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CULTIVATING PRESENCING MASTERY IN ORGANIZATIONS FOR CORPORATE LEADERS:
Rediscovering a Values-Based Perspective through a Buddhist Inspired Framework

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Abstract: This article shares a theoretical framework supported by hands-on practices that can help corporate leaders develop and refine their core values in the context of developing presencing mastery. Presencing mastery enables a deeper way of being: one that is generative and contextually embodied. Drawing on our academic and practitioner experience, we propose exploring leadership values within a Buddhist inspired framework from a values-based leadership perspective as a means for creating the inner space in leaders to awaken a more profound sense of purpose and service. As a whole, presencing, values-based leadership, and Buddhist psychology intersect in their common intent of operating from one's generative inner being as primary.

Keywords: Presencing, Values, Values-based Leadership, Buddhist Principles, Organizational Leadership Practice

I. Introduction

In this article, we share a theoretical framework supported by hands-on practices that can help corporate leaders shift their current understanding of presencing. According to Gunnlaugson (2020), presencing is "a generative expression of our deeper nature" (p. 8). Presencing mastery develops from a more advanced applied knowledge of presencing as a way of being that is cultivated through a deepening of one's presencing self and facilitated through the approach *Dynamic Presencing* (Gunnlaugson, 2020, 2021, 2023), which builds from Scharmer's (2009) Theory U. Elucidating the uncharted basal territories of inner transformation of one's existing presencing practice,

through a process of five journeys Dynamic Presencing uncovers presencing as an integrated, embodied way of being and relating to one's experience (Gunnlaugson, 2020). Passing through the threshold of each apprenticeship journey works with a process of integrating presencing from one's core faculties of presence, knowing, perceiving, communicating, and leading. The fivefold journey as a whole can be profoundly transformative in facilitating an embodied understanding of how to develop the potential of presencing as a way of knowing to a deeply generative way of being. Alongside Dynamic Presencing, drawing on our academic and practitioner experience, we pose that leaders can enrich their overall presencing mastery as a generative way of being by rediscovering the core values that drive their organizational leadership practice through a Buddhist inspired framework of cultivating wisdom, ethical awareness, and meditative practices. Influenced by the Noble Eightfold Path, this framework provides the practitioner with an entry point to explore the workings of the mind and its subsequent application into daily life as a journey of gradual transformation. The psycho-spiritual exploration and practice of Buddhist-based principles and leadership values surfaces related uncultivated dimensions of presencing into one's awareness and practice. Furthermore, exploring deeper leadership values supports the work of Dynamic Presencing in; "rerouting the prevailing Theory U path of *coming-to-know* through a deeply immersive embodied way of *coming-to-be*" (Gunnlaugson, 2023). Combining values-based leadership (Barrett, 2017) with Buddhist psychological principles (Ricketts, 2016) serves as a conduit and leverage point to help leaders shift the inner source location from where they operate, unveiling and expanding individuals' understanding of purpose by being in service to people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships (Valuescentre, 2020). Embracing knowing from being in this manner enables practitioners to observe, connect, and challenge additional dimensions of deeply held values that pertain to their presencing practice. The values-based journey triggers new horizons of inner knowledge and behavior, potentially aligning mind and heart into a congruent quality of being that is needed to grow the essence of presencing as a way of being. Revisiting, questioning, and experimenting with leadership values within this proposed framework creates a rich inner environment to revive a more profound sense of purpose and service that catalyzes a shift in presencing practice.

I.1. A presencing mastery pathway in the corporate context

In today's mainstream corporate environments, leaders often struggle with integrating their deeper purpose with more traditional institutional management role

expectations. Corporate leaders are called upon to deal with an array of emergent workplace demands (Deloitte, 2021) while simultaneously addressing complex societal challenges (Edelman, 2020). Without adequate support, competing workplace priorities can bring about a displacement from core values, which in turn affects the quality and depth of leadership presence, presencing and effectiveness. At the core of this dilemma is a deeper longing, barely noticeable when entwined in daily business routines, a yearning for meaning, value and, to belong authentically and contribute purposefully within the organization's culture.

Amidst this entangled landscape, a mastery path of presencing offers an opportunity to find a way to transform the above described dilemmas many leaders face. Learning to lead from the emerging future "requires us to tap into a deeper level of our humanity, of who we really are and who we want to be as a society" (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013, p. 1). Scharmer (2009) contends, "A deep threshold needs to be crossed in order to connect to one's real source of presence, creativity, and power" (p. 164). In Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020), this threshold is ontological and involves shifting from presencing as a way of knowing to a dynamic way of being. In a leadership context, crossing this threshold requires moving from paradigms informed by the great man theory (Mouton, 2019) or the heroic notion of leadership (Goethals & Allison, 2019) to a post egoic, humanistic awareness, which lies at the core of presencing leadership. By learning to integrate self-development with a renewed commitment for the greater good, leaders can develop a more enriched and integrated "full spectrum consciousness" (Barrett, 2017, p. 234). In this way, a gradual shift in leadership motivation and drive from *me-based* thinking to *we-based* engagement (Barrett, 2017; Dethmer et al., 2015) can take place. Similar to Barrett's model, in Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020) presencing mastery comes gradually through ongoing practice and refinement of deeper learning journeys that move presencing from more inner generated modes of presencing – *primary presence*, *primary knowing*, and, *primary perceiving*- to more interconnected, collective ones – *primary communicating* and *primary leading* (Figure 1). Gunnlaugson (2020) identified the challenge to make presencing actionable in leadership contexts today as a generative way of being is not only about learning how to access source through stillness, but also to learn how to lead from source as a way of being with one's presencing experience and in relationship.
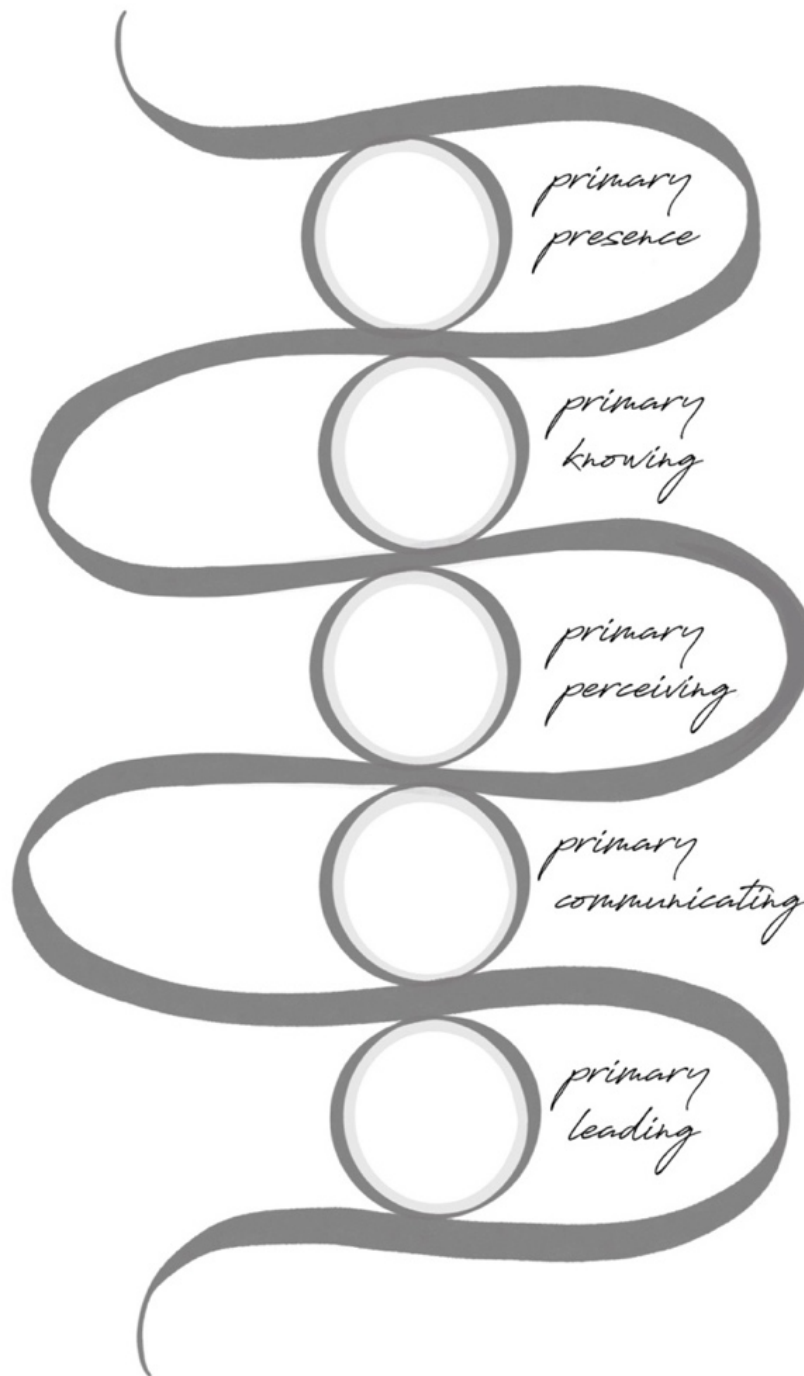
Figure 1.0 The Five Journeys of Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 147)

I.2. Values awareness

As principles that are essential to humans, on a head, heart, hand, and spirit level, values-awareness plays an integral role in the quality and depth of leaders' presencing experience. Hall (2006) noted, that "values are ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly" (p. 21). When values are deeply aligned with personal

meaning and actions, leaders act with authenticity and integrity. In many corporate environments, leaders have experienced a growing fragmentation and decoupling of values-awareness by diminishing emotional intelligence through the progressive separation of heart and mind (Miller, 2021). From our perspective, the mind transcends brain activity by encompassing the quality of reasoning (Leaf, 2021), while the heart goes beyond its biological purpose and involves emotional aspects of the self (Alshami, 2019). In certain empirically dominated contexts of leadership, where hard facts and figures drive decision making, many leaders have unknowingly and progressively smothered, or at worst shut down their access to deeper presencing sources of knowing and leading. Yet the evidence is conclusive: successful leaders draw from their intuition (Rowan, 1986) and "the practice of opening to a deeper knowing, a higher sensory perception, a calling, an inner voice" (Anderson & Adams, 2016, p. 259).

Various values-based leadership frameworks exist for approaching and living values personally and organizationally (Askeland et al., 2020; Barrett, 2017; Hall, 2006). In particular, Barrett (2017) offered a seven levels model that identified developmental phases of consciousness with values and behaviors associated with each stage of consciousness (p. 64). Barrett's (2017) model is useful in recognizing that (a) leaders approach opportunities and challenges from different levels of consciousness and (b) all levels are needed for a holistic perspective. Comparable to climbing a mountain and observing the view at different stages, leaders incrementally expand their values-based perspective as they move up through each level. With an expanded perspective, leaders can then bring a more fulsome understanding to earlier stages of consciousness. In doing so, leaders can provide leadership aligned with the level of consciousness and its associated values, beliefs, and actions. For example, during a time of downsizing when the corporate focus is on viability, an employee may become fearful of losing their job and shift into a focus on personal survival. If an organizational leader is acting from a transformation-evolution perspective and rallies for creative thinking, they likely will encounter resistance because an employee, being in survival mode, needs reassurance and security first. In this way, a values-based leadership framework can help leaders explore their own level of consciousness and associated values, seek to align personal and organizational values, and become more present with themselves and their people to support moving through other levels of consciousness. The full spectrum process unveils an increasingly altruistic perspective for both personal and organizational transformation processes, especially when engaged mindfully.

I.3. Buddhism and an inspired framework

Buddhism has gradually made its way into the corporate world by encouraging the practice of mindfulness (Purser, 2018), a subset of meditative practices, inviting the practitioner to seek a heightened level of equanimity by anchoring the mind in the present moment through "metacognitive introspection awareness" (Yates et al., 2017). Meditative practices have gained credibility in many organizations, albeit not without criticism, primarily given their positive contribution to performance and well-being (Choi et al., 2022; Shahbaz & Parker, 2022). Foregoing its Buddhist origin (Choi et al., 2022), the proliferation of mindfulness has served as a stepping stone to normalizing the exploration of the inner being in a corporate landscape. However, its western secularization has neglected the opportunity to include other elements afforded by Buddhist psychology that support a purposeful practice with, "an ongoing heartfelt reflection on priorities, values, and purpose" (Batchelor, 1997, p. 41).

Buddhist psychology pursues harmonious living by observing and shifting unwholesome emotional states through transformational practices facilitating the ability to progressively transcend a conditioned self-serving motivation towards an amplified altruistic core for self, teams, and organizations to grow. A Buddhist inspired framework invites the practitioner to integrate and nurture three interdependent disciplines: personal wisdom, ethical awareness, and meditative practices (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho & Chodron, 2019). Cultivating wisdom speaks to the ability to deeply question the nature of reality (Batchelor, 2015; Bodhi, 2020) and includes the interconnectedness of all existence (Anālayo, 2021; Goldman-Schuyler, 2012). Developing an ethical lens essentially calls upon minimizing harm to self, others, and the environment by creating a cognitive moral compass (Loy, 2018; Norman, 2010). Meditative practices serve the function of clearing the mind to regain focus and affording new insights to surface (Bodhi, 2020). These interdependent steps act as catalysts to expand or challenge existing mindsets and while they are not all encompassing of the vast continuum of Buddhist knowledge, they represent an entry point for initial experimentation. Ultimately, combining these practices seeks to transcend self-absorbed states of being, allowing for altruistic awareness and cognition to emerge.

Dynamic Presencing, values-based leadership, and Buddhist psychology intersect in their common intent of facilitating a transformational experience of one's values to reencounter and operate from one's inner being as primary. Together, each plays a role in affording the practitioner a concrete experiential path, albeit not necessarily linear, as access points into generative being. In the next sub-sections of this

article, we will go a step further in considering a Buddhist inspired framework by addressing how the three practices, 1) cultivating wisdom, 2) enhancing ethical awareness, and 3) practicing meditation play a key role in creating awareness and the competency to live values skillfully (Viinamäki, 2012) that in turn serve as helpful catalysts for developing leaders' presencing mastery.

II.1. Cultivating wisdom

Cultivating wisdom entails an inner journey into the nature of existence and reality in which societal and cultural conditioning are called into question, challenging deeply conditioned habits (Brach, 2019; Hanson & Mendius, 2009). In utilizing a values-based framework to cultivate wisdom, leaders locate the values that are true to who they are, while also identifying where the gaps may be to embody a full spectrum leadership approach. To develop, leaders can explicitly and intentionally align with the values they will attend to as part of their daily leadership practice from a holistic perspective.
As a starting activity, leaders can identify their core values and check these essential values against actions, distinguishing between espoused and lived values (Barrett, 2017; Schein, 2010). Espoused values are those that the leader or organization professes as important whereas lived values are the those that are observed in behavior and decision-making. Leaders' may utilize journaling as a way to explore their values development and cultivate wisdom by reflecting-in-action (i.e., attending to their experience in real time) and reflecting-on-action (i.e., reviewing their experiences via journaling after the fact; Schön, 1987). Reflecting in and on action can help leaders develop their ability to observe and bear witness to what is going on internally and externally for them.

An example of an open process of journaling is free writing, which involves writing, nonstop, without filtering one's thoughts, for a timed period. It is a way to access creative, and often unconscious, narrative possibilities and inner guidance and wisdom. A writing prompt can be used to start the free writing process to focus one's writing, offer inspiration and be used to develop values work through a prompt such as, "How might I show up more [name the desired value] today," or, "What is calling to me to live or lead purposefully?" A structured way to approach journaling would be to write according to Kolb's experiential learning cycle (as cited in Coghlan, 2019, p. 34) which consists of engaging in four areas (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation) or Schein's ORJI model (as cited in Coghlan, 2019, p. 34), which involves observation, reactions, judgements, and interventions to observe thoughts, actions, and behaviors.

Applying Kolb's experiential learning cycle (as cited in Coghlan, 2019), a leader could journal about a concrete experience in which they experienced a values conflict with one of their team members. They could reflect on what they thought and how they felt, contemplating what this conflict might mean in terms of ways of approaching a situation dependent on underlying values. After considering the experience, leaders could decide on a few next steps and test them out in action. Similarly, a leader could apply Schein's ORJI model (as cited in Coghlan, 2019) by asking colleagues to offer values-based feedback on how they are showing up, and then journal about their observations, reactions, judgments, and derive interventions that they could apply to intercede differently in the future. These models enable leaders' to utilize their own experience in context to explore, make sense of their learning, and open up possibilities around next steps to take in their leadership.

To further deepen learning and leadership, leaders can work with values-based leadership frameworks to craft their purpose and guide their decision making intentionally and explicitly. For example, a leader can approach an organizational project by considering viability, relationships, measurements of success and achievement, ways to support continuous learning, develop personal alignment, cultivate collaboration through a shared vision and values, and inspire a greater purpose or contribution. This decision-making pathway follows the seven levels of consciousness of Barrett's (2017) values-based leadership model. A leader can then choose the most useful values to address for each level (e.g., financial resources or psychological safety of people for survival-viability, belonging or open communication for relationship, quality or efficiency for self-esteem-performance, agility or accountability for transformation-evolution, integrity or trust for internal cohesion-alignment, partnerships or mentoring for making a difference-collaboration, and living purpose or stewardship for service-contribution). While values do not exist in isolation, often they can cluster. When leaders work within a values-based framework in a holistic way as illustrated, they become more connected to their self and source, uncovering a greater sense of purpose and contribution, and gaining presencing mastery by learning to shift between stages of consciousness with associated values as required for full spectrum leadership. Drawing on practices like free writing or more structured journaling approaches enables leaders to journey the path of primary presence which involves moving through four grounds: *being real, being witness, being essence* and *being source* (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 33-61). Through reflecting in and on presenced action, leaders get in touch with their presencing self and what is important to them as expressed in their values. Utilizing

frameworks like Kolb and Schein (as cited in Coghlan, 2019) to guide a critical values-based inquiry, leaders can discover new insight from the four grounds of primary presence. Through reflecting on their concrete values experience and observations in *being real*, leaders become aware of their own perceptions and mental models by connecting with reality as it is. Leaders work with *being witness* when they consider their reflective values observations and reactions, in turn gaining an expansive yet connected perspective to discover what is of value to self and others. When leaders discern insights from *being essence*, they can align with the depths of who they are, to become more aligned with their core values as part of their own essence. With an expanded perception both from within and outside of themselves, leaders enable a flow of consciousness between different values perspectives as they engage in active experimentation and interventions. In the final stage of *being source*, leaders can connect to the deeper source of their values in these moment to moment experiences to discover their authenticity and overall alignment within themselves and their organizations.

Moving from primary presence to primary knowing can occur with the opening of the mind, heart, and deeper faculties of being by delving into the intrinsic values that support a leader's dismantling of self-limiting paradigms. Within the journey of primary knowing which involves a *letting go* of the limiting paradigm and in turn, opens an indwelling space for *letting be,* and then *letting come* can shift awareness to a more emergent wisdom at subtle, embodied levels of one's experience (Gunnlaugson, 2020, pp. 65-84). Leaders are then able to cultivate emerging forms of values-based awareness that in turn, can be integrated to deepen insight and learning to advance their overall presencing mastery through the journeys of primary presence and primary knowing.

II.2. Enhancing ethical awareness

The essence of enhancing ethical awareness in Buddhist psychology stems from the ability to see fellow human beings as fundamental equals. Consequently, ethical awareness is rooted in empathy. While it should not be confused with moral certainty, it invites the practitioner to question the most compassionate action to take in any situation (Batchelor, 1997). Compassion in this realm is not to be understood as related to passive observation and resignation, but as an opportunity to connect with someone else's struggle and take skillful action, an approach identified as "courageous compassion" (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho & Chodron, 2019, p. xv). The intent driving this discipline is ensuring that leaders observe due diligence and accountability, which enables them to handle a situation in an emotionally intelligent way, whether they are

letting go of someone at work or attempting to have a crucial conversation. Kabat-Zinn (1994) recommends considering "if you are really seeing them or just your thoughts about them" (p. 26). In this space of inquiry lies the opportunity to connect meaningfully, lifting the subjective projections, and connecting with another human being. This profound connection can change the dynamics of the interaction, embracing compassionate intent while affording a deep quality of attentiveness.

At this point, it can be helpful to explore how ethics and morality diverge and converge. While morality is generally understood as grounded in personal values, ethics is more prominent in social and professional contexts (Grannan, 2016); hence, they are seen as distinct but intertwined principles. While the essence of human equality is oddly simplistic, embracing its full significance equates to a herculean shift in thinking. In the current world where polarization and extremes abound, it is relatively easy to observe equality among those an individual respects and admires, yet it is counterintuitive to observe the self as related to those with divergent values (Lieberman, 2022). However, as leaders draw upon values-based frameworks, they can see how a variety of values are needed within any project and start to call people in, rather than call them out (Ross, 2021).

To enhance ethical awareness, leaders can work with developing their moral compass by examining their deeply held idealized values, like human rights and global justice, and then consider what personal and organizational actions may be needed to support living these values. They can engage in discussions about what it means to attend to the common good and how true collaboration can happen within the workplace. They can champion having regular leadership dialogue circles in the workplace, thereby cultivating belonging. The focus can also be on alignment, in which employees are encouraged to uncover and live into their purpose and identify what values they will hold to as a moral compass. These personal values can then be discussed with colleagues to evolve shared values for the organization. At the heart of these shared values is attending to the common good through considering me, you, us, and all. This inquiring exercise aligns with values-based leadership as it is "the exercise of influence and/or authority balancing healthy self-interest and the common good" (O'Toole, 1996, p. 1). Through this gradual practice of developing an ethical lens, leaders can be inspired to create a cognitive moral compass minimizing harm to themselves, others, and the environment.

Another activity that leaders could do is attend to values focusing on current workplace issues. A current workplace issue is equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The

American Council of Education in partnership with the Pullias Centre for Higher Education developed a Shared Equity Leadership Model (Kezar et al., 2019) to address EDI. At the heart of the model is a leader's personal journey to consider how they have come to journey around EDI. This is then supported by values that have been identified to serve a shared equity leadership journey and builds out to include practices. As a way of enhancing their ethical awareness, leaders could choose to explore the shared equity leadership values, not simply by thinking about them but by exploring how the values come to life in their own leadership practice. For a period of time, a leader could choose to live and lead with one of the Shared Equity Leadership Model value areas: mutuality, vulnerability, humility, accountability (self and collective), courage, creativity and imagination, transparency, comfort with being uncomfortable, love and care. Leaders do not often discuss what being a leader means to them, nor do they explicitly name their values. Imagine two leaders: one who thinks of leadership and shows up as being accountable to self and others and another who thinks of leadership as creativity and imagination. If they were in the same room for a project, one might focus on putting in structures and systems of how to move forward, whereas the other might be rallying for a shared vision and exploring possibilities. These two leaders could find themselves in conflict if they have not clearly communicated their values. In sharing their values, leaders gain empathy and compassion for each other which helps establish a common ground for how to move forward. By working with values that honor self and others, leaders develop a greater inclusive ethical awareness.

Leaders utilize values exploration, collective dialogue, and values frameworks in their workplaces to enhance their ethical awareness. In particular, these activities can be integrated with the Dynamic Presencing journeys of *primary perceiving* and *primary communicating*. Primary perceiving involves *attuning to what-is, entraining what-is-emerging*, and *discerning the arising new* (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 87-103). Leaders attune to what-is by anchoring their presence in who they are with their values serving as their moral compass. Being clear on their values enables leaders to allow for emergence at the felt-level of their experience. Leaders can draw upon their values to be in a relational experience with their inner being and the external context so that they are actively connected and participating with emergence. From here, they can work with entraining with what is emerging by connecting their presencing awareness to their core values. This can provide openings to discern the arising new as leaders remain in touch with emergence and their presencing self in the inquiry. A leader can remain present through holding a big picture view (by drawing on models like Barrett or SEL) while at the same

time attending to the common good and espoused values to monitor possible gaps or discrepancies. In this way, primary perceiving helps create conditions for leaders to gain insight into the nature of values alignment in themselves and their organizations. Primary communicating draws on different presencing field locations in the *i-space, you-space, we-space*, and *all-space* to heighten presencing across all fields (Gunnlaugson, 2020, pp. 107-135). Values reflection and dialogue enable this deeper engagement across the four field-spaces. Gunnlaugson (2021) noted that "through the course of developing, deepening, and maturing one's presencing leadership, leaders uncover a deeper resilient source of transpersonal meaning and purpose (Gunnlaugson, 2020; Gunnlaugson & Brendel, 2021, 2020, 2019) that can be potentially drawn from to develop our ethical compass and moral perception (Bai, 1999)" (p. 2). Leaders can uncover this deeper source of meaning and purpose, through engaging in dialogue to understand and co-create shared values. At the heart of shared values is attending to the common good, which encompasses considering me, you, us, and all. Thus, leaders can develop their presencing self as an "embodied reference point" (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 111) in which they then can nurture and steward the presencing process across each collective field location. As teams and organizations work with their shared values to bring them to life in service of organizational and societal challenges, they can explore moving between healthy self-interest and the common good which is akin to the primary communicating experience that enables both agency and interrelatedness.

Developing ethical awareness at these deeper levels of our being invites leaders to cross a threshold into collective coherence through the journeys of *primary perceiving* and *primary communicating*. By attuning to the ethical dimension of their experience through presencing, leaders can engage in introspective and collective values dialogue while renewing their moral compass's understanding and creating a collective awareness to deepen organizational values. In turn, this collective awareness enhances presencing beyond the realm of the self in attempting to address corporate challenges.

II.3. Practicing meditation

The notion of meditation generally can convey a misunderstanding of its purpose as attaining a sense of calm. In reality, reaching a state of inner relaxation is a by-product of meditation. At a primary level, the purpose of meditative practices is to sweep the mind from excessive thought, to observe what arises without judgment but curiosity, and to learn to pace reactiveness when engulfed in an overstimulated environment. When starting meditative practices, the focus can be curiosity,

observation, and acceptance without judgment of arising thoughts. The intent of this process is not to clear the mind at this stage, but rather to create a space to explore the nature of mind. Seeking to observe without judgment can be misinterpreted as passivity, so differentiation between observing and the following action is required. Understanding that the self is experiencing anger or agitation should not become an excuse for unskillful behavior but the opportunity to learn to react skillfully, creating a space for growth. Feelings affect behavior; therefore, it is essential to appreciate this causality loop by setting a higher intent of growth beyond mere surveillance. Leaders can follow a simple five-minute exercise at the beginning of the day to ascertain how they feel by attending to their experience, sitting upright in a quiet space, and paying attention to their breathing. Undoubtedly, the mind will do what the mind does best, propelling a barrage of random thoughts to manifest. The skill is not to ignore what arises but to observe it with curiosity and, once acknowledged, caringly let it dissipate. Paying attention and observing serves to relax the nervous system, which, in turn, represents an opportunity to connect with the first few glimpses of being, the opening and sensing of consciousness. Working with leaders, we have observed the most challenging endeavor is to create a cadence of practice amidst the busyness of work. As with all meditative pursuits, creating the habit, even if for a few minutes a day, is the most critical initial step, as irregular practice yields lesser results, even when practiced for extended periods. Once an initial routine has been developed for a few weeks, it may be productive to slowly start introducing the observation beyond breath and mind and attend to the somatic experience, mentally scanning the body and detecting areas of stress.

Buddhist meditation embraces a plethora of approaches not limited to sitting in a lotus position and observing the breath (Rahula, 1980). Our observation is that meditative reflection combined with intellectual and scientific context is beneficial to leaders. The essence of meditation calls for simple progressive gains, such as sitting for a few minutes in the company of oneself and observing what arises. These techniques illustrate the concept of no-big-deal meditation, subsiding unnecessary pressure (Kabat-Zinn, 2015) as a sense of failure may emerge if leaders measures progress against unrealistic expectations. Given the brain's neuroplasticity, of being able to carve new neural pathways, resulting in more mindful reactions, supports leaders in continuing their meditative learning.

In meditation, the organizational cultural norm of busyness as a source of leadership worth plays havoc with creating an adequate developmental space. During a

recent program delivery, when posed with the question "How are you feeling?" a participant shared their inner conflict about taking time for personal development at the cost of dealing with pressing work demands. Finding time to cultivate personal growth feels counterintuitive for most leaders. Complex challenges can be overwhelming and may spiral into a vicious circle of knee-jerk reactions, self-defeat, and lack of purpose. Finding the space to grow and lead from sustained awareness continues to be one of the hardest challenges for leadership development.

Leaders can begin meetings with "a mindful minute" (Reitz & Chaskalson, 2016, p. 6), a way to take a moment to engage in "collective breathing" (Fairbanks Taylor & Bishop, 2019, p. 106). As an example, leaders in a meeting can invite participants to take four shared breaths together in a presencing circle, as this provides a quick way to help people to refocus on the present moment, become in sync with each other and be primed to deal with issues at hand. Breathing together and sitting in a circle with others can also support meditative learning. Values, such as being in service, stewardship, creativity, agility, courage, or collaboration, can be meditated upon. Thereafter, the leader can facilitate a shared understanding and develop a strategy about how to prosper in the organization through the values perspective. Leaders can also expand this practice into their daily routine. As a way to engage deeper with collaboration, they can choose to be present with their intuition and act accordingly. For example, if they are attending a networking event, they could be mindful to listen to their intuition and see how this guides them to the right people and situations that aligns with their purpose and opens up possibilities for collaboration.

Practicing meditation can support moving through higher stages of consciousness, profoundly altering how individuals interact with their surroundings and their experience (Harris, 2015), which creates supportive conditions for "presencing to take root in our immediate experience and progressively become second nature to us" (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 149). This is a critical step to supporting the presencing mastery aim of fostering a generative way of being. We contend that practicing meditation with values is at the heart of primary leading which involves *accessing one's stillpoint, connecting to the source* and *leading from presencing awareness* (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 140). Through establishing regular practice, a leader can work with meditative awareness throughout the day, individually and collectively, to renew their felt connection between their own ground of presence and the presencing field-spaces that they are engaging (e.g., i-space, you-space, we-space, all-space). Depending on which space of presencing they are engaging, leaders can direct their presencing process accordingly. For example, working

with a five-minute morning meditation personally in one's i-space, doing a mindful minute with a colleague to create optimal conditions for engaging their you-space, starting a team meeting with shared breathing in the we-space, or tapping into intuition in their decision making and daily actions to access the all-space. Within these different meditation practices, leaders can connect with a variety of values, such as practicing being calm, competent or living from purpose. In presencing these deeper values, this helps develop a more robust presencing mastery by integrating the personal meaning dimension of leader's experience with presencing. Exploring different ways to meditate with and from one's or a team's core values also helps leaders to focus on accessing presencing as a dynamic way of being through their stillpoint, fostering a connective state of openness and potential, which facilitates a more fluid connection and reconnection with source. Personal and shared values in this way are directly connected with presencing from this source level of being. Values act as beacons and anchors to enable leaders to hold the course, "allowing a presencing way of being to guide our actions and leadership moment to moment" (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 145). Instead of trying to discern best practices, leaders can instead explore discerning new and emergent ways of leading based on the situation at hand in congruence with their values and shared organizational values. Through an ongoing meditative practice applied in different ways to each presencing field-space as illustrated above, leaders develop a foundational container for living and facilitating an embodied experience of primary leading by connecting to source through stillness, and leading in consultation with the different emerging forms of presencing awareness. In summary, by centralizing the values-dimension and engaging in activities for cultivating wisdom, enhancing ethical awareness, and practicing meditation in a fluid and intertwining process, leaders are well positioned to deepen their existing presencing capacities and so in turn develop new realizations that advance their overall presencing mastery.

III. Conclusion

In this article, we have explored how values-based leadership and Buddhist psychological principles enrich leaders understanding for creating important conditions for the presencing mastery milestone of presencing as a way of being. We propose that cultivating a fertile inner ground for corporate leaders to rediscover and reclaim their core values is essential to support the presencing shift to a profound and wholesome inner realm of learning to lead from source and one's deeper presencing self. The framework proposed entails the practices of cultivating wisdom, fostering ethical

awareness, and integrating meditative practices to awaken new levels of presencing awareness. Alongside values-based leadership, which enables the observation and questioning of core values to awaken new levels of consciousness by reacquainting heart and mind, our intent is to seed future conversations concerning the role of values-based leadership and Buddhist principles in shaping the overall journey to presencing mastery as outlined in *Dynamic Presencing* (Gunnlaugson, 2020). Ultimately, we hope future dialogue and ongoing experimentation will inspire corporate leaders to uncover new pathways for deepening their sense of purpose and service through this work.

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