

## Editorial

### SPECIAL THEME: MINDFULNESS

The editing of this publication has afforded some interesting perspectives on the state of the mindfulness movement at this time. In this short introduction I would like to share both my enthusiasm for the current contents of this Journal and also describe what I would call the as yet 'youthfulness' of the movement itself.

The invitation to connect the terms Spirituality, Leadership and Management with Mindfulness initially yielded a great deal of interest from authors, previously published and otherwise, from around the world. Many of these offers were fulfilled, papers were forthcoming and whilst there was an initial culling process, a significant group of articles went through the review process. It was soon revealed that whilst many authors are interested in the topic and are wishing to engage with the subject matter, they are not steeped sufficiently to make a real contribution in the area. Furthermore, there appeared some resistance in authors to take on the suggestions of further reading and immersion in the topic in order to develop their authorship or professionalism in the area.

I would like to suggest that *Mindfulness* is a phenomenon that is broadly misunderstood. When *Mindfulness* is loosened from its great spiritual roots, the attractive ideas are appropriated and appear easily comprehensible and applicable. *Mindfulness* gets lumped together with spirituality, transcendence, authenticity and even leadership. Without immersion in the practice of mindfulness, there is little recognition of the discipline it involves, and the sensitive and actually rigorous nature of its practice. At the same time, there is a great literature in the field that is building – and it requires sensitivity and an internalised wakefulness to navigate this field. Perhaps, unlike some academic subjects, mindfulness likely requires the practice of mindfulness to be able to write well about it.

Over a decade of teaching mindfulness to leaders at a business school are behind the crisp insights offered by Sinclair in *Possibilities, purpose and pitfalls: Insights from introducing mindfulness to leaders*. This article speaks to any leader who may be ready for thinking a bit differently about their own leadership. It clarifies many of the myths and the realities about mindfulness. Through the use of specific examples and the author's actual experience of teaching leadership, and from her own life, this piece is compelling in its immediacy, and reading it offers an enlivening experience for anyone interested in mindfulness. Six insights emerge from the paper as significant for leadership in relation to mindfulness practice. These include: *Putting people and their happiness first in leadership; Mindfulness is not another form of thinking; Don't get lost in neuroscience; You don't have to be in a cave or a retreat to be mindful; What we seek to do with mindfulness matters; Beware of ego and practice – not preach – mindfulness*.

The author suggests that "... being mindful in leadership can be understood as a potentially radical, even subversive, act", and concludes with these delightful yet critical life lessons, including: being present and paying attention to what's really happening; being connected to others and appreciative of their efforts; being reflective about our own 'stuff' and letting go of some of the ebbs and flows of ego; and being courageous about reality and what matters most in life!

*The influence of managers' spiritual mindfulness on ethical behaviour in organisations* reviews the possible links and relationships between spirituality and mindfulness on ethical behaviour in the workplace. McGhee offers thoughtful conceptualisations of spirituality and mindfulness and their resonances, including, importantly, that both have an 'internal focus', are able to be learnt or developed, and that each has been independently shown to enhance organisational performance. The paper uses qualitative research to probe their combined influence on ethical behaviours. The paper is insightful and elegantly readable as managers in a range of industries offer their experience of approaching critical ethical incidents and show their capacity to "reperceive environmental conditions and act in ethical ways that transcended them". Whilst the sample size of the study could be considered limited, this paper addresses a significant gap in the literature of how spirituality and mindfulness, combined, inform ethical decision-making in the workplace. The paper concludes with questions that are stimulated by this research, including questioning the organisation's role in encouraging the practices of spiritual mindfulness.

We're very enthusiastic once again to offer the review of an academic program that gets beyond a theoretical framework; that grounds learning in a more spiritual or mindful direction and thereby develops leadership and

management capacity. Written in an imaginative style and peppered with anecdotes, this description is worth reading even for its languaging of complex concepts. Described by Kaplan, **An MA degree in reflective social practice: Developing a social sensibility** is indeed a different approach to working with complex social processes. Kaplan shows how this international program, offered through the Crossfields Institute in the UK in partnership with Alanus University for Arts and Social Sciences in Germany, is not about developing particular skills or knowledge; rather, it hinges around the development of a deeply human capacity that enables one to perceive the 'wholeness' or 'aliveness' of all things, including organisations and people. Such a faculty is described by Goethe as the 'organs of perception' and its outcome is the development of the kind of humanness that enables a more human world to emerge. Using the practice of phenomenology, "its spirituality lies in that it seeks to see the inner idea in every moment of outer reality". The program focuses on working within the social sphere whereby the ends of the program continuously mirror the means: action and reflection; intellectual and 'holistic', academic and professional, self observation and world observation. The testimonial of a past student attests to the rigour and generative changes experienced.

We trust you will enjoy, and be stimulated by, the articles in this issue. As usual, we invite submissions for future issues of the Journal. See the guidelines for contributors at the end.

**Dr Claire Jankelson, Editor-in-Chief**

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