innovative ideas. Benedict did not see the community as something apart, but invariably as the dynamic result of individual interaction, and even individual failings. His personalist outlook respected individual worth, and even individual eccentricities. This respect reflected the absolute uniqueness of each person and their dignity as human beings. It valued the unique ideas and contributions each one could make to the whole, and called forth affirmation. Such affirmation is liberating for every person and frees up energy—physical, psychological, and spiritual—for further personal development and for personal excellence. Although Benedict did not use the word, his Rule in effect valued also the artistry of the individual, the ability to create and to renew and remake. Such individual artistry, supported in a work context by interaction with others, is vital to innovation, which rests on this personalist experience of uniqueness and freedom in self-mastery.

The combination of the creative individual and the supportive community gives rise to the opportunity for greater innovation in the sense of co-creation. While *Laborem Exercens* speaks of work as the human being co-creating with God, the notion can be

extended also to co-creating with colleagues and management. When the human person is acknowledged, affirmed, and cared about, the doors are opened to the artistry of each and all together. Business writer Tim Leberecht comments: “We are all looking for an invitation to co-create, co-opt, and co-own; for an opportunity to make something new, no matter how small or insignificant it is in the grand scheme of things. . . . We only truly commit when we are a part of the performance, too.”¹⁰⁴

Benedict prized the pursuit of excellence, and saw it as a natural outcome in an individual who possessed a sense of purpose, especially when that sense of purpose was supported by and in turn supported the community. Given workplace contexts, where shared purpose or call to action fosters and supports the forming of healthy relationships and innovation, the subsequent employee desire to be intensely involved and “present” to the task at hand opens up the continual desire as well for collaborative improvements in products and processes. Purpose is a key to innovation: “Purpose makes an innovator more aware, or sensitive, because it is *itself* a response to the environment, and one that engages the innovator strongly. . . . Purpose also provides a degree of emotional certainty that makes the prolonged openness of mind required for innovation easier.”¹⁰⁵ This notion of purpose, and shared purpose, was central to a Benedictine approach to work. In studying the subject, Lewis Mumford recognized Benedictine efficiency, that “*le travail Bénédictin*

¹⁰⁴ Leberecht, *The Business Romantic*, 177.

¹⁰⁵ Nikos Mourkogiannis, *Purpose: The Starting Point of Great Companies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 128, 129. Italics in original.

became a byword for . . . formal perfection.”¹⁰⁶ The application of his central principles to the contemporary workplace can offer a real antidote when innovation is absent.

In a situation of declining innovation, perhaps the most important Benedictine principle of all is the notion of *conversatio morum*, which puts emphasis on the need for constant openness to change and requires an ongoing availability to a daily newness in the ordinary affairs of living and working. This latter commitment is essential to nurturing innovation since it represents an employee’s commitment to a culture of growth while also being supported in the personalist nourishing of increasing interiority with its development of human values by which the interior life can mature. It is from this ongoing openness that the surprise of innovative ideas finds fertile soil. The interior growth that values excellence in all things will have its external effect in finding more excellent ways of working.

Innovator W. Edwards Deming’s idea of continuous improvement has been described by the Japanese word *Kaizen* or “improvement” (where “Kai” means change and “zen” means good) and whose core principle is self-reflection, whereby employees continually think about the small and often evolutionary improvements in processes that need to be done.¹⁰⁷ In essence, because innovation is holistic in nature in that it embraces a series of activities required to ensure value creation, Buckler suggests that it “is an environment, a culture—almost spiritual force—that exists in a company.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ “In moralizing the whole process of work, the monastery had raised its productivity; and the term, ‘le travail Bénédictin’ became a byword for zealous efficiency and formal perfection,” in Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, 267.

¹⁰⁷ Masaaki Imai, *Kaizen: The Key to Japan’s Competitive Success* (New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 1986).

¹⁰⁸ S. A. Buckler, “The Spiritual Nature of Innovation,” *Research-Technology Management* 40, no. 2 (1997): 45.

Benedict saw a culture of this kind as a seedbed for *conversatio morum*. In this context, innovation can be seen as the external effect of changed outlooks, something that is recognized in contemporary research, which acknowledges that “positive emotions broaden the scope of cognition and enable flexible and creative thinking.”¹⁰⁹ In other words, positive emotional patterns of thought are notably unusual, flexible, creative, and receptive because they expand our thinking ability.¹¹⁰ We are not left therefore at the mercy of what Lynch calls “the absolutizing instinct,”¹¹¹ which constricts the imagination and will eventually lead to despair. Here the interior growth that Benedict saw as a product of constant openness to change is supported by the emotional competency of Flexibility, which he also valued highly, as well as by the correlative factors of Empathy and constant Reality Testing. In placing a value on the encouragement of notions of transcendence, a workplace is not only encouraging the personal development of its employees. It is also laying the groundwork for the reflection and rethinking that can lead to innovation. This is one of the reasons the encouragement of transcendence, even in small ways, can be so helpful to a company like DTU.

In the final analysis, innovation is grounded in what Turak calls the Rule’s business model of *service and selflessness*.¹¹² This involved finding and nurturing an ongoing perspective of transcendence which, in the contemporary workplace necessitates that employees have a mission that is bigger than their own selfish or personal concerns. For

¹⁰⁹ Paloutzian, Emmons, and Keortge, “Spiritual Well-Being, Spiritual Intelligence, and Healthy Workplace Policy,” 80.

¹¹⁰ Barbara L. Fredrickson and Thomas Joiner, “Positive Emotions Trigger Upward Spirals Toward Emotional Well-Being,” *Psychological Science* 13, no. 2 (March 2002): 172–175.

¹¹¹ William F. Lynch, SJ, *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), 27, 23.

¹¹² Turak, *Business Secrets of the Trappist Monks*, xiii. Italics in original.

those deep in the throes of disengagement, this can often mean a personally wrenching *metanoia*, an about-face, a turning around. Again, it reinforces what was spoken of earlier: that all change—and this now includes a more nuanced notion of innovation—begins *inside out*, leading to personal transformation in community.

Employee engagement then stands a chance of reinforcing organizational and workplace loyalty—given appropriate leadership that is able to model such a personalist transformation—because employees will have been able “to tap into the innate human longing for something worth sacrificing for.”¹¹³ Self-understanding and self-acceptance will find that collaborative community of workspace for their ongoing nurturance and excellence in work. Still, such a process of self-understanding and self-acceptance *within* community still requires, says Crawford, ongoing structural societal efforts “to prevent the concentration of economic power, or take account of how such concentration damages the conditions under which full human flourishing becomes possible (it is never guaranteed).”¹¹⁴ Here principle and practice can find a common ground. Benedict’s monks were stakeholders in all that they did. They shared an interest in it and they constantly sought to improve it. This is a major reason for the recommendation that DTU offer to its employees an opportunity for ownership. Not only can this redress economic imbalances, but it can also be a great motivator in the pursuit of excellence and innovation.

¹¹³ Ibid., 97.

¹¹⁴ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 209.

5.5 Concluding remarks

It was noted in chapter 1 that disengagement is a form of alienation, involving a lack of meaning, a lack of control, a sense of powerlessness or isolation, an absence of purpose, and a lack of significant interaction with co-workers. The recognition of the scope and nature of employee disengagement has brought us to see how a combined emotional and spiritual response might minimize its effects, and perhaps address even some of its root causes, particularly in the situations of absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation.

The reference here is to a *response*, not to *responses*, for although emotional intelligence and spirituality deal with different orders there is a connection between them, as a variety of authors have begun to note. It would seem clear that to turn to only one of these two and to ignore the possible contributions from the other would be to make a real oversight. Taking them together can provide broader insights into the problem of disengagement and a more effective overall approach in addressing it. One of the most important insights of Benedict's personalist approach is in not seeing spiritual and human values as things apart. The holistic view of the person this fosters suggests that the same approach can also be useful in the context of the workplace more generally.

This thesis has attempted to analyze employee disengagement, and then to see the potential contributions of the emotional and spiritual areas in dealing with two of its symptoms. A recognition of the extensive problems created by a mechanistic approach to work has brought us to the personalism of the Rule of Benedict, which has to be credited with providing both a profound awareness of human nature and a deeply interiorized, but practical and practiced, spirituality. Obviously as an ancient monastic rule, it cannot be

immediately used to transform the modern secular workplace. As Mumford put it when dealing with Benedictine achievements in the workplace, “Admittedly monasticism achieved these admirable results by oversimplifying the human problem.”¹¹⁵ Put bluntly, the monastic vocation is not for everybody, and a Benedictine spirituality will have gaps—such as human sexuality and the demands of family—that must be otherwise provided for. At the same time, the Rule is filled with a spiritual wisdom that when distilled can be profitable for today’s world of work. It contains a richness of emotional and spiritual content that can readily be transposed beyond the monastery walls to be applied to the human situation generally, as well as to organizational theory, today’s worker, and the contemporary workplace.

Above all, Benedict attached worth to work. In his Rule work was a value, not simply an obligation or a necessity. Work was not a curse or something personally degrading. Indeed, Benedict effectively exalted work, seeing in it a transcendent character, for work in its own way was a form of prayer and worship. Pierucci, for example, in an article on the subjective element of work, points out that this same aspect of wonder is crucial to the subjective dimension of work because otherwise “we cannot achieve the self-realization” that is at its core.¹¹⁶ Like Benedict who saw the sacredness of the ordinary, he sees the notion of wonder as transcendence, while also acknowledging its role in social

¹¹⁵ Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, 266.

¹¹⁶ Ernest S. Pierucci, “Restoring the Broken Image: The Centrality of the Subjective Dimension of Labor and Liberal Education in Catholic Business Education,” in *Summary Papers: Business Education at Catholic Universities: The Role of Mission-Driven Business Schools*, ed. Michael Naughton and Patrick Murphy (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, June 11–13, 2008), 247.

responsibility.¹¹⁷ Obviously, as various authors have noted, today's workplace frequently lacks such values, to its detriment.

Benedict's understanding of work as conveying worth leads him to start with the person as crucial. If one pole of work was the ultimate purpose to which it was directed, the other was the growth of the person in its doing. Work is the expression of the person, and the person's work reverberates back to defining and shaping who the person becomes. The question today is of necessity a prophetic one, a task of taking business out of its one-dimensional objectified and mechanized vision, so that it can appreciate a wider vision of work as deeply affecting and potentially meaningful for its subjects. Thankfully, such thinking is now beginning to permeate even business itself. Koehn observes, "As business leaders, we should be thinking of the corporation as a voluntary and evolving *community* that can either help or prevent people from realizing their essential humanity."¹¹⁸ Indeed, the widespread presence of workplace disengagement means that thinking like Koehn's might not only be beneficial to the individual employee and the company community, but bring tangible benefits even in business terms. The same personal understanding of work is a major contribution that the Rule holds out in the face of today's increasing alienation.

¹¹⁷ "To wonder means to enter into a relationship with the whole world, to be *capax universi*. Inanimate objects, plants, and animals all relate to an environment limited by what they are. Only the human person, through wonder and contemplation, can relate to the whole world as spirit and truth. This is the radical source of our freedom and of our priority over things—we transcend the material world by comprehending its meanings, the universals that constitute it a cosmos. What follows from this understanding of the relation between the human person and created, sacramental world, is the reality of our interiority, our self-realization, which becomes the more solid, the deeper our contemplation of reality in genuine leisure." Pierucci, "Restoring the Broken Image," 248.

¹¹⁸ Daryl Koehn, "The Soul's Hunger: Spirituality in Corporations and in the Teaching of Business Ethics," in *Spiritual Intelligence at Work: Meaning, Metaphor, and Morals*, Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations, vol. 5, ed. Moses Pava and Patrick Primeau (Stamford, CT: JAI Press, 2004), 7. Italics added.

Koehn, like the Rule, is effectively calling for work that has meaning. Our study has seen that workers have experienced increasingly that something is missing. While it is acknowledged that making a profit and earning a salary are important, employees also began to realize that work without a sense of personal meaning and purpose can only be ultimately destructive. Perhaps this realization is at the very heart of disengagement itself. It certainly creates the situations of both absenteeism and declining innovation. In any case, it raises the very basic question of the way in which work is conceived. The missing piece is clearly the subjective element of work, or in Pava's terms, its meaningfulness, how work defines and shapes the individual and indirectly the working community. While the Rule did not ignore the objective nature of work, its insistence on the element of the personal has much to contribute today.

Clearly, as the very notion of work is re-examined, its commodity-based, or objective, dimension cannot be ignored. While this no longer can provide a total rationale, it needs to be a valid part of any rethinking. It may seem strange to say it, but in his own way, Benedict recognized the need for both. He wanted the work of his monasteries to be profitable. The difference was in how he would use the profits: for alms and guests, to support monks who were infirm, to keep up the monastery fabric. Moreover, to those who would say that the subjective and the objective dimensions of work are inherently incompatible, it is important to note that spirituality of itself is transformational,¹¹⁹ and that the Benedictine tradition stands as a retort.

¹¹⁹ Margaret Benefiel, "The Second Half of the Journey: Spiritual Leadership for Organizational Transformation," *Leadership Quarterly* 16, no. 5 (October 2005): 723–747.

As the workplace community deals with disengagement and its symptoms, Benedict's organizational plan includes many solid principles that can easily be applied: flexibility, moderation, empathy, social responsibility, and singlemindedness. But behind them all, in terms of work, is his Rule's personalist vision that it would have meaning and purpose for the individual, build up the community, and at the same time be productive and, indeed, profitable on every count. While his counsels are eminently practical, since they account for human nature, it is this broader, transcendent vision of Benedict regarding work that can facilitate the shift from having a *workplace* to growing a *worthplace*.

Conclusion

It is work that distinguishes human beings from other creatures. They are the only ones capable of work. Work is something particularly human done in a community of persons, a characteristic that marks and, in a sense, constitutes the very nature of work. . . . Work is an activity that begins in human beings, and is directed to something outside them. . . . all work should be judged by the measure of dignity given to the person who carries it out. . . . Through work we not only transform the world, we are transformed ourselves, become “more than a human being.”¹

Although the reality and the concept of work in its many forms has existed since the first human creation myths, the urgency of attending to its quality has increasingly become of critical importance. Many hours of each day are devoted to working, sometimes understood as generating a salary to pay for one’s family and a sense of well-being; generating a product or service of value for others; or an unwilling expenditure of a person’s energy to produce for the benefit of someone else. At the same time, what is quite common in the contemporary workplace is an addiction to work (workaholism and overwork), that reduces life itself to working hours.²

On the other hand, for some having a job is precisely that: one has to have a job of some kind to pay the bills, what Dr. Johnson in his eighteenth-century dictionary termed “jobbing” or “petty, piddling work; a piece of chance work.”³ In effect, there is a tendency to reduce all work to Johnson’s notion of casual labour. Working, or taking labour to a higher level, can instead be seen as doing something that one wants to do, something that is both personally life-giving and a service to the wider community. As one recent author put

¹ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, II, 4, 8.

² Matthew Fox, *Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 34–37.

³ *Ibid.*, 6.

it: “Work comes from inside out; work is the expression of our soul, our inner being. It is unique to the individual; it is creative. . . . Work is . . . that which puts us in touch with others . . . at the level of service in the community.”⁴ Still, as has been argued in this thesis, such an approach requires an awareness of oneself and one’s emotions, a subjectivity in the face of mechanism:

Many executive managers . . . are so totally wrapped up in their daily business that they hardly know who they really are. However, if they do not perceive themselves, they will also not notice their employees as distinct people. They will regard them merely as human capital or as cogs in the wheels of machinery, but won’t see their special character as human beings. Because they have no relationship to their own selves, these managers also cannot form a real relationship to others or the company. The person who is not aware of herself will also fail to make contact with what matters to others.⁵

A huge problem exists in the contemporary experience of working. The immense levels of workplace disengagement and its spread across all types of industries and whole countries indicates that this is a *root* problem for which more than superficial remedies are called for. Fundamentally, a paradigm shift is needed to move the balance from an overly mechanistic approach (efficiency/productivity) to a more personalist and subjective outlook that values the worker. This does not mean that people will envision work as solely a pleasurable experience, without the element of toil. Wendell Berry realistically reminds us that “all work contains drudgery; the issue is whether it holds meaning or not.”⁶ In other

⁴ Whitney Wherrett Roberson, *Life and Livelihood: A Handbook for Spirituality at Work* (New York: Morehouse Publishing Co., 2004), 45.

⁵ Jochen Zeitz and Anselm Grün, “Awareness: With an Introduction by Anselm Grün,” in *The Manager and the Monk: A Discourse On Prayer, Profit, and Principles* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 160.

⁶ Fox, *Reinvention of Work*, 23. Fox continues, “If we do our work from our center, from our Source, it will always hold meaning.”

words, sometimes work will be “a heavy burden.”⁷ Yet, there is no reason why even hard work cannot hold meaning, and this is key. As this thesis has strongly suggested, for the new paradigm to take hold, “we need spiritual work. And spiritual workers.”⁸

What this thesis has studied is the contemporary rampant reaction to work that breathes without spirit; indeed, it is a reaction that approximates Benedict’s notion of spiritual *acedia*. In today’s workplace, it is identified as the problem of *disengagement*. The challenge is to give some indications as to what approach may have the greatest chance of effecting a paradigm shift that can help tackle the problem. This thesis has explored such a paradigm transformation by suggesting the problems created by the prevalent mechanistic, objective, commodity-based vision of work and exploring its re-balancing towards the primacy of a subjective and meaning-based vision that includes the personalist characteristics of uniqueness, dignity, subjectivity, self-determination, and relationality. As a consequence, acknowledging the contours of human emotionality and developing a workplace spirituality that honours emotionality is its main argument.

For its overall methodological approach, the thesis chose to use a standard problem-response method common in theological presentations. Consequently, chapter 1 posed the problem of disengagement, considering its nature and its extent. Having identified in chapter 1 that disengagement clearly includes an emotional component, chapter 2 then considered the application of emotional intelligence theory to the workplace, with both its contributions and its limitations. It concluded that “something more,” a meaningful spiritual

⁷ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, II, 9. There is such a reality as “the dark night of the soul and work,” in Fox, *Reinvention of Work*, 43–45 and Elizabeth A. Dreyer, *Earth Crammed with Heaven: A Spirituality of Everyday Life* (NY: Paulist Press, 1994), 86–88.

⁸ Fox, *Reinvention of Work*, 22.

dimension, is needed to in any solution to the problem. Chapter 3 examined with a critical eye the current literature on workplace spirituality; this helped to identify its limitations. In examining whether the human and emotional underpinnings of the practical spirituality of the Rule of Benedict might offer potential new responses, chapter 4 ascertained what might be transposed profitably from that tradition to a contemporary setting. Chapter 5 further identified and applied these combined emotional and spiritual principles to a particular workplace situation in which the two problems of disengagement chosen for special examination (absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation) could be clearly observed.

Regarding methodology, it must be noted also that chapter 4 dealt with the sixth-century Rule of Benedict while attempting to transpose the spiritual principles found there to a contemporary and usually secular workplace setting. This required an appropriate methodological subset that allowed principles of the Rule to be transferred in some consistent fashion from an ancient Christian monastic tradition to a contemporary context. The root metaphor chosen here was that of personalism, as the clear counterbalance to the mechanistic metaphor that dominates today's culture. Employing a personalist optic (uniqueness, dignity, subjectivity, self-determination, and relationality) the thesis examined the Rule for those spiritual and emotional elements that are sufficiently timeless and universal to be usefully brought into today's workplace environment. It continued to use this metaphor as its guide to further identify and apply these same principles in chapter 5.

As the thesis looked at the application of these principles to the symptoms of absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation, it became especially helpful to have at hand the example of a particular, but representative, North American workplace. Here, the

effects of the problem of disengagement were observed in an actual setting and the potential application of the principles drawn from the research in this thesis examined in a concrete situation. A detailed case study of a mid-size Canadian company that reflected a workplace situation typical of many public and private sector environments provided an excellent background for this purpose. The particular company chosen was no less typical of contemporary situations in that it had recently suffered considerable downsizing.

A discussion of work in chapter 1 began by discussing and analyzing the problem of employee disengagement in the workplace. There was seen both the enormity of this problem and the personal and economic costs it entails. It also became clear that at its core employee disengagement is at least partly *emotional* in nature. Such awareness has major repercussions. It means that other workplace systems—for example, human resources management and staff development initiatives—can be helpful to some extent, but often only marginally. Unless the emotional aspect of employee disengagement is explicitly recognized, other systems may be only of short-term effect or, at worst, artificial props.

While many symptoms of employee disengagement could be cited, two that are currently prevalent were chosen for particular consideration: absenteeism/presenteeism and declining innovation. Absenteeism is obviously the physical absence of the employee, while with presenteeism the employee gives the façade of being engaged at work but in reality is present only in body but not in spirit. Sometimes this is the result of illness or fatigue. Chronically, the employee can fall deeper into other traps such as an uncaring attitude, depressive or angry emotional states, and a pervasive listlessness. Innovation is inspirational in character. Employees who are *emotionally* disengaged from their work also lack an *inspirational* sense of commitment to their work. First, they do not feel any need to

get emotionally involved in their work; second, being stuck at that level of non-involvement, they lack a *meaning* or reason to get excited about developing innovative ideas related to their work. As noted in the research, such modes of employee disengagement have a range of severity. Those employees at the extreme end of employee disengagement range are actually working against the system that employs them, basically in a destructive manner.

Because the problem of employee disengagement addressed here has at its roots an emotional nucleus, chapter 2 began with an overview of the possibilities of an emotional response. The scientific and contemporary assessment tool chosen to examine the potential for this was the Bar-On emotional intelligence construct, the EQ-i™. This was selected because of its scientific validity and reliability, its wide acceptance in the scientific community, and its simple and contemporary appeal to people's self-understanding. Such qualities have made it applicable for scientific research in diverse contexts, two of them regarding the workplace and well-being. To date, however, while studies have examined workplace issues like stress, training and development, and learning challenges, there has been a minimum amount of research dealing with EI as a response to employee disengagement. It was also recognized that emotional intelligence could be co-opted for instrumentalist purposes, such as efficiencies and profit-making, and not used for the benefit of workers. Even more importantly, what became apparent in the discussion was that there was "something more" still left undisclosed in the application of emotional intelligence principles and competencies in workplace applications. This "something more"

was the employee's personal need and yearning for meaning, vision, and purpose,⁹ what research names today *spirituality in the workplace*.

Thus, the focus of chapter 3 dealt with workplace spirituality literature and specifically to what extent this could be seen as a response to the problem of employee disengagement. Since the "something more" identified in chapter 2 beckoned for a spiritual response, it was expected that this literature would begin to speak to the problem. What was noted positively was the significant attention paid to spirituality and its application to such areas as workplace policies, integration with ethical climates and organizational politics, the quality of work life and job satisfaction, and its role in occupational stress and well-being. Absent, however, was any direct indication of the relationship between the workplace spirituality theories proposed and employee disengagement.

What was helpful in the literature was the growing emphasis on the three-fold dimensions of self-awareness, other-awareness, and transcendence-awareness. Paloutzian et al. comment as follows:

Our overriding idea is that the best performance and the greatest happiness of workers happen when they believe in what they are doing and when they feel free rather than compelled in the doing of it. That is, when people are motivated to pursue *transcendent* goals, they are likely to continue to work, even at seemingly mundane tasks, for long periods of time and likely to be content to do so. In addition, they are likely to *engage* in those interpersonal behaviors that would foster trust, a sense of being part of a team, and a healthy atmosphere and that would demonstrate commitment to the

⁹ Although not speaking directly about employee disengagement, medical researcher Dr. Stanislav Grof writes, "In the last analysis, the psychological root of the crisis humanity is facing on a global scale seems to lie in the loss of the spiritual perspective. Since a harmonious experience of life requires, among other things, fulfillment of transcendental needs, a culture that has denied spirituality and has lost access to the transpersonal dimensions of existence is doomed to failure in all other avenues of its activities," in Suzi Gablik, *The Reinvention of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 57–58.

employer and its goals. The employer and employee both are likely to see the other as collaborator and coworker trying to achieve a common goal.¹⁰

While these authors consider basic and social needs, ordinary analyses for them “are not sufficient,” evoking what this thesis has called the need for “something more.” This sense of requisite transcendence, as the authors point out, involves workers believing in what they are working at and feeling free in its doing. Given such a transcendent context, employees are then able to work collaboratively with colleagues and employers to achieve a common goal. However, like workplace emotional intelligence usage, workplace spirituality still has the impediment that it can be used instrumentally. Still, serious authors are adamant in maintaining that there is no reason to exclude something that promotes employee well-being simply because it also makes him or her a more effective worker. What is clear is that since this involves an individual’s interior life, it is a matter that demands the utmost caution.

A second difficulty was the question of what precisely was being promoted with the notion and practice of workplace spirituality. The difficulties involved in defining the term were discussed, and various elements of a proposed definition were considered. It was recognized that certain points were essential: any acceptable notion of workplace spirituality ought to include both connectedness and transcendence, and it should be both substantive and functional. Without the restrictions suggested by a notion of workplace spirituality, it was felt to be important for this dissertation to clearly identify its own notion of spirituality that could be applied to a workplace situation.

¹⁰ Paloutzian, Emmons, and Keortge, “Spiritual Well-Being, Spiritual Intelligence, and Healthy Workplace Policy,” 73. Italics added.

Consequently, drawing from the various elements in the literature, what was offered was the following: spirituality can best be described as *a deeply personal outlook that shapes one's thoughts and actions according to what one perceives as ultimately important (transcendent) and that connects the individual to other persons and to the broader universe, enabling one to live in a meaningful and purposeful way*. Although this description tried to be as specific as possible, it is sufficiently broad to exclude neither religious nor non-religious traditions.

The question remained as to what particular spiritual approach might be especially useful in dealing with workplace disengagement. Chapter 4 turned to the Rule of Benedict as a possible source for a response. It did so because of the Rule's specific recognition of work, the fact that it propounded a spirituality with emotional underpinnings, and its clear communitarian, even organizational, focus. Still, the challenge lay in transposing the principles of a centuries-old, Christian and monastic handbook to a quite different setting. What root metaphor, therefore, could serve methodologically to identify content that had validity for a different time and setting? Here, the inspiration came from Gibson Winter's suggestion that the prevalent contemporary metaphor was mechanism, and his further suggestion that what was needed in its place was a notion of the "human dwelling."¹¹ Consequently, this thesis adopted a traditional personalist metaphor as a lens through which it could examine Benedict and identify what remained spiritually and humanly valuable for the ages, so as to provide a counterweight to the prevalent mechanistic view.

¹¹ Winter, *Liberating Creation*, x. It was noted that a similar notion has been suggested by Wuthrow, *After Heaven*, 4–5.

The thesis therefore looked for those universal features present within the spirituality of the Rule that focused on the human person, their dignity and uniqueness, the transcendence that was inherent in their humanity, and the relationality that this involved. These were seen as key liberating features from a personalist perspective that could enable the thesis to transpose and best apply the principles of the Rule to different contexts, in particular, to the modern workplace. Because the optic of the Rule was so clearly personalist, its features could easily be contrasted with a mechanistic metaphor that operates “on a linear, mathematical time line that often has little to do with personal or biological rhythms.”¹²

In chapter 5, the overriding task was to relate these great and timeless spiritual principles to the workplace, more particularly to its current symptoms of disengagement. First, the study attempted to integrate what seemed valuable in the Rule into a more synthetic view of the worker and the workplace. This exercise was facilitated by the facts that Benedict consistently saw work as an important part of life itself and that his overall spiritual principles encompassed the working life. Having something of a synthesis at hand, the thesis was able to turn more specifically to its central problem of workplace disengagement. In terms of seeing possibilities for the practical application of Benedict’s principles, what was very helpful was a detailed case study of a Canadian company that had suffered considerable downsizing, and where the dysfunctionality was subsequently evident. Drawing from the tradition of the Rule, the thesis was able to suggest both general workplace practices, beginning foundationally with EI usage, as well as individually

¹² Winter, *Liberating Creation*, 1–2.

helpful ones of a more personal nature that could have proved very useful in the given situation.

Summary of findings

What was immediately clear from the research undertaken here was the necessity for any response to the problem of workplace disengagement to include the field of emotional intelligence theory. Without this, any potential response lacked a solid foundation. At the same time the limitations inherent in the application of EI quickly indicated that the “something more” of a spiritual approach offering meaning and purpose was equally necessary to give any response an even more solid footing. While current workplace spirituality literature often appeared to be heading in the right direction, it rather conspicuously failed to address directly the problem at hand. Moreover, it sometimes presented itself instrumentally, which put it at odds with a view of work that is more subject-oriented.

Even despite its age and its Christian monastic context, many central principles of the Rule of Benedict proved to be germane for the present study. Within the context of his guideposts for a spiritual journey, Benedict specifically acknowledged work and saw it as a vital part of the spiritual life itself. The spiritual principles he proposed to guide individuals through that journey were clearly founded on emotional underpinnings. He recognized both the transcendence of the human person and the dignity that implied. At the same time, the whole perspective of his Rule was communitarian, with the result that it still holds validity even within a current organizational focus. Consequently, it became possible to draw from

the Rule a number of universal and enduring principles that could form the foundation for a contemporary response to the problem posed.

Once the problem of disengagement has been considered from the perspective of the personalist optic that Benedict's Rule espouses, several general observations can be made with regard to work: (1) the clear and practical underpinnings of Benedict's acknowledgement of human emotions, human individuality, and human dignity give his spirituality a solidity, but at the same time allow it to offer to the workplace more than emotional intelligence theory alone can do; (2) Benedict's Rule would support the notion that there is meaning and value in work because work has both objective and subjective elements, while maintaining that the latter should have primacy and consequently should be given far greater emphasis than is currently the case; (3) the communitarian perspective that pervades the Rule suggests that there needs to be a clearer acceptance by organizations and workers themselves that work is not a collection of individual efforts (especially competitive ones) but a common social undertaking; (4) the key principles of the Rule suggest a rethinking of work that clearly embraces the demands of human dignity and personal and social justice, fully acknowledging the human person and their engagement in creation, with all that this implies; (5) above all else, and uniting these elements previously mentioned, Benedict's approach to work involved support for some notion of transcendence, a higher meaning and purpose, both in the workplace itself and among individual workers, which would seem all-important.

The final section of chapter 5 had a particular discussion of the two chosen symptoms of employee disengagement in light of Benedict's approach. Here it was found that a Benedictine vision, while fundamentally grounded on recognition of human

emotions, added important dimensions that EI alone cannot provide. Applying Benedict's principles to absenteeism, for example, demands that one *attend* to work with all one's spirit and soul. This understanding involved the personalist concepts of human dignity, interiority, and self-determination, where a person rejects the notion that they are simply a cog in the workplace machine, but recognizes that they are endowed with a higher calling. Any meaningful response also involved an ongoing valuing of *stabilitas*, a spiritual rootedness in the present moment that is the very opposite of presenteeism. The apparent tendency of the DTU survivors to act passively effectively expressed instead a mechanistic outlook. To facilitate a meaningful conversation between Benedict's personalist spiritual vision and the deep-rooted problem of absenteeism/presenteeism, the necessity for managerial and employee "unselfing" of self-consciousness was seen as especially critical.¹³ While this process includes the emotional Reality Testing competency by which one would avoid simply being present, but not involved, in one's work, at a quite different level this process allows an employee a chance to "respond to the world justly" in the broadest possible way.¹⁴

When it comes to fostering innovation, it was observed that innovation occurs when engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their workplace. Here too, while emotional factors were found to be important, "something more" is needed for true creativity. In this connection, Benedict's all-encompassing notions of community and listening not only require that one hear and learn from other people, but in a trans-personal sense also open up the notion of community to the entire universe. His Rule would

¹³ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 99.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 103

likewise espouse as a core principle that a spiritually-oriented individual needs to be in a constant process of *conversatio morum*, that is, openness to change. These concepts, especially when taken together, were found to be essential to any true innovative approach in the workplace.

These principles, founded on solid emotional intelligence theory and the spirituality of Benedict's Rule, have the possibility to give work greater meaning and purpose, endow it with rootedness in the present and openness to new possibilities, and firmly situate it within the broad context of community. While in this thesis they were applied specifically only to the situation of DTU, chosen as a representative workplace situation, there is every reason to suppose that they could be applied to workplace situations generally where the symptoms of disengagement are present. The research indicates few, if any, real differences among the vast number of workplaces examined by the major studies of disengagement, and appears to indicate that the problem is of a general nature with reference both to location and to workplace type.

Directions for further research

This thesis was fortunate enough to derive much of its inspiration from the centuries-old monastic Rule of Benedict. Perhaps the reason it was able to draw so much of a universal and timeless nature from such a source comes from the fact that it was written by a layman, effectively for young men with little education. Vatican II acknowledged that the formation of the laity should be "specially characterized by the distinctively secular and

particular quality of the lay state and by its own form of the spiritual life.”¹⁵ Yet much research on Christian spirituality probably still needs to be de-clericalized, so to speak, and to be more rooted in a “distinctively secular” quality. The current thesis was able to take steps in this direction for the important area of work, but major areas of particular concern to the laity remain relatively sparsely treated, especially studies on spirituality (not ethics) that would deal with human sexuality and gender. Even more general areas for research are studies of the implications of individuals describing themselves as “not religious but spiritual” and the spiritual implications of a concept like *the common good*. Obviously, such studies will need to account for the major sociological and cultural shifts that have taken place over the past centuries.

In researching and writing this thesis, the author was particularly struck by Benedict’s opening and key word, “*Obsculta!*” (“Listen!”) and how his emphasis on both exterior and interior listening was able to encompass so much of his whole approach to spirituality. Listening became an important element not only in such a personalist concept as relationality (community) but also in the concepts of subjectivity, self-determination, and self-development. It is suggested that further research on the whole concept of listening within the area of spirituality may provide a very profitable field of study.¹⁶

¹⁵ It added: “The formation for the apostolate presupposes a certain human and well-rounded formation adapted to the natural abilities and conditions of each lay person. Well-informed about the modern world, the lay person should be a member of his own community and adjusted to its culture,” *Apostolicum Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity), 29, accessed March 6, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html.

¹⁶ Perhaps such studies might also take account of Benedict’s allied notion of discernment.

As was noted in chapter 3, Howard Gardner, known for his theory of multiple intelligences, had accepted, then abandoned, the concept of a spiritual intelligence.¹⁷ Although his stated reason for doing this was not particularly weighty (the difficulty of quantification), terminology may have been an even more important factor. With the growing acceptance of the notion of multiple intelligences, including a very general acceptance of emotional intelligence theory, and the increasing association of spirituality even with the workplace, it would seem timely to take up once again the matter of a distinctive spiritual intelligence and the identification of its particular competencies.

The present thesis suggested and employed a linkage between emotional intelligence theory and a spirituality of work. It would recommend that further research in the area of spirituality recognize and make use of human emotional competencies in any spiritual analysis because of their natural and integrative features. Further research that would connect emotional intelligence and spirituality can only enhance the relevance of the contemporary person's "turn to experience" and its connection with transcendent values.

In even more general terms, future research would greatly benefit from further examination of the aspect of relational human development and its connection to a contemporary and relevant spirituality.¹⁸ Over the past decades, both the social sciences and psychological/medical research have made great strides in studying the nature and process of human development and human relationships. A Christian theology that has espoused

¹⁷ Gardner, "A Case Against Spiritual Intelligence," 27–34. The term originated with Danah Zohar, *Rewiring the Corporate Brain: Using the New Science to Rethink How We Structure and Lead Organizations* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1997).

¹⁸ Tomlinson, "A Relational Human Development Perspective on Benedictine Spirituality," 81–102, provides one example of such research.

the principle of the intimate connection between nature and grace can only profit from studies that more specifically connect the spiritual to its human underpinnings.

Although this final recommendation goes well beyond the realm of research into spirituality alone, it is strongly suggested that any study of work-related issues take account of the subjective or meaning-based elements of work and not merely work's commodity-related factors. This would include any research in the area of human relations or organizational theory, as well as any more narrow research into the subject of workplace spirituality. Put simply, the subjective element of work is never absent. When efforts are made to combine commodity-related factors with due recognition of the worker, such efforts can only become more productive. Contrariwise, studies that ignore the subjective elements of work or use them only instrumentally are likely to have little lasting success. Indeed, the present state of disengagement may likely reflect the imbalance of current workplace literature.

In summary, re-examining Benedict offers the contemporary world an opportunity to develop new approaches to work, ones that not only counteract destructive symptoms, but offer possibilities for personal and social well-being and growth. It offers an opportunity to shift the current objective emphasis on work to a more personal, subjective one. Any thesis is expected to contribute something new to its field of study. What this thesis offers is first of all the suggestion that the enormous current workplace problem of disengagement is a mechanistic one that can only be attacked at root by a spiritual approach that offers personal meaning and purpose, while at the same time acknowledging the emotions that are so central to the human being. It submits that "grace builds on nature," and that any spiritual approach, however uplifting, that lacks a clear emotional component

will be ineffective. More particularly, it suggests that the central elements of such a combined approach can be discovered in the Rule of Benedict, whose transcendental, personalist, and communitarian features are not only timeless, but considering today's workplace, especially timely.

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