# SELF-ACTUALIZATION AND INDIVIDUATION: SOME THOUGHTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY IN RELATION TO HIGH PERFORMING WORKPLACE CULTURES

by

#### Lindsay M. Parker

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#### Abstract

Organizations are shifting from a place of purely economic activity to a platform for individual growth. As individuals seek to find more meaning in their life and a strong sense of connectedness to others and society, they are looking to their organizations to fulfill these needs. Through Maslow and Rogers's theory of self-actualization and Jung's theory of self-realization (through the process of individuation), a distinct understanding of human potential is captured. Based on these theories and the idea of spirituality in the workplace, organizations can develop a culture of organizational spirituality to satisfy the innate needs of individuals and facilitate spiritual growth and development of their employees to actualize their fullest potential.

This paper illustrates how, through the implementation of organizational spirituality, individuals may be able to actualize their unique potentialities and become all that they can be to promote high performing workplace culture and organizational effectiveness.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Based on humanistic psychology perspective, the concept of self-actualization and reaching full potential has brought us closer to understanding the complex psychological construct of an individual. Abraham Maslow (1943) developed a theory to describe the human motivation towards becoming a fully actualized person, one who is becoming all that he or she is capable of becoming. Carl Rogers (1959) further supported the idea that self-actualization was the path to reaching one's full potential. The self-actualization theory has profoundly influenced the humanistic psychology movement.

The theory of self-realization through Carl Jung's (1933) individuation process provides a foundation for discovering one's true unique self. Theory of self-realization brings more meaning to life for an individual through seeking a higher purpose and bringing one closer to a state of being a whole and complete individual. It is only when an individual is in a state of being a whole and complete that he or she can fully actualize (Patterson & Joseph, 2007). Full awareness of the self is therefore essential. Together, theory of self actualization and theory of self realization can or may give organizations a clear understanding of what human potential is and how organizations can benefit from creating a culture in which individuals can reach full their potential.

The conceptual framework brought forward by psychologists, like Maslow, Rogers and Jung, have inspired the idea that organizational culture and leadership can impact the effectiveness of employees' potential and performance. Therefore, modifying the workplace culture to influence and encourage personal development can bring much to an organization's overall effectiveness. As humanistic psychology adopts a holistic approach to human

existence—through investigations of human potential, self-actualization, self-realization, spirituality, meaning, values, freedom, and personal responsibility—so can organizations. With the understanding that individual behavior is primarily determined by the perception of the environment around them and the internal direction and motivation to fulfill their highest potential, organizations can modify or design workplace cultures that influence these behaviors towards reaching full potential.

Self-actualization, self-realization and spiritual growth and development represent the optimal psychological stages for all individuals. As individuals grow and develop into whole and complete, self-actualized people, they seek to find more meaning in their life through the work. The result could be that the workplace may cease to be separate from the personal development space and transcending into a platform for individual growth (Konz and Ryan, 1999).

The purpose of this paper is to describe the unique relationship between organizations and their employees. In addition, it is proposed in this paper that an organization's ability to reach full potential relies on the ability of the employees reaching full potential. In the last chapter of this paper, some thoughts about the implementation strategy for organizational spirituality are suggested.

## **Chapter 2: Understanding Human Potential**

#### 2.1 - Kurt Goldstein: Actualization Tendency theory

Kurt Goldstein (1934), an organismic theorist, seeking to understand an organism's inherent growth and developmental tendencies, first introduced the term 'actualization'.

According to Goldstein (1939), actualization is "the tendency to actualize, as much as possible, [the organism's] individual capacities" in the world. The tendency to actualize is "the only drive by which the life of an organism is determined" (Goldstein, 1939, pp.196-197, cited in Brodley, 2001, pp. 87-88). Goldstein defined actualization as a driving life force that ultimately leads to maximizing one's true capabilities and determine one's path in life (Brodley, 2001).

#### 2.2 - Abraham Maslow: Self-Actualization theory

The concept of actualization was brought to greater distinction in Abraham Maslow's theory of self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). In attempts to formulate a definitive framework of human motivation, Maslow proposed that self-actualization is the final level of psychological development achieved when all other lower order needs are fulfilled (Maslow, 1943). The notion that human motivation towards self-actualization relied upon fulfilling a hierarchy of needs differentiates it from Goldstein's theory that actualization was the inherent driving force.

Maslow believed that human motivation, based on individuals seeking fulfillment and change through personal growth, was the driving force to self-actualization.

Self-actualization stemmed from the basic idea that "what a man can be, he must be" meaning that all humans, once they have satisfied lower level needs, have a need and "the desire for self-fulfillment, namely the tendency for him [the individual] to become actualized in what he [the individual] is potentially" (Maslow, 1943, p. 382). The lower level needs, also known as

deficiency needs, included physiological, safety, love and esteem. Physiological well-being included the most primary and basic biological requirements of human life such as breathing, eating, water and sleeping. Safety and security needs include the need to feel secure such that an individual feels that they can support and maintain the physiological well-being previously obtained (March, 1978). The need to belong, also known as the social need, is fulfilled by interpersonal relationships as well as, but not limited to, recognition by others. The final deficiency need is the need for esteem, which was divided into two distinct subgroupings: the dominance needs, which included recognition and respect from others; and the achievement needs, which included self-respect, self-worth, independence and freedom (Maslow, 1943; Marsh, 1978).

Marsh (1978) restated Maslow's theory of human needs into six groups and implied that there was a time relationship in satisfying needs (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Maslow's Implied Matrix

	Present Time	Future time
Physical aspects of man	Physiological needs	Safety needs
Social aspects of man	Affection needs	Dominance needs
Intellectual aspects of man	Achievement needs	Self-actualization needs

Source: Adapted from Marsh, 1978, p. 114

Marsh (1978) concluded, "self-actualization was a need for future control over satisfaction of achievement needs. (If one has found a highly rewarding career that is 'self-actualization', one is assured of future satisfaction of the achievement needs.)" (Marsh 1978, p.

114). Furthermore, individuals will not seek to fulfill future-time needs before the corresponding present-time needs are at least partially satisfied. For example, a rational individual would not choose to die of starvation today in order to possess food for tomorrow. As such, an individual will not seek self-actualization until they fulfill the needs of self-respect, self-worth, independence and freedom.

Moreover, when an individual has fulfilled the lower level needs they become, what Maslow called, basically satisfied people and capable of fulfilling their uniquely individual potentialities, whatever they may be. At this stage, an individual "is primarily motivated by his [the individual's] needs to develop and actualize his fullest potentialities and capacities" (Maslow, 1943, p. 394). The potentialities of each individual are highly unique and vary from person to person (Maslow, 1943). For an example, Maslow (1943) stated that the state of actualization could take the form of the following:

In one individual it may take the form of the desire to be an ideal mother, in another it may be expressed athletically, and in still another it may be expressed in painting pictures or in inventions. It is not necessarily a creative urge although in people who have any capacities for creation it will take this form. (Maslow, 1943, p. 383).

In the context of employees in an organization, self-actualization will vary from employee to employee. One employee may be seeking to achieve a more strategic managerial role or become the top sales person in the organization, where as another may be seeking to be the most efficient data entry clerk.

Everett Shostrom (1964) developed a Personal Orientation Inventory designed to measure an individual's level of self-actualization in relation to their level of psychological health. As a result, Shostrom concluded that it is possible to differentiate between a self-actualizing person and normal, or non-self-actualizing, person. A self-actualizing person was thought to have freedom from social pressures and functioned as a self-supportive and autonomous individual. Therefore, in the context of a work-environment, self-actualized individuals would be more self-directed and require less management or supervision in their work. They would also display a high level of confidence in their abilities and are not burdened by the past or future, therefore living more fully in the present.

Shostrom (1964) also claimed that the self-actualized individual displayed synergy between self and others and had no distinction between work and play. Therefore, a self-actualized person, aligned with an organization's vision and objectives, would have a true desire and passion towards the achievement of organizational goals rather than obtaining employment for purely economic gain.

According to Maslow (1943), the self-actualization stage, is considered to never be fully satisfied. As an individual grows psychologically, that psychological growth creates a new opening and level of being (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). This concept was described as self-transcendence, a motivational step beyond self-actualization, which was later introduced by Maslow (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). Self-transcendence is characterized as the motivational need to help others achieve self-actualization and included the notion that individuals gained a sense of purpose in life once they reach the state of transcendence.

Manifested through 'peak experiences', self-transcendence resulted in an individual becoming 'fused' with the world, which supported Shostrom's (1964) findings of synergy. As cited in Koltko-Rivera (2006), Maslow stated (1961):

"As he [the individual having peak experiences] gets to be more purely and singly himself [one's self] he [the individual] is more able to fuse with the world... for example the creator becomes one with his work being created, the mother feels one with her child" (Maslow, 1961,p. 125, cited in Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

Maslow introduced self-transcendence as a separate phenomenon from self-actualization in attempts to show an Eastern influence in his writings (Tamney, 1992). Even though these concepts were represented separately, Maslow's ideal life, also known as the 'healthy person', embodied both stages (Tamney, 1992). Expressed as the full development of one's self, an individual at the self-transcendence staged modeled an individual who was priest-like, mysticlike, and god-like (Tamney, 1992). However, Maslow's view of self-transcendence does not represent an individual whom displayed traditional religious commitments (Gardner & Prashar, 2009; Waston, 1993; Tamney, 1992). Further to this point, according to Tamney (1992), "Maslow (1968) did believe that religions tend to affirm asceticism, self-denial, and the deliberate rejection of the needs of the organism, and that such a perspective would prevent selfactualization" (Tamney, 1992, p. 133). Maslow (1964) also stated "for many empirical reason, that basic human needs can be fulfilled only by and through other human beings, i.e., society". For that reason, though self-actualization and self-transcendence may have descriptive similarities to a religious person, however, Maslow's intended application and definition of these concepts were different in practice and in nature than a religion person. Therefore, the definition

of a self-actualized and self-transcendent individual includes having the ability to reach his or her unique and fullest potentialities to become more of what he or she is, and supporting others in their journey to becoming fully actualized. Though Maslow was not anti-spiritual—to discuss self-actualization and transcendence in a spiritual context, a distinction must be made between religion and spirituality.

Ivtzan et at. (2009) conducted a study to measure the differing levels of religious involvement and spirituality in attempts to delineate the two constructs. In their study they concluded that spirituality can be experienced with or without religious involvement. It was stated, "therefore, an individual who is spiritual may not be religious at all in the organizational sense" (Ivtzan et at., 2009, para. 6).

<u>Proposition 1</u>: Self-actualization and self-transcendence speaks to a spiritual experience and not of a religious one.

## 2.3 - Carl Rogers: Fully Functioning Person theory

Carl Rogers, a humanistic psychologist influenced by the work of Goldstein and Maslow, further distinguished the theory of actualization tendency (Bozarth and Brodley, 1991). Primarily based on the observed behaviors of organisms, Rogers (1959) enforced the assumption that actualizing is an inherent tendency for all organisms and stated:

The inherent tendency of the organism to develop all its capacities in ways which serve to maintain or enhance the organism.... [The tendency involves] development toward autonomy and away from heteronomy, or control by external forces. (Rogers, 1959, p. 196, cited in Patterson & Joseph, 2007, p. 120,).

Similar to Maslow, Rogers (1959) held that actualization was a process of always becoming and changing, rather than a final state (Bozarth & Brodley, 1991). An individual who is continually moving toward actualization is what Rogers described as a fully functioning person. The fully functioning person is thought to have an increasing value in understanding and acceptance of others, openness to new experiences, and trust and deep relationships with others (Patterson & Joseph, 2007; Bozarth & Brodley, 1991).

Rogers reaffirmed Goldstein's actualizing tendency theory by stating that the actualizing tendency was the fundamental and only motivational construct (Ford, 1991). However, when approaching Maslow's theory of self-actualization, Rogers differentiated the organismic actualizing tendency from self-actualization, claiming that they were two different occurrences happening simultaneously (Ford, 1991). Rogers (1959) definition of organismic actualization was that of Goldstein; the tendency to actualize, as much as possible, the organism's capacities in the world. According to Brodley (1999), Rogers's self-actualization referred to the actualizing tendency of the self-concept, a human subsystem that develops within the whole person through early life social interactions (Brodley, 1999, p. 111). In order to reach full potential, the actualizing tendency and self-actualization must be in a state of congruency (Patterson & Joseph, 2007). This means that an individual's motivation to actualize his or her own self-concept must not be incongruent with the inherent organismic actualizing tendency. Patterson & Joseph (2007) state:

The self, with its self-actualizing tendency, and the organism, with its actualizing tendency, were linked by the concept of congruence/incongruence. Incongruence refers to a difference between the characteristics of the self and those of the organism and was derived by Rogers as the incongruence of self with experiences of the organism (Patterson & Joseph, 2007, p.104)

Incongruence occurs when the self-actualizing tendency is striving to actualize a self-concept that is at cross purposes with the organismic actualizing tendency then it would prohibit the individual from reaching optimal psychological functioning.

Congruency then has important implications on the ability of an individual to reach full potential. Congruency becomes dependent on an individual's self-development. Similar to Maslow's esteem needs, in order for an individual to actualize his or her full potential he or she must have a positive self-concept (Iberg, 2001). The need to feel valued, respected, and treated with affection and love, facilitates an individual's capability of manifesting self-actualization (Maslow, 1943; Marsh, 1978). Ford (1991) stated that an individual's sense of self largely reflected how he or she evaluated the view others held of him or her. Therefore, developing a positive self-concept requires an environment of unconditional positive regard from others (Patterson & Joseph, 2007).

Rogers made a distinction between unconditional positive regard and conditional positive regard. Unconditional positive regard refers to being loved and accepted for all choices made and which are not withdrawn when the individual does something wrong or makes a mistake (Iberg, 2001). Environments of unconditional positive regard therefore help foster high self-worth. Individuals in this environment feel free to try new things and make mistakes while still maintaining self-worth, self-efficacy and the motivation to continue trying.

Individuals raised in an environment of conditional positive regard evaluate their own self-concept based on the thoughts others have of them (Patterson & Joseph, 2007, Iberg, 2001). According to Patterson & Joseph, this type of environment is to be considered an unfavorable social environment. Under conditional positive self-regard an individual will feel constrained to

behave only in ways that they feel are correct and repress who they really are. This causes the individual to replace his or her organismic values with those developed from conditional positive regard (Patterson & Joseph, 2007).

An unfavorable social environment prohibits an individual from becoming aware of his or her whole and true inner self. If an individual evaluates his or her self-concept based on external sources, the values created by the 'self' will be incongruent to the organismic values.

This incongruence will prohibit self-actualization and reaching full potential.

Rogers used the theory of locus of control to explain the difference between being free to respond to one's own inner actualizing tendency or being restricted by the views and beliefs of others (Patterson & Joseph, 2007). Individuals with an internal locus of control are controlled by their own personal values. Individuals with an external locus of control are controlled by the desire to live up to the expectations of others. Their sense of self-worth is developed by others perception of how well they are doing in living up to the expectations of others. There is a lack of trust in one's own judgment and it is a likely result of conditional positive regard in their life.

#### 2.4 - Carl Jung: Individuation Process

Becoming aware of one's whole and complete inner self is a critical and necessary aspect of self-actualization, as presented in Rogers's theory of congruency (1959). Without the awareness of the self, individuals are not able to truly actualize their fullest potentialities (Geller, 1982). Carl Jung (1933) concept of individuation explains a process of self-realization, discovering one's meaning and purpose in life, and actualizing who one really is and capable of becoming (King & Nicol, 1999; Fordham, 1969; Schmidt, 2005).

The whole self encompasses, in psychological terms, the conscious and unconscious aspects of an individual's psyche (Fordham, 1969). It reveals who a person really is rather than who the individual perceives himself or herself to be. West (2008) believed that Jung was seeking to understand the modern man's reasoning to 'become rigidly identified with certain elements of their personality' and their resistance to 'opening up to the enriched sources' of the whole self (West, 2008, p. 371).

The whole and complete self, according to Harding (1965), cited in King and Nicol (1999), was defined as the first occurrence of an individual's physiological construct (King & Nicol, 1999, p. 236). Formed at birth, elements of the whole self become hidden in the unconsciousness as an individual develops a conscious awareness in childhood. This conscious awareness is the ego and acts as an identity for an individual, giving him or her the ability to distinguish him or herself from others (Eddinger, 1972). It is the role an individual plays in society and the appearance, or presentation, he or she gives to the world through a conscious personality (West, 2008).

The ego also consists of unconscious or undeveloped elements that are repressed by the dominate personalities of the ego (West, 2008). According to King and Nicol (1999), "Jung suggested that if an individual's ego became too one-sided, with the conscious personality fixated on his or her dominant characteristics, then the repressed unconscious personality characteristics gain expression by being projected onto others" (King & Nicol, 1999, p. 237). These projections are emotional or spontaneous reactions and if not owned or taken responsibility for, through the integration into the conscious personality, they can have the greatest negative affect on building healthy work relationships; resulting in a culture of blaming others and lack of acceptance (West, 2008; King & Nicol, 1999).

The inability to integrate the conscious and unconscious aspects of oneself leads to negative consequences for an individual's work relationships. Through focusing on the nature of relationships with others, an individual can become aware of his/her undeveloped personality as it often manifests itself through interpersonal relationships with others (King & Nicol, 1999). Integrating the unconscious and conscious self provides an individual with the ability to be more tolerant of others and take responsibility for personal behavior. Therefore, it is proposed that, without the organization's support in the processes of individuation, an individual may not be capable of reaching their fullest potential.

Similar to Maslow's theory of self-actualization, individuation is "an active on-going process and not a static state" (Schmidt, 2005). As cited in Schmidt (2005), Jung proclaimed:

"Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too

– as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once." (Jung, 1961, p. 288, cited in Schmidt, 2005, p. 599)

Furthermore, according to Schmidt (2005), Jung viewed individuation and self-realization as differentiated from "Eastern mystical ideas of achieving Nirvana or Samadhi – a state of perfection attained by yogis" (Schmidt, 2005, p. 598). Self-realization is dependent on relationships with others. As cited in Schmidt (2005), Jung (1935) states:

"The self is relatedness...The self only exists inasmush as you appear.

Not that you *are*, but that you *do* the self. The self appears in your deeds and deeds always mean relationships." (Jung, 1935, p. 73, cited in Schmidt, 2005, p. 598).

Conclusive of the literature review of self-actualization and individuation, human potential can be described as the inherent motivation to strive to become all that one can become. The full potential of an individual is unique and spiritual. The process towards actualizing one's potential is discovered through the fulfillment of motivation needs, favorable environments and self-awareness.

<u>Proposition 2</u>: Organizations are able to better understand how to design, develop and implement a workplace culture that facilitates and fosters an individual's ability to reach full potential, based on the findings of self-actualization and individuation.

## **Chapter 3: Spirituality**

#### 3.1 - Individual Spiritual Growth and Development

Spiritual growth and development of an individual can be defined as searching for a greater meaning and purpose in life, feeling a sense of wholeness and connectedness to one's complete self, others and to society (King & Nicol, 1999; Milliman et al., 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Sass, 2000; Ashmos & Duchon, 2009). An individual's spiritual development is considered a highly personal and philosophical in nature (Milliman et at, 2003). Konz & Ryan (1999) stated that "spiritual experiences', however they may be defined, take place at a much deeper level than do our 'normal experiences'; something individuals experience on a deeper level that is difficult to objectify and enunciate" (Konz & Ryan, 1999, p 201). Benjamin and Looby (1998) concede that spiritual experiences transcend individuals into a new frame of reference, "strengthened by one spiritual experience after another", from which new possibilities of being are made available (Benjamin & Looby, 1998, p. 94). Similarly to self-actualization, this implies that as individuals continue to achieve high performance and reach new potentialities, it creates an opening for new possibilities of achieving. For an example, if an employee is consistently meeting sales targets, they will likely aim to reach a higher target.

<u>Proposition 3:</u> Therefore, it is proposed that, the definition of spiritual growth and development is the nexus between the theories of self-actualization and self-realization.

## 3.2 - Organizational Spirituality

Spiritual-based organizations "recognize that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 137). Organizational spirituality is, however, a complex and multifaceted

construct (Milliman et al., 2003, p. 428). However, the literature on organizational spirituality suggests that it is a framework of organizational values that promotes an employee's sense of purpose and meaning in their work and a sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace community (Rego & Cunha, 2007).

The spirituality of an organization cannot be easily separated from the spirituality of its members (Sass, 2000). The human resources of a traditional organization, however, do not consider an individual's spiritual growth and very few organizations foster an environment that supports this kind of growth (King & Nicol, 1999).

<u>Proposition 4</u>: Creating a spiritual framework and value system, based on individual needs, promotes an individual's spiritual growth and development to become a whole and complete individual- providing the individual with the capability of reaching full potential.

#### 3.3 - Differentiation between Religion and Spirituality

The term spirituality elicits ideas of religious views and practices. However, as it has been stated, for some individuals' spirituality has many religious implications, conversely, for others; religion is separate from spirituality (Ivtzan et al., 2009). Spirituality focuses on an individual's own personal values and philosophy (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Milliman et at, 2003).

A religious framework is not what is being proposed in this paper. Despite the religious imagery that spirituality carries, spirituality in the work place does not include getting people to accept a specific belief system (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Rego & Cunha, 2007). Rego and Cunha (2007) state that the fundamental differences between religion and spirituality is that

"religion divides people through dogma and the emphasis is on formal structure, and excludes those who have different beliefs. Spirituality is inclusive, tolerant and open-minded" (Rego & Cunha, 2007, p. 55).

#### 3.4 - Economic Impact of Organizational Spirituality

Empirical evidence available in literature indicates that monetary compensation is becoming less important to individuals when selecting employment (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Conclusive to this finding is that individuals are seeking to find "an opportunity at work to express many aspects of one's being, not merely the ability to perform physical or intellectual task. (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 135). Organizations, therefore, must evolve beyond achieving economic gain as a sole purpose of existence in order to retain high quality employees.

Organizations need to become aware of the critical role they play in creating an arena for spiritual development, as more and more individuals seek meaning in their life through their work. Konz and Ryan (1999) state:

The nature of work appears to have changed fundamentally. Work has ceased to be an endeavor totally removed from personal development. Work has been transformed into the forum in which individuals develop themselves. (Konz & Ryan, 1999, p. 200)

Furthermore, Sass (2000) confirmed that spirituality of an individual and that of the organization cannot be easily separated.

An employer and employee relationship can either be a "bridge or a barrier" to organizational effectiveness (Fawcett et al., 2008). In the age of globalization, the ability of organizations to consistently reinvent their approach to market demand requires a lasting competitive advantage. Observing how organizations have operated over the last decade, it is

clear to see that they have viewed the investment of new technologies, product innovation, and marketing or financial activities as the sole source of value creation (Fawcett et at., 2008; Porth et at., 1999). These value creations, however, fail to create a unique competitive advantage as they are easily replicated. The only source of competitive advantage, which does not end in parity, is found in the long-term commitment of high performing employees (Porth et at, 1999). Often poorly managed, employee potential is the most untapped resource in organizations today.

Though there are many types of organizational cultures available to adopt in the workplace, organizational spirituality has shown to have positive effects on organizational performance (Neal & Milliman, 1994; King & Nicol, 1999; Konz & Ryan, 1999). Empirical evidence of the financial growth, resulting from organizational spirituality, has not been tested in literature. However, improved employee commitment to organizational goals has shown a positive correlation to higher financial results then of those organizations that lack employee commitment (Collins & Porras, 1994). Furthermore, adapting organizational spirituality in the workplace has been empirical tested to show that it improves employee commitment to organizational goals (Porth et at., 1999). Therefore, it can be suggested that organizational spirituality may impact an organizations financial performance.

The internal dynamics of an organization's practices may promote or repress the spiritual experiences of an employee (Sass, 2000). Managers are consistently seeking new ways of maximizing profits and shareholder value. By adopting a workplace culture of organizational spirituality, organizational processes, interpersonal relationships, employee development and leadership are improved. These factors of an organization can have either a negative or positive impact on the ability for individuals to experience self-actualization, self-realization and spirituality.

<u>Proposition 5:</u> If organizations implement organizational spirituality, which provides an environment for all employees to reach their unique full potential, those organizations can experience higher performance.

The following section will provide and implementation strategy for organizational spirituality.

## **Chapter 4: Implementing Organizational Spirituality**

Human behavior in an organization is driven by what is learned, shared and the tacit assumptions based on the perceived reality (Schein, 1999). The organizational culture will reflect the organizational vision, mission, values, and goals only by defining expected employee behaviours and attitudes, training and development and ensuring that leadership models the set organizational values (Schein, 1999). Many high performing organizations superficially understand the inner workings of their culture but have not formalized a methodology that facilitates and fosters self-actualization and spiritual development (Porth et al., 1999).

This chapter will illustrate how to implement organizational spirituality to influence employee behavior and motivation toward reaching full potential and improving employee commitment to organizational goals.

<u>Proposition 6:</u> The successful implementation of spiritual elements—such as a higher purpose, spiritual based values, and spiritual leadership—in the workplace make it possible for organizations to emancipate self-actualization of their employees and build an inspiring workplace culture that unleashes creativity, insight and passion as employees realize their full potential.

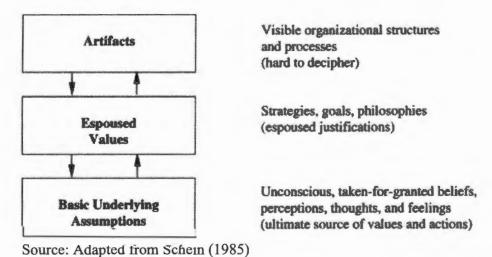
## 4.1 - Creating a Higher Organizational Purpose

Creating a higher organizational purpose requires entrepreneurs to look at their business in a different way. As noted in Jung's individuation process, individuals become conscious of their whole personality, the self, to gain awareness of their higher purpose and potential capabilities (King & Nicol, 1999). An organization's ability to connect with its unique "self" becomes the ultimate bridge to realizing its specific purpose. In order for organizations to

develop values, and not just manifestations of them, the organization must be able to understand and go beyond its conscious personality.

This conscious personality, known as artifacts, introduces Schein's (1985) theory that culture exist on three levels; artifacts, espoused values, and underlying shared tacit assumptions, varying from very visible to a very tacit and invisible level (Schein, 1985). The first level of artifacts is the characteristics of the organization that can be easily viewed, heard and felt-including such things as the organization's vision and mission. It is here that an organization's vision and mission can influence the commitment of their employees.

Figure 2: Three Levels of Culture



Porth et at. (1999) claim that the commitment of an employee to the vision and mission of an organization is the only possible source of competitive advantage for businesses (Porth et at, 1999). It is understandable that businesses exist to create profits. However, an organizational goal of maximizing profits does not resonate with individuals in a way that allows them to seek a

higher purpose in their own lives (Leigh, 1997).

<u>Proposition 7:</u> Individuals experiencing spiritual growth and development toward their own higher purpose in life will seek to be a part of an organization that has a vision that contributes to the greater good of society.

Collins and Porras (1994) state that long-term financial performance was associated with organizations that had a vision other than simply to maximize profits (Collins & Porras, 1994). Therefore, in order for organizations to achieve maximized profits and maintain their success, they must provide a platform for individuals to actualize their higher purpose through their contributions to the organization. Organizations can transcend their traditional workplace into a spiritual culture by developing a vision and mission that reaches beyond profit maximization and incorporates humanitarian contributions such as promoting the well-being of the communities the organization operates within or promoting environmental stewardship. Examples of an organizational vision and mission that depicts a higher purpose include:

#### Lululemon Athletica:

"elevating the world from mediocrity to greatness."

#### Microsoft:

"At Microsoft, we work to help people and businesses throughout the world realize their full potential. This is our mission. Everything we do reflects this mission and the values that make it possible."

#### Starbucks:

"Our mission: to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time."

These vision and mission statements convey a sense of deeper spiritual purpose. This deeper purpose demonstrates the ability to embark on a spiritual identity and directly influences the organization's values, goals and objectives. Organizations that have a vision and mission that contributes to wellness of humanity promotes an employee's own sense of value that their

contribution has towards the organizational goals. It creates a sense of meaningful work and gives employees something greater to strive for (Milliman et at., 1999; Collins & Porras, 1994).

Here are examples of organizations that have a purpose that is not shared:

Adidas:

"The adidas Group strives to be the global leader in the sporting goods industry with brands built on a passion for sports and a sporting lifestyle".

**Dunkin Donuts:** 

"Make and serve the freshest, most delicious coffee and donuts quickly and courteously in modern, well-merchandised stores".

Although these statements have purpose, it is not a shared purpose or one of a higher purpose.

Meaningful work is more than interesting and challenging work and it encompasses contributing to the organization and others within the organization. Often it involves knowing the importance or purpose that an individual's work has for the success of the organization (Thomas, 2009). Individuals feel that they have an opportunity to accomplish something of real value that matters in the larger scheme of things. This strong sense of purpose and direction gives individuals the feeling that their time and effort has value and, therefore, they are valued (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006).

#### 4.2 - Value Congruency

According to Schein's (1985) three levels of culture model, the second level of organizational culture is espoused values (see figure 2). These are the organization's stated values and are represented by the organizational leader's philosophies, goals and strategies. It is often best described as how members of the organization represent the organization to the outside world.

As Schein (1985) noted, the values of the organization should be supported by the behaviours in the workplace. Employees who understand their organization's values have a better grasp of whether those values reflect their inner needs, beliefs, and aspirations. In order for these values to have a successful impact on the organizational spirituality, employee's values must align with the organizational values (Collins & Porras, 1994). If these values are not enunciated, employees will be unaware of what behaviours and attitudes are congruent with the spirituality of an organization. Therefore, hiring employees that have similar value systems to that of the organization will be critical to fostering organizational spirituality. Value congruency also promotes the development of whole and complete individuals and creates a sense of connectedness between employees and the organizations (Sass, 2000; Neal et al., 1999; Fawcett et al., 2008).

The organization's stated values should include a spiritual context such that the spiritual growth and development of an individual is supported. These spiritual values will provide the foundation for how employees of an organization think, act and feel towards organizational problems, decisions and business practices (Milliman et al., 2003). Therefore, organizational values are critical as they have the ability to create or hinder an individual's ability of self-actualization and spiritual development.

#### 4.3 - Designing a Spiritual-based Value System

The basic and traditional "rewards" systems, including monetary compensation, job security, health benefits and pension scheme have supported the fulfillment of safety and security needs. However, these basic and traditional "rewards", alone, do not translate into a work environment that promotes self-actualization and no longer sufficiently fulfill the needs of

employees (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Monetary compensation, as the sole tradeoff for knowledge and skill, also does not inspire creativity and commitment (Porth & McCall, 1999).

Organizations need to develop methods, which fulfill the needs of its employees, in order to promote spiritual growth and development and motivation for self-enhancement. Therefore, it has become imperative for organizations to develop a value system that facilitates and fosters self-actualization and spiritual growth and development. Fawcett et al. (2008) Elements of a Culture Success, shown in Figure 3, introduces the elements of spirituality in an organization and shows how these elements can either limits or inspires self-actualization and spiritual growth and development.

Perceived Benefits

Organizational Climate

Workplace Attributes

Limiting

Organizational Spirituality

Inspiring

Figure 3: Elements of a Culture Success

Source: Adopted from Fawcett et at., 2008, p. 423

This model provides a framework for implementing an organizational spirituality as a valuebased system. The implementation of organizational spirituality deals with the cognition of the individual members of an organization, processes and characteristics of the whole organization and the actions of leaders. All of these aspects revolve around the spiritual growth and development of individuals within an organization in the context of realizing one's true inner self and reaching the state of self-actualization and full potential.

Having a spiritual-based value system in an organization is critical for organizational success. It ensures that employees are able to reach full performance and maintain that performance. It also develops an environment that is capable of finding the root cause of internal conflict. Implementing a spiritual-based value system includes fulfilling the human motivational needs, having an environment of unconditional positive regard and supporting an individual's spiritual development. The following are the key spiritual values that are essential for implantation of organizational spirituality.

#### 4.3.1 - Belonging Needs: Community, Teamwork & Socialization

Community is perhaps the most frequently discussed value. Community involves having a deep connection or relationship with others in the workplace (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Based on the belief that people see themselves as connected to each other, community in an organization involves receiving support, feeling free to fully express oneself and germine carring for others (Milliman et al., 2003).

The health of an organization largely depends on the quality of interpersonal relationships within the work environment (King & Nicol, 1999). When there is no community in a workplace, trust and respect are not maintained (Anderson, 1997). Individuation and uncovering the unconscious personality creates a healthy work environment by understanding how the undeveloped self results in negative projections onto others (King & Nicol, 1999). The adoption

of this principle and follow through of leadership can ensure the collective success of each employee leads to the overall success of the organization. These needs in the workplace show up as factors such as having good work relationships, helping others, being recognized, finding meaning in individual work, and feeling empowered (Fawcett et al., 2008).

As previously mentioned, community creates a strong sense of belonging in an organization, which creates a personal sense of self-worth. The sense of belonging is also critical for higher levels of commitment to organizational goals (Fawcett et al, 2008.). The employee needs to feel socially connected to other employees and the organization; this stems from the motivation to belong, feel love and acceptance from others. The social connection that emerges from high-quality interpersonal relationships within the workplace also supports important values like self-esteem (King & Nicol, 1999). An individual's self-worth is also enhanced when they feel respected by others at work. Employees are less likely to leave organizations to which they are committed. This results in high retention of quality employees. When employees feel that they are part of an organization's fabric, they perform at a higher level than employees that do not have a sense of belonging (Fawcett et al., 2008).

In almost every company or organization, teamwork plays a vital role in getting things accomplished. Team based goals connect individual efforts together as everyone works to reach a common goal. Creating group performance-measurement systems that link individual performance to the performance of the team helps promote strong organizational teamwork.

Teamwork promotes connectedness to others, which fosters spiritual development (Milliman et al., 1999). Through a clear understanding of the source of interpersonal conflicts, individuals are able to be more accepting and less prone to blaming others. They are also more

objective in assessing situations and making decisions, thereby enhancing teamwork (King & Nicol, 1999). As mentioned, spiritual development encourages higher levels of tolerance and acceptance of others resulting in high-functioning teams (King & Nicol, 1999). High-functioning teams bring a sense of energy to their work. This energy promotes a fun work environment which improves turnover of employees'. Having higher levels of tolerance and acceptance also encourages feedback as it is viewed as being given and received in the spirit of continuous improvement. It also encourages collaboration, cooperation, and develops caring relationships, which enables teams to work effectively (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006).

Socialization is how new employees are enrolled in the organizational culture. In order for spiritual values to be successful, employees must align themselves with these values. Without understanding what these values are, employees are less likely to know if their value system aligns with those of the workplace.

## 4.3.2 - Acceptance and Self-Esteem Needs: Positive regard & Autonomy

By implementing the core values mentioned and the following leadership methods, an employee will experience an increasing sense of self-worth. Unconditional positive regard, both through managerial recognition or intrinsic work design, provides an employee with the sense of self-worth and validates their contribution to the organization (Fawcett et at., 2008). Positive affirmation in the workplace helps employees feel valued and creates a sense of self-worth. This is not to say that employees should not be evaluated on their true performance. If performance is not adequate then corrective action can be taken. Finding the root cause of the problem will require leadership coaching that uncovers where the incongruence is occurring.

King and Nicol (1999) state, "creativity and innovation are considered to be significant contributors to an organization's competitive advantage. Yet, creative insights are not readily forthcoming from those that lack a sense of self-worth." Employees who feel valued compensate the organization by bringing more creativity and passion to the workplace. As employees become a source of creativity and continue to add value to the organization, their self-esteem need is enhanced (Milliman et al., 2003; King & Nicol, 1999).

In addition to affirmations, organizational values and structures that encourage individual growth promote self-esteem (Konz & Ryan, 1999). Affirmations also promote a healthy environment for constructive criticism. Employees in these types of environments are more likely to feel that feedback is an effort to help them succeed and they would be less likely to reactive defensively (Fawcett et al, 2008).

By acknowledging an individual's growth and shifting his or her utilization in the organization in recognition of that growth, an organization can develop commitment in their employees. As an individual moves closer to self-actualization, the work that was once meaningful may become less meaningful as his/her desire to contribute to the organization grows (Thomas, 2009).

It is also important for an individual to feel autonomy in their work. The freedom to choose how they accomplish their work is important to creating ownership in achieving success in the organization (Thomas, 2009). Giving an individual as much control as possible creates a sense of ownership and promotes eagerness to take responsibility and become accountable to their work. The ability to be flexible and autonomous in one's work not only enables decision-making and the opportunity to influence outcomes, but also encourage initiative, creativity, and

self-expression—all of which are identified as factors that foster spiritual development (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006). Limiting employees to a specific job description or scope does not create an environment of creativity and trust. Though it is necessary to set a base line, leaders must trust in an individual's potential by giving them autonomy to create beyond a defined job scope (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006).

Further to the sense of choice, is the sense of progress. Employees' sense of progress involves the feeling that their work is on track and moving in the right direction. This can be accomplished by having frequent performance reviews throughout the year.

#### 4.3.4 - Congruency: Ethical Consideration

In order to ensure congruency, as noted in Rogers's theory of self-actualization, the workplace must practice high levels of ethics. If employees are asked to do something that is against moral ethics, it creates a struggle. It also creates conflict between what an employee values and the values of the organization. When an organization conveys that it has a high sense of integrity for doing the right things, it ensures that the employees value this as well. This is often accomplished by having a clear code of conduct in the workplace.

#### 4.4 - Spiritual Leadership

Developing an organizational spirituality becomes the most important role of leadership.

The interaction between organizational spirituality and leadership is then interdependent (Schein, 1999). Organizational leadership is responsible for inspiring the attributes and value-system and ensuring the successful implementation of the spiritual vision and mission of the organization (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2005). Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2005) noted that employees reported that spiritual leadership enabled, mentored and supported achieving the organizational purpose and

goals. Leadership's regular promotion and communication of the organization's purpose and goals created a sense of connectedness to the purpose and goals for employees.

Another key element of leadership spirituality conveyed by Ferguson and Milliman (2008) was the attribute of authenticity. Leaders who were authentic in their approach to others are more likely to be well received by others; "people respond to what they see as real" (Ferguson & Milliman, 2008, p. 447).

Moreover, leaders in a spiritual workplace culture are seen as guides for employees seeking to find meaning in their work (Leigh, 1997). Leaders, at all levels, have a responsibility to stimulate and support their employee's journey to self-actualization. Traditionally, managers have been trained in four functions: planning, organizing, leading and controlling (Konz & Ryan, 1999). Being a spiritual guide or coach is not within the scope of management responsibility in a traditional work environment. Furthermore, in a traditional work environment, guiding and coaching others is often not rewarded although the lack of it is not penalized either (Charan et al., 2001). For organizations to be successful in creating a work environment, leaders need to be in service of others (Ferguson & Milliman, 2008). This is to say that leaders display characteristics of the self-actualized and self- transcendent individual. This ensures that they are capable of supporting and stimulating spiritual growth in others.

Furthermore, developing self-actualized and self-transcendent leaders requires training and rewarding then for allocating resources and time in guiding and coaching others in their own spiritual growth. Charan et at. (2001) noted that often employees are promoted and rewarded based on their individual contributions and high performing successes. The transformation into a leader is typically rejected psychologically because it requires giving up the task and responsibility that earned them a management role (Charan et al., 2001). The first challenge for

an organization in creating spiritual guides and coaches is the value-based and behavioral shift leaders must encounter in the transformation from an individual contributor to becoming a true leader. If leaders adopt a coaching mentality and organizations can support and train them to provide consistent affirmation and assurance of belonging and esteem, a sense of ease can be cultivated in the organization. Feeling at ease reduces resentment, despair, and confrontation; contributing to the positive spirit of the organization (Fawcett et al., 2008).

In addition to transforming leaders into spiritual guides, leaders have a strong influence on the organizational culture through the projections of their own spirituality (Konz & Ryan, 1999). As discussed, the vision and mission of an organization is largely developed through the values of the organization's founders (Schein, 1983). Similarly, through Schneider (1987) theory of attraction-selection-attrition, the process of leaders hiring individuals with the same value system influences the culture that is formed in the organization even further (Schneider, 1987). As a result, the organizational spirituality is a direct reflection of the cumulative spirituality of the founders or top management of an organization (Moore, 2008). It is also important to note that promoting leadership within the organization will ensure that the values held by these individuals are in alignment with the organizational values.

#### 4.5 - Make the Shift to Spirituality

Understanding how culture exists in an organization is critical for understanding how to influence it. Once a workplace culture has developed, it is difficult to change. Without actively building a workplace culture, a culture will develop on its own accord based on the assumptions and attitudes of the most influential people, often the founders, within the organizational group (Schein, 1985). Existing employees will follow the unwritten code of conduct and will be reluctant to accept any request for change by the management team. Employees rely, consciously

or unconsciously, on the predictability of how things are and get done in the workplace (Schein, 1999).

A workplace culture that has not allowed for spiritual development may find that resistance to change is rooted in an individual's dependence on the unwritten code of conduct. The unwritten code of conduct acts as a part of the ego's identity with the way things are or have been. If the employee lacks spiritual development, an enforced cultural change will be very unsettling. Change, however, is an organizational reality, as is resistance to it from employees. Through the development and implementation of self-realization in the workplace, organizations can limit the resistance to change. Responding to market demands may require an organization to shift directions, practices or processes. Being able to respond to those changes requires flexibility.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

Organizations are consistently striving to be the best in the industry. The most innovative and creative organizations have the ability to be flexible to changes in the industry and market demands. Having a high performing workforce is critical in today's economy. Cultivating a high performing workforce requires implementing the type of workplace culture that promotes spiritual growth and development and human motivational needs. An individual's capacity to actualize and realize their full potential is determined by the implementation of organizational spirituality. This includes creating a higher purpose mission and vision of the organizational that employees can find meaning in their own life through the contributions to the organization. Having spiritual based values creates a workplace culture that encourages human motivation towards self-actualization. Leadership in a spiritual environment plays a key role in ensuring

alignment between employees and the organizational goals. This alignment facilitates high performing organizations.

Ensuring that employees are able to function at full performance promotes organizational effectiveness and the overall success of organizational goals. Organizations that adopt spirituality into the workplace yield great success and long-term growth.

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