

Running Head: WORK NAMASTE

Work Namaste: The Importance of Mattering at Work, and How a Leader Can Create an
Environment Where Employees Feel They and Their Work Matter

Rebecca J. Lamperski

University of Pennsylvania

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Advisor: Faisal N. Khan

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Reblampe@gmail.com

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Abstract

The concept of mattering is an underdeveloped, yet important component of an employee's success in the workplace, and personal well-being. Deficit-based leadership strategies employed by many organizations can break-down the ability for an employee to feel that they and their work matter, however, the focus by leaders on mattering can lead employees to feel: my leader is invested in my success, I am noticed, I am cared about, I am depended upon, I would be missed if I were not here, my leader is interested in what I say and do, I am appreciated, and I am noticed for my unique strengths. And through a focus on mattering, employees could also know and feel recognized for the impact of their work on the organization, and in society; and leaders can grow their employee's capability to flourish, thus increasing work effectiveness and performance. The opportunities to experiment and the tactics to create a culture of mattering through the customized definition outlined in this paper called *work namaste* are endless. This paper will provide a framework for leadership training programs on mattering as well as coaching exercises for leaders to utilize. Leaders can use *work namaste* as a playground for creating human flourishing and achieving organizational goals.

Dedication

This capstone project is dedicated to my husband, Jamie, and my daughters, Jessica and Jackie who endured their wife and mom spending countless hours participating in the MAPP program.

I want to thank my mom (Mayanne), mother-in-law (Jeanne), and my sister (Michele) who became soccer moms in my absence. And, Aunt Linda who held down the fort.

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I also want to thank “The Mattering Network.” Thank you for sharing your expertise, and for providing the inspiration of your research and writings. You know who you are and many of you are referenced in this paper. But, a special thanks to David Yaden, Gordon Flett, Julie Haizlip, Isaac Prilleltensky, and Megan France who shared in my enthusiasm while writing this paper, and sent me valuable articles and information.

And, I want to honor Hannah Milbert and her family. Hannah’s star shines brightly. I only hope to run my race as fiercely as she ran hers.

Table of Contents

I - Introduction..... 8

II - Definition of Mattering..... 11

 Interpersonal Mattering..... 14

 Societal Mattering..... 17

 The Intersection of Societal Mattering and Interpersonal
 Mattering..... 18

 Anti-Mattering..... 21

 Organizational Mattering..... 23

 Work Namaste..... 29

III - Why is Mattering Important?..... 31

 The Impact of Increased Mattering..... 32

 Upholding Psychological Well-being..... 32

 Improving Self-Esteem..... 33

 Increasing Self-Efficacy..... 35

 Creating Purpose and Meaning in Life or Work..... 36

 Increasing Job Satisfaction..... 37

Reducing Job-Related Stress and Burnout.....	37
Activating Compassion at Work.....	38
Other Benefits.....	39
Mattering Ignites Human Flourishing.....	40
Positive Psychology.....	41
How Mattering is Symbiotic with PERMA.....	43
Positive Emotion.....	43
Engagement.....	44
Relationships.....	46
Meaning.....	49
Achievement.....	51
PERMA Summary.....	52
Broaden and Build Theory.....	52
Positivity Ratio.....	54
Positive Organizational Scholarship.....	56
IV - What Impacts Mattering?	56
V - How Mattering is Measured.....	58

General Mattering Scale (GMS)	58
The Mattering to Others Questionnaire (MTOQ)	58
Interpersonal Mattering Index.....	58
School Counseling Mattering Survey.....	59
College Mattering Inventory (CMI).....	59
Work Mattering Scale (WMS)	59
Anti-Mattering Scale (AMS)	59
Organizational Mattering Scale (OMS)	59
Scoring the Scales.....	60
Measuring Work Namaste.....	61
VI - Mattering Summary.....	62
VII - Application: How Leaders and Organizations Create Mattering.....	63
Coaching to Overcome Mattering Thinking Traps (MTTs)	65
Strengths-based Coaching to Increase Mattering.....	72
Love.....	76
VIII - Other Considerations.....	78
Appreciative Inquiry (AI).....	79

IX - Conclusion..... 80

References..... 82

Appendix A – Definitions of Mattering Timeline..... 94

Appendix B - Components of Various Forms of Mattering..... 95

Appendix C - Mattering Survey Timeline..... 96

Appendix D – Comparison of Gallup Q¹² Questions to Mattering Components..... 101

Appendix E - Recommended Positive Psychology Book List..... 102

Appendix F – Sample Mattering Thinking Trap Conversations..... 104

I - Introduction

Imagine the best leaders you have ever worked with in your career. What impact did these leaders have on your work and your personal life? What made that a great work experience for you? Did the leader notice you, care about you, and did they depend upon you? Were they proud of your success, and did they make you feel like you would be missed if you were not on their team? Were they interested in your work, and what you had to say, did you feel appreciated and special? Did you feel like your work contributed to your organization's success, and did you receive praise for your work from your leader? Did they help you see how your work fit into the bigger picture at your company, and even in society? If you are saying yes to any of these questions, then your leader generated an environment (knowingly or unknowingly) where you felt that you and your work mattered. Do you want to work for a leader like this again? Would you, yourself, like to be this sort of leader? Do you have leaders reporting to you, or do you train leaders, and you think creating this environment is important? Then, this paper is for you!

Take another look at the questions I asked about your leader's attention towards you, and see that they revolve around noticing you, caring about you, depending upon you, and missing you if you were not on the team. Consider what it takes to see a person and respect a person for who they are. Think of it like a work version of the Sanskrit word namaste which Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines as "I bow to you," and that some yoga instructors have stated in yoga classes I have attended as "the light in me sees the light in you" which means acknowledgment of the soul in one by the soul in another. It is a word to describe the seeing, respecting, and connecting of humans with each other. And, as I was writing this capstone paper on mattering at work, I realized that mattering at work is a type of namaste. And, therefore, I dedicate this paper

to helping leaders create an environment at work where employees feel that they and their work matter. It aligns with my mission to *zestfully love people to help them develop to their potential*.

I will name the work environment where an employee feels that they and their work matters:

work namaste, and I will provide a more detailed definition for *work namaste* later in this paper.

Many of our leadership practices in Corporate America focus on fixing what's wrong, or what is also called a deficit theory of change (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001). Leaders take the role of uncovering breakdowns and barriers to achieving goals. This focus on uncovering breakdowns leads to the creation of focus groups to gather more information on the root cause(s) of the problem, and then the creation of committees to come up with ways to solve the problem or remove the barrier. From there, project management organizations (PMOs) put together elaborate action plans and timelines for execution. It is not a surprise, then, that leaders implement this strategy on people. Leaders focus performance management conversations on their assessment of their employee's weaknesses (which they attempt to create into a positive by calling them developmental opportunities). Training is then prescribed to fix the employee's shortcomings. Elaborate individual development plans are created that outline the competencies that are deficient and in need of improvement over a given timeframe. The employee is considered broken. This deficit-focus leads to a culture of fear, exhaustion, and cynicism (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Chapman & Sisodia, 2015), and I believe it blocks any leadership training efforts towards producing proper coaching skills because the change management culture models for the leader that their role is to fix. So, leaders are taught by the culture to fix broken processes and weak people. They do not learn to focus on mining the organization for the positive and focusing on strengths to achieve results.

This deficit-based strategy and lack of coaching may block a sense of mattering in the employees of an organization. Employees do not feel noticed, cared for, or valued. They feel like they are a part of a machine that needs to be more effective and efficient. And the employee's work as well as the leader's focus is aimed at uncovering and fixing what is wrong with the corporate machine and themselves versus identifying and growing what is good. The focus of positive psychology is on appreciating strengths (Seligman, 2011), and this paper is grounded in the science of positive psychology which is briefly defined as the science of human flourishing (Seligman, 2011). I will go into more detail later in this paper on how positive psychology relates to creating a positive corporate culture where employees feel that they and their work matters.

Gordon Flett (2018, pp. 4) says in his newly published book on mattering that "you cannot understand someone without having a sense of whether they feel as though they matter, and of how much they need to matter." I believe leaders can and should employ strategies to uncover and promote a sense of mattering, to truly understand and know their employees, and therefore, benefit from the positive outcomes that mattering can provide. I believe mattering is a component of positive psychology that can lead to human flourishing. This paper will provide leaders the knowledge and practical application to utilize mattering as such a resource for growing the good in our employees, and our corporate environments.

In this paper, I will provide a basis for a leader to create *work namaste* (a customized environment of mattering) through various positive psychology definitions, research, theories, and tactics. And, I propose that *work namaste* could provide the needed catalyst for an employee to flourish. I will start by delving into the topic of mattering: what is mattering, why it is important to individuals, and why it is important to organizations. Then, I will define *work*

namaste (mattering at work). I will look at how mattering positively impacts the resources of a team and its team members, and how it ignites human flourishing. I will give a brief summary of positive psychology and its relation to mattering. Finally, I will prescribe several tactics for leaders to proactively create an environment where their employees feel they matter, and their work matters, and I will provide some thoughts for further investigation by organizations that are beyond the scope of this particular paper.

II - Definition of Mattering

We have an innate propensity to get ourselves noticed, and noticed favorably, by our kind. No more fiendish punishment could be devised, were such a thing physically possible, than that one should be turned loose in society and remain absolutely unnoticed by all the members thereof. If no one turned around when we entered, answered when we spoke, or minded what we did, but if every person we met “cut us dead”, and acted as if we were non-existing things, a kind of rage and impotent despair would ere long well up in us, from which the cruelest bodily tortures would be a relief; for these would make us feel that, however bad might be our plight, we had not sunk to such a depth as to be unworthy of attention at all (William James, 1890, pp. 293-294).

Like me, you might feel the need to matter the first time you read that passage, or you might need to read it a second or third time. I hope that when you read William James’ passage you understand, and physically feel, the need and urge to matter. Mattering is rarely talked about in psychology courses and is “neglected by the academic community” (Flett, 2018, pp. 4). When I started my research, it took a bit of digging to find the research and the underlying network of those who are interested in this topic. Once I found those people, I found a network who is truly passionate about this subject. Gordon Flett (personal communications, June 18, 2018) has

nicknamed us “The Mattering Network.” I am hoping by the time you finish reading this paper that you want to join us too!

Even though mattering has not caught the interest of many, mattering has been put forward as being important to many human needs such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, identity, belonging, social support, control, purpose, meaning (Elliot, Kao, & Grant, 2004; France & Finney, 2009; Marshall, 2001; Rosenberg, 1985; Taylor & Turner, 2001; Marcus, 1991; Prilleltensky, 2014; Flett, 2018). Those topics are likely more familiar to you. Mattering is related, yet distinct from them as well. However limited, mattering has been applied in work contexts (Rayle, 2006; Jung, 2015; Jung & Heppner, 2017) as well as with children (Flett, Su, Ma, & Guo, 2016), adolescents (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Rosenberg, 1985; Marshall, 2001; Paputsakis, 2010), schools and students (Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987; Schlossberg, 1989; Rayle, 2006; Rayle & Chung, 2007; Tovar, Simon, & Lee, 2009; Marshall, Liu, Wu, Berzonsky, & Adams, 2010; Richards, Gaudreault, & Woods, 2016; Richards, Gaudreault, Starck, & Woods, 2018), homeless men (Deforge & Barclay, 1997), mothers (Schultheiss, 2009), and military environments (Rohall, 2003).

Mattering is defined by a host of researchers, psychologists, and philosophers; however, it still has room to be vetted, debated, and validated. I will provide several definitions that have been utilized frequently in research studies, I will review more recent thoughts on mattering at work, and then I will provide some of the correlations of mattering to success in our personal and professional lives. I will present and utilize the research of the mattering network to demonstrate how mattering can be an important factor for human flourishing, and I will provide support for how it is important for individuals to thrive at work.

What is mattering? In general, mattering is defined as “the extent to which we make a difference in the world around us” (Elliott et al., 2004, pp. 339). I will add to that definition that mattering is one’s perception and feelings surrounding that impact. It is important to point this out because leaders of people cannot assume that their employees feel they matter. Leaders must check-in with their employees, ask questions (or conduct a survey), listen to what employees are saying, and observe behaviors in order to gain confirmation that their employees feel they matter. Even if an employee does matter to a leader, it does not mean the employee feels they matter. This is the reason there are mattering scales and questionnaires that are created with the purpose of gathering feedback from employees. I will cover a variety of measurement tools later in this paper.

The definition of mattering has origins in both psychology and philosophy. Psychological definitions (which most call *interpersonal mattering*, or on a larger scale, *societal mattering*) focus on our personal assessment of our relationships, feelings, and meaning to other people or society as a whole (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Rosenberg, 1985; Schlossberg, 1989; Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987; Elliott et al., 2004). Philosophical definitions of mattering focus on how one perceives their actions are important or impactful to others (O’Brien, 1996; Goldstein, 2015; Yaden, Reece, Kellerman, Seligman, & Baumeister, in prep). In this paper on mattering at work, we will cover one primary philosophical definition of mattering which is currently being called *organizational mattering* (Yaden et al., in prep). I assert that in work contexts, *interpersonal mattering*, *societal mattering*, and *organizational mattering* are important and impactful. Therefore, I will cover their definitions, address the importance of each dimension, and propose a combined definition of mattering within organizations which I call *work namaste*. I will use the terms *interpersonal mattering*, *societal mattering*, *organizational*

mattering, and *work namaste* as distinct definitions of mattering as outlined below. When I am talking about mattering in general (including any and all definitions), I will use the term *mattering*. See Appendix A for a definition of mattering timeline.

Interpersonal Mattering

Rosenberg was one of the first to introduce a psychological concept of mattering which he called *interpersonal mattering* (Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). The full definition of *interpersonal mattering* developed over time. Initially, *interpersonal mattering* was defined as making a difference to another specific person with three dimensions: attention, importance, and dependence (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). These dimensions could be communicated by an employee through these statements: **I feel seen and noticed (attention), I feel cared about and valued (importance), and I feel depended and relied upon (dependence)**. Rosenberg (1985) later added two more components of *interpersonal mattering*: ego-extension and being missed. An employee could communicate these concepts through these statements: **I feel people are proud of my success and/or emotionally invested in what happens to me (ego-extension), and I feel people would miss me if I were not here (being missed)**. Rosenberg and Marcus (1987) constructed a scale based upon these factors (covered in the measurement section of this paper) as well as added another factor that they called interest. Interest could be communicated by an employee with this statement: **I feel people are interested in what I have to say or what I do (interest)**. Interest can be both positive and negative (I like you/your behavior, or I do not like you/your behavior), it just means that the person does not feel the other person is indifferent to them. I will continue to add dimensions to the overall definition of *interpersonal mattering* as articles and research compelled researchers to add them. Each of the components are individually measured in various questionnaires, and

some questionnaires include overall mattering questions (such as I feel like I matter to my colleagues/coworkers). There is an opportunity for more research in measuring mattering as the mattering concept can be very complex. I will provide more information on measurement in the measurement section of this paper.

Schlossberg (1989) was the first researcher beyond Rosenberg, McCullough, and Marcus that conducted research which contributes to the definition of mattering. Her research centered upon student involvement on college campuses and how that impacted academic success. Schlossberg's (1989) article proposes that marginality is the opposite of mattering. Or, stated another way, she proposed that when a student feels they matter, they will not be as likely to feel marginal. She admits that both marginality and mattering are contextual, and complex to measure. Schlossberg (1989) concluded that in order for institutions of higher education to reduce feelings of marginalization, they need to consider whether their policies, programs, and practices create perceptions of mattering. More research is needed to be done on the topic of marginality and mattering. As an example, Martin Luther King would have likely stated that he was marginalized. However, I would also propose that he thought that he mattered (at a minimum on a societal level, which we will discuss below). I do think that marginalization could cause a lack of mattering, however, I do not believe all marginalized individuals feel they do not matter. As I stated above, Schlossberg contributed to the definition of mattering in this study. In order to measure how feelings of *interpersonal mattering* positively impact student performance, she incorporated these existing *interpersonal mattering* components (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Rosenberg, 1985): attention, importance, ego-extension, and dependence. Her interviews and research also led her to uncover another component which she called

appreciation. The appreciation dimension of mattering could be communicated by an employee through this statement: **I feel my efforts are appreciated (appreciation).**

In later research, Elliot et al. (2004) categorized the dimensions of Rosenberg's *interpersonal mattering* model into their own framework of two categories and three terms: awareness (awareness) and relationship (importance and reliance). The awareness category aligns with Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) attention component. This category answers questions like this: do people recognize me and know my name, are people aware of my presence and do they not ignore me, and do people notice when I come and go? The relationship category (including importance and reliance) proposed by Elliot et al. (2004) aligns to the other components of Rosenberg's definition of *interpersonal mattering* (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Rosenberg, 1985). This category answers questions like this: do people care what happens to me and take pride in my successes, do people look to me for advice and support, and do people trust and count on me?

In his newly published book, Gordon Flett (2018) adds another (and currently the most recent and final component I will cover in this paper) component to the *interpersonal mattering* definition. He calls this component individuation (Flett, 2018, pp. 35). Flett (2018) defines this component as the need to have others notice your uniqueness (true self) or notice that one is special. He adds this component based upon the research of Maslach, Stapp, and Santee (1985) who first introduced the term individuation as a desire people have to act differently or uniquely in public. Combining that research with distinctiveness theory (McGuire, 1984), and research on the need for uniqueness (Fromkin & Snyder, 1980) leads him to propose that people find a sense of mattering when someone notices their unique strengths. This dimension could be

communicated by an employee through this statement: **I feel noticed for my true self and my uniqueness (individuation)**. This sounds a great deal like namaste to me!

Interpersonal mattering components have been utilized in a variety of research studies to determine the impact and benefit of increased mattering. I consider (for the sake of this paper and simplification) *interpersonal mattering* to include any study of the following components of mattering: attention, importance, dependence, ego-extension, being missed, interest, appreciation, and individuation (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987; Schlossberg, 1989; Elliot et al., 2004; Flett, 2018). See Appendix B for a list of the components of *interpersonal mattering*.

Societal Mattering. Rosenberg (1985) also defined *societal mattering*, which is similar to *interpersonal mattering*, but the domain is larger than an individual relationship. In this case, it is your feeling that you are making a difference in the world, society, or in the work context, your organization. Most *societal mattering* surveys revolve around the importance factor of interpersonal mattering. However, I do believe there is flexibility there for future researchers as it is possible that the other components (attention, dependence, ego-extension, being missed, interest, appreciation, and individuation) could apply to a person's perceptions of themselves in society as a whole or their employer. *Societal mattering* could be communicated by an employee through these statements: **I feel I matter to the world, society, or to my organization (general), and I feel I am important to the world, society, or to my organization (importance)**. Rosenberg and Marcus (1987) eventually referred to *societal mattering* as global mattering or general mattering (as differentiated from person-specific mattering). See Appendix B for a list of the components of *societal mattering*.

The Intersection of Societal Mattering and Interpersonal Mattering. Several researchers assess a combination of *interpersonal mattering* and *societal mattering* in their research. An example is research conducted on mattering with school counselors by Andrea Dixon Rayle (2006). She not only asked the counselors how important they felt to students, administrators, parents, and teachers (*interpersonal mattering*), but she also asked how important the school counselors believed they are to the school's overall environment, and the professional school counseling profession (*societal mattering*). Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009) included questions in their College Mattering Inventory (CMI) that measured college student's mattering to students, counselors and instructors (*interpersonal mattering*), and also included a general section aimed more generically towards mattering to people on campus as a whole, and within the school (*societal mattering*).

Isaac Prilleltensky (2014, pp. 1) believes strongly that "for many people, the struggle for mattering and thriving is what makes life worth living." The reason I cover Prilleltensky's definition within this section is because his article talks a great deal about feelings of mattering to the world, and "signals we receive from the world." This seems to align with *societal mattering*. However, he also indicates that mattering (by his definition) applies to personal, family, and work interactions as well. Prilleltensky (2014) defines mattering in two components: recognition and impact. In his writings, he does not align this definition to previously published definitions of mattering, however, based upon his descriptions, he somewhat aligned his definition to various factors of *interpersonal mattering* although as I stated he is focused primarily on the bigger picture of *societal mattering*. His recognition component seems to be aligned to the attention (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Elliot, Kao, & Grant, 2004), importance (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981), being missed (Rosenberg, 1985), interest

(Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987), and appreciation (Schlossberg, 1989) components of *interpersonal mattering*. Then, a component is added called impact that includes both the dependence (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Elliot, Kao, & Grant, 2004) component of *interpersonal mattering*, and adds a component to mattering that is the belief that we can make a difference or that we are actually making a difference through our actions. As of 2014, this is a new concept to the definition of mattering. He says that “impact reflects the moment of doing and acting on the world” (Prilleltensky, 2014, pp. 1). You will see under the *organizational mattering* section below, that this alignment with the belief that our actions can and do make a difference is also incorporated in the work by Yaden et al. (in prep), therefore, I consider it a part of the definition of *organizational mattering* and not an addition to the definition of *interpersonal mattering*.

Jung and Heppner (2017) developed a Work Mattering Scale (WMS) that I have included in the mattering measurement section of this paper. I also discuss the scale in this section of this paper because these researchers created a definition (through the development of their scale) for mattering at work that combined *interpersonal mattering* elements with *societal mattering* elements. Their survey questions do not line-up perfectly to any previous *interpersonal mattering* definitions, but appear to include the areas of being missed (Rosenberg, 1985), importance (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981), and appreciation (Schlossberg, 1989). They did, though, as I suggested above, include a general *interpersonal mattering* question (I feel like I matter to my coworkers). Along with that, they asked five *societal mattering* questions that were either general in nature (ex. I feel my work meets a societal need), or that tapped-into the importance component of *interpersonal mattering* (ex. I think that society values the work that I do). I do believe that the *societal mattering* components that they added have value in the workplace as employees like to feel they make a difference not only in their jobs but

in the world as a whole. And, the general *interpersonal mattering* question will enable researchers to compare those scores with the other more specific *interpersonal mattering* questions to see if one negative score drives the overall score down.

I propose that Jung and Heppner (2017) could have added the *societal mattering* elements (and the general *interpersonal mattering* question) while attempting to keep consistent with the *interpersonal mattering* elements that have been tested with other populations. They are missing the components of attention (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Elliot, Kao, & Grant, 2004), dependence/reliance (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Elliot, Kao, & Grant, 2004), ego-extension (Rosenberg, 1985), and interest (Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987). They indicate in their article (Jung & Heppner, 2017) that they started with an initial list of forty-five questions, it is not clear whether all components of interpersonal mattering definitions were included in their original list, and eliminated through their process of item analysis. Their survey also included four questions that were aimed at interpersonal mattering to coworkers/colleagues, and only one question that was aimed at interpersonal mattering toward the employee's boss/supervisor. I would have liked to have more data on interpersonal mattering toward both populations, and as it would be especially helpful to have data that measures an employee's sense of mattering from their boss/supervisor. Regardless, I am appreciative that they see the value of this research, and are furthering the academic pursuit of more information around mattering at work.

Interpersonal mattering and *societal mattering* are separate, yet related concepts, but are not reliant on each other. One could feel they matter on a larger societal basis (high *societal mattering*) because they work for a company that has a great purpose in the world (like a non-profit organization that feeds the poor, and maybe the person is in a fundraising capacity), but when it comes to their actual interactions at work, they do not feel they matter to their co-

workers and leaders (low *interpersonal mattering*). And, vice versa, one could feel they matter to their leader and coworkers (high *interpersonal mattering*), but the employee is feeling empty because the company they work for makes steel wire, and they do not know how that fits into the good of the world (low *societal mattering*). The *work namaste* definition that I propose later in this paper will provide a framework that shows value for both *interpersonal mattering* and *societal mattering*.

Anti-Mattering. Before I move on to talk about *organizational mattering*, I do want to briefly discuss a concept from Gordon Flett’s (2018) newly published book on mattering (this book primarily covers *interpersonal mattering*). Flett (2018, pp. 37) proposes in his book that there is another form of mattering, which is not just the lack of *interpersonal mattering*, but what he calls *anti-mattering*. Flett (2018, pp. 97) states that “the feeling of not mattering to other people is qualitatively different from the feeling of mattering to others.” *Anti-mattering* is not caused by low amounts of feeling like you matter. Rather, it is a result of specific negative interactions with others that cause one to feel they do not matter. He gives examples such as not acknowledging or remembering someone when they should be remembered (maybe they have met several times already), not acknowledging someone’s work (maybe a leader taking credit for someone’s work), and talking over someone when they are trying to speak (or only allowing people with certain job titles to speak). See Figure 1 for a depiction of the creation of mattering versus the creation of *anti-mattering*.

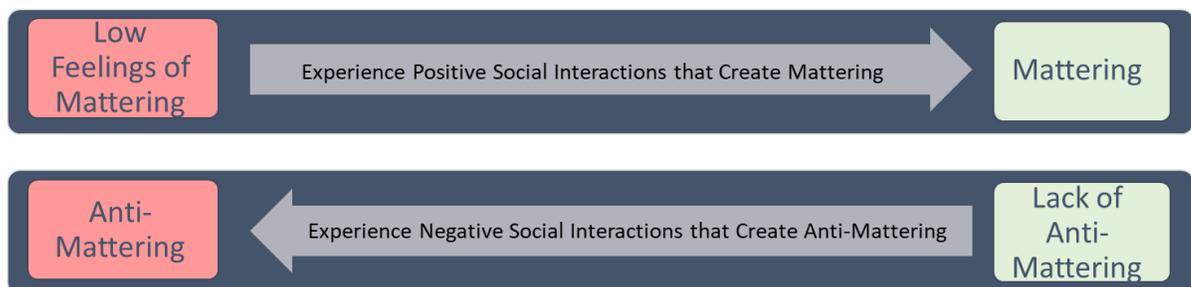


Figure 1. Creation of Mattering versus Creation of Anti-Mattering

The key point of Flett's (2018) *anti-mattering* concept is that research on stress and social interactions support that being subjected to negative social interactions (creating anti-mattering) is not the same as a lack of positive social interaction (not creating mattering). Flett goes as far as saying that mattering could have received more attention and importance in psychology research if *anti-mattering* had been the focus of earlier research. *Anti-mattering* could be communicated by an employee through this statement: **I do not feel I matter**. See Appendix B for a list of the components of *anti-mattering*. More application needs to be done, however, I look forward to seeing how Flett's *anti-mattering* research and scale propels the value of mattering in the future.

In our measurement section later in this paper, and in Appendix C, I will cover Flett's (2018) Anti-Mattering Scale (AMS). All the other scales that are published to date are created from a positive viewpoint and ask questions like "How much do you feel other people pay attention to you?" (Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987). The *anti-mattering* questions gather perspective from another angle and ask questions like "To what extent have you been made to feel like you are invisible?" The difference is the positive versus the negative perspective of the questions. I think this is really important to consider in the work environment because as leaders we need to uncover whether there are behaviors going on in the environment that are causing the lack of mattering (this would be *anti-mattering*), or if the environment just does not have enough positive interaction to create mattering (by any definition of mattering). The distinction is important.

Organizational Mattering

There is a new focus in the research on mattering, particularly in the area of mattering at work, and the term currently being utilized is *organizational mattering* (Yaden et al., in prep). *Organizational mattering* is being defined as “a post-action assessment of self-image, and relates more to the perception of the impact one’s actions have had on one’s environment” (Yaden et al., in prep, pp. 3). In essence, it is an employee’s opinion of whether their completed work is valued or recognized by their company or co-workers. Yaden et al. (in prep) definition of *organizational mattering* is recent and has only just begun to be tested and validated. They define organizational mattering with two dimensions: recognition and achievement. These dimensions could be communicated by an employee through these statements: **I feel my work is recognized by others at work (recognition), and I feel my work has a positive impact on my organization (achievement)**. See Appendix B for a list of the components of *organizational mattering*. An organizational mattering scale (OMS) was created and validated by Yaden et al. (in prep) which I will review in the measurement section later in this paper. I will also discuss the benefits of *organizational mattering* that were found in Yaden et al. (in prep) initial research study later in this paper.

Yaden et al. (in prep) propose and have validated that *organizational mattering* is more related to self-efficacy, and *interpersonal mattering* is more related to self-esteem, and they feel that mattering in a work context should relate to self-efficacy to be valuable (Yaden et al., in prep). Before we get deeper into defining *organizational mattering*, and to provide more context and understanding of these two forms of mattering and Yaden et al.’s (in prep) assertion of the relationship of different forms of mattering to self-esteem or self-efficacy, I will provide definitions of self-efficacy and self-esteem. However, keep in mind these are basic overviews of

these concepts in order to provide you with a better understanding of the possible difference between *organizational mattering* and *interpersonal mattering*, and not a comprehensive review.

Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief in their capabilities to perform or behave in a way that leads to achieving goals (Maddux, 2009). A person with high self-efficacy believes in themselves, and this drives their behavior and perseverance in tough situations. Self-esteem is defined as a global opinion a person has of themselves as being either positive or negative (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). It is a feeling, evaluation, and appreciation a person has of themselves, and their competencies, successes, and value (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). Mattering, self-efficacy, and self-esteem are perceptions and do not necessarily reflect reality. Self-esteem is a positive feeling about yourself in the current moment, where self-efficacy is a belief that you can achieve a certain future goal or task. In the Why is Mattering Important section of this paper, I will go into greater detail about how self-efficacy and self-esteem are linked and beneficial to individuals at work. I believe they are both important. Self-efficacy at work is valuable as it is the belief an employee has that they are capable of succeeding at their assigned goals. I believe self-esteem at work is also valuable because it is a person's positive regard for themselves. It is the opinion the employee has of themselves, and this will impact their work and their perceptions of their work relationships. Mattering is different from self-efficacy and self-esteem as it is one's own perception of worth to others (*interpersonal mattering*), one's own perception of worth to the world (*societal mattering*), and one's own perception of the worth of one's work product (*organizational mattering*).

I will use a hypothetical work example to show the difference between self-efficacy, self-esteem, and the various forms of mattering. Todd is the receptionist at a large advertising agency. Let us assume he has high self-efficacy, self-esteem, and also feels he matters. Todd's

high self-efficacy could be observed when he excitedly agrees to take on extra projects and stretch assignments. This might be because he has a business degree in marketing, and believes he is capable of more than just receptionist-level administrative work. Todd could show high self-esteem by smiling and greeting people as they arrive to work even those that dismissed him to begin with. Todd is confident in himself, likes his friendly personality, and is not embarrassed by his receptionist job even though he has a college education and wanted his first job out of college to be at a higher level. However, he will not allow others in the office to delegate their administrative work to him just because he's the receptionist. He will do anything to help, but he will not allow others to take advantage of him. Todd takes on stretch work because he believes in his capabilities (self-efficacy), but he does not allow the people in the office to dump their administrative work on him because he respects his skills, and has the confidence (or self-esteem) to say no. Both self-efficacy and self-esteem are focused on what we believe about ourselves. How does Todd feel he matters? He feels he matters because of how he perceives others reacting to him and his work. He notices that people start to remember his name (attention), and ask him where he was when he has a day off (being missed). He feels he matters when his boss and co-workers bring him those more complex stretch assignments, and not just the work they do not want to do (important and dependence). He feels he matters (*organizational mattering*) when his work product helps his team achieve a business goal, and he gets recognized at a company event. Mattering is focused on how we feel about ourselves in our relationships with others. The concepts are different, yet intertwined. As an example, feelings that you matter (primarily *interpersonal mattering*) can impact self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1985; Elliot, Colangelo, & Gelles, 2005), and self-efficacy can impact *organizational mattering* (Yaden et al., in prep).

Yaden et al. (in prep) propose that self-efficacy creates action that leads to *organizational mattering*. And, that *organizational mattering* is our perception of our contributions to the workplace, the quality of our work, the impact of our work, and the feeling or observation that our excellent work is recognized and praised. They found that the achievement dimension of their Organizational Mattering Scale (OMS) was positively correlated to self-efficacy, while other scales in their study that I will discuss in the measurement section of this paper (e.g. Jung and Heppner's (2017) Work Mattering Scale; Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) mattering scale; Marshall's (2001) Mattering to Others Questionnaire; the General Mattering Scale (Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987)) could not differentiate between self-efficacy and self-esteem, or were more highly correlated to self-esteem (Yaden et al., in prep).

Yaden et al. (in prep) propose that self-efficacy leads to action that leads to organizational mattering. I believe that this is helpful to measure, and was missing in the previous research. However, I believe that removing psychological (interpersonal and societal) mattering from the overall mattering definition in a work context removes the step that measures how mattering can impact the action. And, in corporate environments, and as leaders, we need to measure components that could drive behavior, and therefore results, not just measure the final results. I also believe it removes the person from the equation. The person becomes only the product of their final end product or success to the organization. I believe the components of *interpersonal mattering*, *societal mattering*, *anti-mattering*, and *organizational mattering* are linked, and that mattering could be a multi-dimensional construct in which several of its components interact in a related fashion, but where each component is still important, and should not be utilized independently. This is the reason I have created the *work namaste* framework.

Think about a highly matrixed and politically-charged corporate environment, which probably describes most large corporations in the world today. Let us use the example of an employee (let's call them Joe) in the corporate marketing department who was asked to put together a sales brochure for a new product by a business partner department that they service. Joe designs a beautiful, compelling brochure, and Joe's business partner recognizes him in a group meeting for producing such a beautiful and effective brochure in a small amount of time, and under budget (*organizational mattering* – achievement component). The brochure is sent out to the sales teams, and feedback is received that the brochure is having an immediate impact on sales (*organizational mattering* – achievement component). However, within Joe's internal department, there is silence. The leader of the department does not return phone calls or attend any meetings with Joe and his business partner. The leader and Joe do not even work in the same location. Joe does not feel like he matters to his leader. He does not feel valued, important, depended-upon, appreciated, or special (low *interpersonal mattering* or could be high *anti-mattering*). Joe feels hidden and invisible. With a distributed workforce, this is a work situation that is frequently the case. In this case, Joe's work can be hindered by the lack of *interpersonal mattering* within his department and his direct supervisor even though he is getting components of *organizational mattering* from his business partner. Therefore, along with *organizational mattering*, a case can be made that *interpersonal mattering* is also essential. This example also shows the importance of the practical application of this research and how leaders can benefit from it.

There could also be an example where centralized departments are making work product for field organizations, and they do not know whether their work is having an impact. So, their sense of mattering is being created by *interpersonal mattering* within their team and their direct

supervisor versus the *organizational mattering* components. I see value in all forms of mattering at work for reasons such as these. There are many reasons how and why an employee's work could fail to make a difference, be recognized, and many reasons how and why an employee would not feel valued, important, depended-upon, appreciated, or special. And, there are complex combinations of all of the above that could lead an employee to feel like they do matter. And, when they do not have *interpersonal mattering*, they can shut down, lose their voice (Grant, 2016; Flett, 2018), and soon lose their *organizational mattering* as well (see the mattering summary section of this paper for more information on the impact of losing your voice). It is important to know whether the employee thinks they matter, and how and why they think they matter as that can impact their self-efficacy and their self-esteem for the next project.

I also wonder whether this model is missing the actual results. Would the learning for the organization be in comparing the feelings of *organizational mattering* with actual results? What I mean by this is that an organization could have a low level of *organizational mattering*, yet very high results. This could mean that employees do not see how they fit into the results of the company and/or are not being recognized properly. Alternatively, an organization could have a high level of *organizational mattering*, and low results. Maybe this workforce is overconfident or too comfortable with the status quo, and that is impacting results in a negative way. Could there be too much *organizational mattering*, *interpersonal mattering* or *societal mattering*? I think this would be interesting to research. The Yaden et al. (in prep) model is at the early stages of development and research, so the future is exciting to see how the *organizational mattering* model develops over time, and how the research guides us to know more about the value of mattering. I propose that with high *interpersonal mattering*, *organizational mattering*, and *societal mattering*, and low *anti-mattering* an organization might be able to make new resources

available from employees, that could allow the organization to unlock new possibilities of growth. This fits nicely with the premise of Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS), which I will write about later in this paper.

Work Namaste

Now it is time to put it all together. I believe that in order to create and maximize mattering at work and to benefit from all the aspects of mattering, one needs to consider the levels of *interpersonal mattering*, *societal mattering*, and *organizational mattering* as well as *anti-mattering*. I am saying *yes, and* to mattering concepts. Why eliminate components, when they have value? Why not create a work-related model and assessment that measures all the components of mattering, and allows a leader to see more clearly and decide for themselves where they might be able to make an impact. *Interpersonal mattering*, *societal mattering*, and *anti-mattering* could have an impact prior to action, and *organizational mattering* could measure mattering as a result of their action. I believe leaders should not only want to create self-esteem, self-efficacy, and societal impact (among other positive benefits) for their employees in their work, but also eliminate those behaviors that are barriers to the benefits of mattering. And, leaders will need to assess each of these to maximize the benefits of mattering at work.

To create a culture of *work namaste*, a leader would create awareness of, training of, and efforts to assess, understand, and measure the eight components of *interpersonal mattering* (attention, importance, dependence, ego-extension, being missed, interest, appreciation, and individuation), the level of *societal mattering* (general and importance), the levels of *anti-mattering* as well as the two components of organizational mattering (recognition and achievement).

I also propose that *work namaste* is not just a psychological or philosophical construct, but it is a comprehensive framework for mattering in organizations. The ATC Model (Reivich & Shatte, 2003) provides a strong basis for the *work namaste* model. See Figure 2 below. In the ATC Model, an activating event (A) creates thoughts (T) which produce consequences (C) (Reivich & Shatte, 2003).



Figure 2. The ATC Model

In the *work namaste* framework, I am building off of the ATC Model as our employees interpret and experience behaviors in the workplace, which leads to their perceptions of the various forms of mattering. Their perceptions of mattering then lead to consequences or results (both individual and organizational). In the *work namaste* model, I have included the eight components of *interpersonal mattering* (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987; Schlossberg, 1989; Elliot et al., 2004; Flett, 2018), the two components of *organizational mattering* (Yaden et al., in prep), the two components of *societal mattering* (Jung & Heppner, 2017), and *anti-mattering* (Flett, 2018). Mattering then impacts a host of individual and organizational results (including feedback on those results). I have the arrows flowing both ways in the framework because results (whether positive or negative) can flow back to impact our perceptions of mattering and our future experience in the workplace. Results are certainly impactful to the equation, however, there could be some circumstances where our efforts to produce results fail, but we still feel the effort mattered, and that we matter.

I think results are not sufficient in and of themselves to create mattering. For most employees, I believe the *interpersonal mattering* or *anti-mattering* factors will impact their experience as much if not more than the personal reward they get from end results. There is certainly plenty of research that needs to be done to substantiate and explore the dynamics of mattering, and my opinions. See Figure 3 for a graphical framework for the *work namaste* Framework.

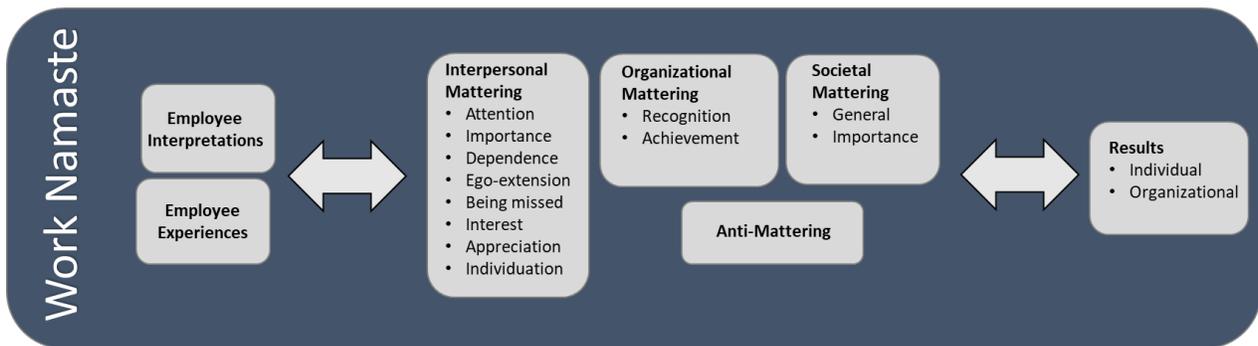


Figure 3. The *Work Namaste* Framework

III - Why is Mattering Important?

If you are wondering how a greater sense of mattering, or a focus on mattering in the workplace, could benefit you as an individual, or if you are a leader in an organization, and you are wondering what bottom-line benefits a greater sense of mattering, or a focus on mattering in the workplace, could benefit your business or employer then this section is for you! Mattering is shown to be related with a variety of positive results that are important to individuals and work organizations today. Although the research is still limited on the bottom-line impact on organizations, I hope you agree that a healthy employee is a great step in creating performance at work (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000), and so I do propose that the benefits to individuals will also provide work benefits. More focus and research on organizational impact would be beneficial.

Organizational mattering research is very new, along with the organizational mattering scale. There is less research to validate and replicate the impact of *organizational mattering* as was reported in the research by Yaden et al. (in prep). I include the findings from that research in the section below and will clearly indicate whether I am presenting to you a benefit of *interpersonal mattering*, *organizational mattering*, or both (for which I will use the generic term of mattering).

I also propose in this section that mattering is important because it ignites human flourishing and that human flourishing provides a wealth of benefits to our employees, as well as to our work organizations. I will provide several definitions of human flourishing, and how mattering can be the fuel for the various components of those definitions.

The impact of Increased Mattering

Upholding Psychological Well-Being. Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) found an association between *interpersonal mattering* and a person's psychological well-being in their research. Rosenberg (1985, pp. 219) went as far as to say that when a person is low on *interpersonal mattering*, they feel "irrelevant, unimportant," and even "invisible." When we feel we do not matter, it negatively impacts our self-esteem and is shown to lead to depression, hostility, anxiety, resentment, and suicide ideation (Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987; Taylor & Turner, 2001; Elliot, Colangelo, & Gelles, 2005; Jung & Heppner, 2017). These are not feelings that engage our employees or create positive, productive work environments, these are mental states that lead to personal suffering, and can lead to poor work performance (Worline & Dutton, 2017). Emily Esfahani Smith (2017) states in her book *The Power of Meaning: Crafting a Life that Matters* that when we feel we matter to others our own assessment

of our significance and value can increase. This positive self-assessment can drive energy and positivity in our employees.

Wright and Cropanzano (2000) studied the impact of psychological well-being on job performance. They used the eight-item Index of Psychological Well-Being (Berkman, 1971; Wright & Bonett, 1992) to measure psychological well-being, and they gathered supervisory ratings to measure job performance (one study had a single job performance factor, and the second study had four job performance factors). The studies were conducted with forty-seven employees who worked for a human services agency in California. The employees were college-educated, all performed the same job duties, and reported up through, and were evaluated by the same top-ranking senior leader. Both studies provided validation that psychological well-being was positively related to job performance ratings. They also found that psychological well-being was more predictive of job performance than job satisfaction. This means well-being is a better predictor of job success than job satisfaction. As mentioned above, this is how I believe that *interpersonal mattering* can have a positive impact on our employee's psychological well-being (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981), and this study indicates there is a benefit in greater job performance (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Therefore, *interpersonal mattering* impacts job performance through increased psychological well-being.

Improving Self-Esteem. In Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) research on *interpersonal mattering* and adolescents, *interpersonal mattering* was positively linked through four studies to an adolescent's self-esteem. Self-esteem is defined as the adolescent's global opinion of themselves as being either positive or negative (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). And, the researchers determined the adolescent's self-esteem was sourced by feelings that they mattered to their parents, regardless of whether the parents' opinions or evaluations of the

adolescent was good or bad. Matter of fact, adolescents gained more self-esteem when they were punished by their parents than when their parents were indifferent. Mattering to others is not always easy, it means that others are taking notice of our actions, and they depend on us. This creates a level of accountability that some might think they do not want. Yet, those that had parents that set those expectations (whether positively or negatively) created more positive self-esteem in their children than those that appeared to be indifferent. In the workplace, this applies as well to a leader and their employees. If a leader avoids difficult conversations about poor performance or even just small coaching opportunities, an employee can feel that their success does not matter to their leader. However, when a leader takes the time to have the difficult performance conversations, it can lead to an increase in self-esteem and mattering in their employees. I believe that leaders need to not only have these conversations, but they need to be good at having them. Having a difficult conversation is certainly easier when you have built a trustful relationship with your employee, but it is also on the leader to hone their skills in delivering constructive feedback in a productive manner.

An important point to reinforce here is that Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) suggest that *interpersonal mattering* is not self-esteem (although it may create self-esteem). *Interpersonal mattering* is how you perceive others notice you, and self-esteem is your evaluation of yourself (Rosenberg, 1979; Brinthaup & Erwin, 1992). Marshall (2001) validated this hypothesis with two groups of adolescent-age children by correlating responses from Rosenberg's (1965) ten-item self-esteem scale with the responses to the Mattering to Others Questionnaire (MTOQ). The MTOQ is discussed in more detail in the How Mattering is Measured section of this paper. Elliot, Colangelo, and Gelles (2005) also found that *interpersonal mattering* was related to self-esteem, which impacted depression and suicide

ideation. Their study was to determine whether *interpersonal mattering* had the ability to buffer against suicide ideation, and this was substantiated in their study, although fully mediated by self-esteem and depression. This means that they found that *interpersonal mattering* created self-esteem which protected against depression, and the ideation of suicide. They go as far as to say that *interpersonal mattering* “is the beginning of a chain of potency that exerts profound influence on other dimensions of self, and ultimately behavior” (Elliot et al., 2005, pp. 235). They propose that *interpersonal mattering*, and not self-esteem, may now be the “master sentiment” (McDougall, 1933, pp. 225) to which all others are subordinated. *Interpersonal mattering* is of vital personal importance to our employee’s mental health as it provides the resilience necessary to handle the challenges of life (Elliot et al., 2005), and also tough corporate environments. And, higher self-esteem is linked to two valuable outcomes: more happiness (including less depression) and greater initiative (Baumeister et al., 2003) which are beneficial to personal and professional circumstances. *Interpersonal mattering* is linked to increased self-esteem (Elliot et al., 2005), and self-esteem is linked to healthy psychological well-being (Elliot et al., 2005), and well-being is linked to job performance (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). This is how I believe interpersonal mattering leads to increased job performance.

Increasing Self-Efficacy. As we discussed earlier, James E. Maddux (2009) describes self-efficacy as a person’s belief (perception) about their capabilities to perform or behave in a way that leads to achieving goals. A person with high self-efficacy believes in themselves, and this drives their behavior and perseverance in tough situations. Maddux (2009) indicates that we can positively impact our levels of self-efficacy through our life experiences whether those are our own experiences (our work product), experiences lived vicariously through others (watching others be successful at work - mentors), or experiences we imagine (our vision for our future

success). In their recent research study, Yaden et al. (in prep) found a positive correlation between *organizational mattering* and self-efficacy, especially within the achievement sub-dimension. Maddux (2009) goes as far as saying that self-efficacy could be the most impactful factor in achieving success. It is like our brain saying “I think I can, I think I can” like the engine in the book *The Little Engine That Could* (Piper, 1930, pp. 21). This confidence in our capability is undoubtedly valuable in the workplace.

Creating Purpose and Meaning in Life or Work. David Blustein (2011) links an individual’s *interpersonal mattering* at work to a sense of life’s purpose and meaning as do France & Finney (2009) in their research. In Blustein’s (2011) relational theory of working, he proposes that *interpersonal mattering* can be and should be a primary outcome of working regardless of whether your work aligns with your interests, strengths or values (Blustein, 2011). He believes that *interpersonal mattering* at work (by being seen, depended upon, and valued) provides the dignity that one needs to feel that they matter in life. France and Finney (2009) utilized four of the *interpersonal mattering* factors in their research study (awareness, importance, reliance, and ego-extension), and found they were all positively related to purpose in life. Yaden et al. (in prep) found a medium strength positive correlation between *organizational mattering* and workplace meaning as measured by the Comprehensive Meaningful Work Scale (Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012) and the Work and Meaning Inventory (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012). Baumeister and Vohs (2002, pp. 609) state that “meaning can be regarded as one of humanity’s tools for imposing stability on life.” People who think their lives have meaning are found through a variety of research studies to have more of the good stuff, and less of the bad stuff: more positive emotion, life satisfaction, feelings of control, and engagement, and less

negative emotion, depression, anxiety, workaholism and substance abuse (Steger, 2009). These are valued in the workplace as well.

Increasing Job Satisfaction. In a study of three hundred eighty-eight school counselors, it was found that mattering to others explained nineteen percent of a school counselors' assessment of job satisfaction (Rayle, 2006). In this study, the researcher investigated only the importance factor of *interpersonal mattering*. The importance factor impacts the perception that the employee is cared for and valued in the workplace. Mattering was defined as feeling important to students, administrators, parents, teachers, the overall school environment, and the profession as a whole. Rayle (2006) found that feeling important to others at work increased job satisfaction more than job-related stress decreased job satisfaction. A limitation to this study is that other factors of *interpersonal mattering* were not measured, so we do not know whether there were other factors impacting these school counselors' feelings of mattering. However, the good news is that the importance factor was shown to have a great benefit. Corporate leadership is always interested in ways to increase job satisfaction, and they are normally getting the feedback that employees are stressed, and thus, less satisfied with their work. This study shows that a focus on increasing mattering in the component of importance could have a greater impact on job satisfaction than a focus on lowering stress. I think employees are willing to accept more stress on the job if they feel they matter, and if they feel they matter, they might feel less stressful, and more satisfied.

Reducing Job-Related Stress and Burnout. Reducing job-related stress and burnout is also a hot topic for leaders in organizations today. In the job satisfaction study discussed above, Rayle (2006) also found that feeling important to others at work (importance factor of *interpersonal mattering*) was moderately correlated with less job-related stress. Rayle (2006, pp.

209) constructed a customized job-related stress instrument that asked questions such as “I have too much work to do and/or too many unreasonable deadlines,” and “my career causes stress in my life and affects my quality of life” to correlate with a customized School Counseling Mattering Survey (SCMS) that I include in the mattering measurement section of this paper. Also, a recent yet to be published study by Haizlip, McCluney, Quatrara, and Hernandez (in prep) found that *interpersonal mattering* was negatively correlated with burnout. This study included three hundred and twenty-four nurses and nurse practitioners who are in a profession known for high stress and high burnout rates. They utilized Jung and Heppner’s (2017) Work Mattering Scale (WMS) to measure *interpersonal mattering*, and the Compassion Fatigue subscale in the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL) to measure burnout (Stamm, 2005). In this study, they not only found a negatively correlated relationship between mattering and burnout, but that burnout was more highly correlated to the relationship the nurses and nurse practitioners had with their peers and subordinates than with their direct supervisor. This reinforces the concept that I discuss throughout this paper that it is important for leaders to be aware of their own actions that can impact mattering, and also be aware of and uncover behaviors in the environment of their teams that impacts mattering.

Activating Compassion at Work. Worline and Dutton (2017) believe that *noticing* is the activator of compassion at work, and as we discussed above, a leader noticing, and an employee feeling noticed are a component of the attention factor of *interpersonal mattering*. In their book, *Awakening Compassion at Work* (Worline & Dutton, 2017, pp. 5), they define compassion as “more than an emotion; it is a felt and enacted desire to alleviate suffering.” By noticing that an employee is suffering (or struggling at work), leaders then have an opportunity to ask questions about the employee’s situation, and how it might be impacting their work performance. Keeping

a non-judgmental mindset, and not just noticing the employee's poor performance (when it is on the decline, it is more likely to trigger attention), but also being aware that something else seems to be influencing the poor performance, allows the leader to ask questions to uncover what the performance barriers are, and get the employee back on track. And, why limit ourselves to situations when performance is low? When performance is high, it is also a great time to notice, ask questions, and find out what is going well. This will enable the leader, either way, to have more information about what is impacting the employee's performance. If leaders can create compassion through mattering, it will positively impact bottom-line results (Worline & Dutton, 2017). According to Worline and Dutton (2017), Cameron, Bright, and Caza (2004) conducted a study of the impact of virtuousness on corporate performance, and found that virtuousness (which included compassion) created an upward spiral of performance (please refer to sections on the *broaden and build theory* and positivity ratio) due to its amplification of positive emotions (as well as social capital and prosocial behavior which we will not define or cover in this paper). They also found that virtuousness also acted as a buffer for companies who were going through downsizing by protecting them from the standard negative performance trends (turnover, decreased morale, etc.) after a downsizing event.

Other Benefits. The components of *interpersonal mattering* were shown to be related to a host of external variables in a study by France and Finney (2009): increased healthy relationships and self-acceptance, and decreased worry, concerns about fitting in, and anxiety. France and Finney (2009) utilized four of the *interpersonal mattering* factors (awareness, importance, reliance, and ego-extension) and found they were all positively related to positive relationships with others and self-acceptance, and they were negatively related to social adequacy concern. Only awareness and importance were significantly related (negatively) to

worrisome thinking, and only awareness was significantly related (negatively) to anxiety (as measured by the Generalized Anxiety Symptoms subscale). Yaden et al.'s (2018) study found that *organizational mattering* positively correlated with an employee getting a promotion and raise, as well as with lowering turnover. The increase in promotions and raises could indicate that organizational mattering (reminder – this is the perception that an employee has that they are having an impact and being recognized for that impact) is a predictor of work success (if the most successful employees get rewarded with promotions and raises). Certainly, organizations want to lower turnover of employees that are performing as onboarding new employees is a huge cost to any organization. This indicates that by making sure our performing employees feel they are having an impact and are recognized (and not just assuming our performers feel this) is something a leader can do to lower the turnover on their team.

Mattering's power to produce the multitude of positive personal and organizational outcomes that I've outlined, and even provide a buffer against depression, personal suffering, and suicide is a compelling argument to focus on mattering in the workplace. And, it does not stop there. As I was reading articles and books on mattering, it became clear to me that mattering touches humans in ways that align with the various definitions of well-being that I learned in the MAPP program for which I am writing this paper, and *work namaste* provides a framework for leaders to evaluate and consider where mattering can be activated. Therefore, the next section will cover how the components of mattering are a catalyst for the various components of human flourishing and positive psychology.

Mattering Ignites Human Flourishing

As I was researching the positive impact of mattering, it struck me that many of the positive outcomes from the feeling that one matters align with and support various definitions of

human flourishing. This section provides an overview of well-being theories and a variety of positive psychology concepts that are symbiotic with mattering. I provide this background to provide further substantiation that mattering should not only have a larger focus by psychology researchers, but that the *work namaste* framework would assist organizations who want to tap into the potential of their human capital.

Positive Psychology. Positive psychology was founded to study what helps people flourish, and that includes the study of positive emotion (such as love and hope), the study of positive traits (such as strengths and virtues), and the study of positive institutions (such as corporations and families) (Seligman, 2002). Aristotle called it *The Good Life* (Melchert, 2002), Seligman (2011) refers to it as *flourishing or well-being*, and Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008) represented it with the term *subjective well-being*. Although each has their own construct on exactly how to define it, and what term to use to describe it, they are each describing a human's desire to live their best, happiest life, or what is also called human flourishing. I would like to provide several definitions of human flourishing, and throughout this section, discuss how mattering is a fuel for human flourishing.

Going back in history for a definition of human flourishing, we can look to Aristotle as an early and exceptional positive psychologist. According to Aristotle, happiness, well-being and flourishing (which he called eudaemonia, or as stated above, *The Good Life*) is not something you just feel as a positive emotion (matter of fact, he thought being virtuous can sometimes be difficult and emotionally painful), it is something that you must earn through your actions (Melchert, 2002). Aristotle thought that strong virtue leads to happiness, and he felt that to maximize virtue, one must strive to be the best version of oneself (Smith, 2017). Aristotle believed human flourishing could be found when we explore, define, grow, and exemplify our

virtues (Peterson, 2006), and he thought that virtue conducted for its own sake was the highest virtue (Melchert, 2002).

Another definition of human flourishing I will cover in this paper is from Diener and Biswas-Diener's (2008) definition of *subjective well-being* (SWB) which includes the following components: level of positive affect, level of negative affect, and life satisfaction score. Another way to state this is that subjective well-being is the combination of one's emotional assessment of positive affect, and also, a cognitive assessment of life satisfaction. SWB allows us to consider not only increasing the positive factors in our lives but fixing the negative factors as well. Solely focusing on fixing the positive factors, and ignoring negative factors that make living miserable, will not maximize well-being as the negative factors can lower positive affect, increase negative affect and lower the satisfaction we have with our lives. Pawelski (personal communication, October 8, 2017) calls this a "green cape-red cape" or a "reversible cape" approach. The green cape approach involves activities that focus on improving the positive, and the red cape approach involves activities that focus on fixing what is wrong. Having a reversible cape approach allows for a focus on both, and aligns with the definition of *subjective well-being*.

In his new book, *The Hope Circuit*, Seligman (2018, p. 5) states "the absence of ill-being does not equal the presence of well-being." What he is saying is that it is not solely by eliminating the negative, or our faults, that we thrive, but we find well-being by growing the good, and the strengths within ourselves. This is not a new proposition of Seligman's as this is the premise upon which Seligman helped to form and name the science of positive psychology when he was the president of the American Psychological Association in 1998 (Peterson, 2006; Moores et al., 2015). Seligman proposed that the field of psychology should focus on more than just defining the problems of humans, and how to fix them (Seligman, 2005). Although helpful

to treat and cure many mental illnesses, he did not believe it was the full equation for well-being (Peterson, 2006). Seligman (2005, pp. 3) recommended a rebalance of focus to include how to build the “best qualities in life.” James Maddux (2005, pp. 14) concurs with Seligman’s views and goes as far as to say that the pathology-based psychology has “outlived its usefulness.”

Seligman (2011) believes that well-being is composed of five elements that contribute to well-being, and can be pursued, developed and measured independently from each other: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement (PERMA). Seligman also most recently mentions a possibility of adding health and control to that list (Seligman, 2018), but I have decided this is beyond my desired scope of this paper as these items have not officially been added to the PERMA construct as of the writing of this paper. In the next section, I will focus on defining the PERMA elements, and also indicate why they are important to increasing mattering, and other benefits in a work setting. I will provide overviews and broad-brush descriptions of these concepts, and a few examples of research studies in order to provide leaders with the grounding they need to be confident that mattering activates PERMA. Seligman has stated that both PERMA and SWB are important because SWB provides the emotional and cognitive assessment, but PERMA provides the pathways or “the how” to get to SWB (personal communication, October 28, 2017).

How Mattering is Symbiotic with PERMA

Positive Emotion. Positive emotion is more than just pleasure (Fredrickson, 2009; Seligman, 2002). Pleasures are more immediate, subjective, short-lived enjoyments (like those that could be created by food or sex), and that create positive feelings in our senses, but that in the long-run would not increase our well-being (Seligman, 2002). Although positive emotions can also develop quickly and be short-lived like pleasures, they include more than just

subjective, pleasurable feelings (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009). Positive emotions involve what we think and process about a situation, and have an impact on our body through facial expressions, cardiovascular and hormonal systems, and more (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009; Fredrickson, 2002). Fredrickson's top ten positive emotions include amusement, awe, gratitude, hope, inspiration, interest, joy, love, pride and serenity (Fredrickson, 2009). Positive emotion is measured subjectively (Seligman, 2011), which means it is a personal opinion by the person being measured or surveyed. According to Barbara Fredrickson's (2009) *broaden and build theory*, positive emotions in the workplace can create an upward spiral of positivity, and are a component of *high quality* connections (both covered later in this paper) which can lead to increased creativity, innovation, inclusion, collaboration, and many other positive outcomes (Fredrickson, 2009; Dutton, 2003). *Interpersonal mattering* and *organizational mattering* both were found to be positively associated with creating positive affect which is the initial ingredient in this component of PERMA (Jung & Heppner, 2017; Marcus, 1991; Yaden et al., in prep).

Engagement. Engagement is a way in which a person partakes in an activity that creates focus and mindfulness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Flow, a type of engagement, is defined as a heightened state of consciousness, being involved in an activity that is so enjoyable and perfectly challenging that we get lost in it and lose track of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). We only realize that we are in this state of flow after the activity or goal at hand has been accomplished. Flow is engagement (Peterson, 2006, p. 382). Schwartz (2015, pp. 1) agrees by stating in his book *Why We Work* that employees who are fulfilled with their work are engaged in their work and "they lose themselves in it." Maslach and Goldberg (1998) define engagement in a work context as being the opposite of burnout, and that engagement creates high energy, involvement, and commitment within workers. I provide this definition because burnout and mattering have

significant connections to each other, and preventing burnout is important to leaders of people (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998).

As to why engagement is valuable in a work context, I refer you to a recent meta-analysis published by Gallup, and conducted by Harter, Schmidt, Agrawal, Plowman, and Blue (2016) where employee engagement was found to be related (in a productive way) to the following performance outcomes: customer loyalty, profitability, productivity, turnover, safety incidents, absenteeism, shrinkage, patient safety incidents, and quality (defects). And, the impact of engagement on these performance factors was found to be highly applicable across the two hundred thirty organizations, forty-nine industries, three hundred thirty-nine research studies, and seventy-three countries (where employees were working) included in the study. Engagement is the other subjectively-measured element in the PERMA definition of well-being while the final three elements can also be measured objectively (Seligman, 2001). When team members are engaged, absenteeism goes down, turnover goes down, quality goes up, productivity goes up, and profitability goes up (Harter et al., 2016). Prilleltensky (2016) indicated that organizational cultures where engagement is encouraged assists in creating a sense of mattering. I propose that mattering will and does increase engagement in an organization because people tend to like work that they feel makes a difference, gets recognized, and makes them feel special to others. I also propose that an organization that has high engagement would likely be found to have high levels of mattering. However, engagement can be created just because the work is in complete alignment with the person's interests, strengths, skills or values, and not that they think the work will have an impact, or that they are special or valued because of their work. So, there can be engagement without a feeling of *interpersonal, societal or organizational mattering*. Maybe this

could be another form of mattering called *personal mattering* because the work is only important to the person doing the work, and that is why it matters to them.

Relationships. Seligman (2011) is resolute that positive relationships are vital to our well-being. Seligman discusses in his book *Flourish* that human brains have formed to be social as our ability to collaborate, understand the feelings and emotions of others, and promote teamwork is what enables success or even our physical survival. According to Jonathan Haidt, we can predict a person's level of happiness by how much they "intertwine" (Haidt, 2006, p. 133) with others, and by the strength of their ties and bonds in their social network. People who live alone, and who are part of religious organizations with fewer obligations and more social freedom were more likely to commit suicide (Haidt, 2006). Emily Esfahani Smith (2017) echoes these beliefs and research. On the extreme side, Smith (2017) shared studies in her book that involved orphan children who had an increase in mortality rates simply because they were not receiving physical touch. Smith (2017) observes that human connection points, like the ones these infants craved, are decreasing because we are isolating ourselves with our multi-screen world, whether for work or pleasure, and we are spending less time in person with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. In a corporate setting, it is more likely than ever that a leader will have at least a portion of their team working in a different location than where they have an office. This creates challenges for leaders to establish and maintain relationships with their teams, but it does not decrease the importance of doing so.

Christopher Peterson (2006, pp. 249) stated frequently that positive psychology could be summed up in only three words: "*other people matter.*" He felt strongly that our well-being was linked to our ability to be in positive relationships with others, and that for human beings positive relationships are a biological need. Peterson (2006, pp. 250) wrote that we are wired to

be in relationships with others, and that “relationships in and of themselves matter.” In relation to the *work namaste* framework, his statements revolve around our needs to be valued, listened to, and acknowledged by others which aligns with the concepts of *interpersonal mattering*. Our need to matter to those around us (or to at least perceive we matter), is tied to our need to be in relationship.

The Gallup study we discussed in the engagement section above (Harter et al., 2016) includes an overview of the development of Gallup’s Q¹² instrument. Although we will not go into a deep conversation about this instrument, it is worth reading up on because the Q¹² is utilized extensively in corporate America to measure items that supervisors/leaders can impact, and that have value in building positive and productive teams (such as recognition, purpose, quality, and relationships). I have provided a list of the Q¹² survey questions in Appendix D, and I’ve highlighted the questions that I think have applicability to mattering. The questionnaire has eight out of twelve questions that I believe relate directly to *interpersonal mattering*, and two of the twelve that relate to *organizational mattering*. Although mattering has yet to hit the mainstream in corporate lingo, there is quite a bit of acknowledgment just in this measurement tool that mattering is important. Organizations who use this instrument could use the questions I have indicated to get a pulse on the mattering levels within their teams without completing a separate survey.

One of the questions on the survey is, “I have a best friend at work.” Gallup measures the deepness of an employee’s relationship(s) at work with this question, as they have seen in their research that close relationships at work lead to increased trust, better communication, and a host of other organizational outcomes (Harter et al., 2016). As an example, seventy-five percent of employees with a best friend at work indicated they would stay with the company for at least

another year, whereas of those that did not have a best friend only 51% said they would be staying (Ellingwood, 2001). Retention equals profits, and this is just one example of the power of relationships at work. In the end, strong relationships foster happiness, and happier people have more relationships (Reis & Gable, 2003), that creates a positive cycle that is valuable in life, and in work contexts. The power these relationships have to create positive emotion and connect at work can fuel the energy employees bring to their work, and thus their achievement, and their perceptions of their *organizational mattering*. Several of the questions in the *organizational mattering* scale speak to the power of the relationship to create mattering. These questions ask respondents to rate these items: “my co-workers praise my work” and “my work has made me popular at my workplace” (Yaden et al., in prep). By being more popular, and gaining praise from our co-workers, we can utilize components of building relationships to create *organizational mattering*.

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) created a leadership theory called Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) that focuses on the quality and characteristics of the one on one relationship between leaders and their followers. Those relationships that are of the highest quality are defined as having the most mutual trust, respect, and obligation (Graves & Luciano, 2013), and lead to increased engagement (Bailey, Madden, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2017), and reduced turnover (Collins, Burrus, & Meyer, 2014; Graves & Luciano, 2013; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). This is another example of the importance of strong supervisor-employee relationships in the workplace, and the importance of relationships to employee well-being. And, the mutual trust, respect, and obligation that is mentioned in the LMX theory sound very similar to the dependence and individuation components found in the definition of *interpersonal mattering*.

Meaning. Meaning is defined by Seligman (2011, pp. 17) as “belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self.” There are a variety of opinions and research on the definition of meaning. Steger (2009) provides a three-part framework that is helpful to understand the various thoughts on the definition of meaning. Steger (2009) says that most definitions of meaning revolve around purpose, significance, or are a multifaceted definition. He writes that the definitions grounded in purpose are motivationally driven and focus on the idea that we have purpose if our lives are in alignment with something we value, like our relationships. The definitions for meaning that are grounded in significance are more centered on a cognitive level when your life conveys an important message or that you are seen to “stand for something” (Steger, 2009, pp. 681). The multifaceted definitions of meaning, according to Steger (2009), often combine purpose and significance with the feeling that your life has meaning (a more affective dimension of meaning).

Smith (2017) in her book *The Power of Meaning: Crafting a Life that Matters* writes that there are core components of meaning: belonging, purpose, storytelling, and transcendence. She particularly says that “belonging is the most important driver of meaning” and links belonging to mattering by stating that “when other people think you matter and treat you like you matter, you believe you matter too” (Smith, 2017, pp. 49-50). Marshall (2001) states that perceived mattering can help people have a sense of meaning and purpose in life. Lambert et al. (2013) conducted a study where they confirmed that the relationships that created a sense of belonging would create more meaning in those people’s lives. Belonging was defined in this case as the assessment that not only do you have a positive relationship but that you have a “secure sense of fitting in” (Lambert et al., 2013, pp. 1).

So, how does meaning help us thrive? As we discussed above, Baumeister and Vohs (2002) claim that finding meaning in your life and work provides stability, and Steger (2009) found meaning to be associated with more positive emotion, life satisfaction, feelings of control, and engagement, and less negative emotion, depression, anxiety, workaholism and substance abuse.

One can find meaning at work in a variety of manners. Dik, Steger, Fitch-Martin, and Onder (2013) identify a variety of mechanisms that are congruent with the components of mattering. They found grounding for creating meaning at work in the following ways: work that allows you to be authentic and congruent with your values, work that you believe you are capable of doing (self-efficacy) and work where you feel you are personally valued (self-esteem). This aligns with *organizational mattering* and *interpersonal mattering* components. They also linked meaning at work to belongingness, and relationships, and what they called “supportive interpersonal connectedness” (Dik et al., 2013, pp. 368). Finding meaning at work has been linked to a variety of positive organizational outcomes such as overall employee well-being, job satisfaction, work unit cohesion, better attendance, greater intrinsic work motivation, and a stronger faith in management (Dik et al., 2013).

As we discussed earlier in this paper, David Blustein (2011) links an individual’s *interpersonal mattering* at work to a sense of life’s purpose and meaning as does France and Finney (2009) in their research. Yaden et al. (in prep) also found a medium strength positive correlation between *organizational mattering* and workplace meaning as measured by the Comprehensive Meaningful Work Scale (Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012) and the Work and Meaning Inventory (Steger, et al., 2012). I have linked mattering and the meaning component of PERMA.

Achievement. Achievement is one of the two components of Yaden et al.'s (2018) definition of *organizational mattering*. It is also the final component of Seligman's (2011) PERMA construct, and one of two components (achievement and relationships) that he added to his original equation for well-being from the book *Authentic Happiness* (Seligman, 2002). The original equation only included positive emotion, engagement, and meaning. Seligman added achievement to his construct after a University of Pennsylvania Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) student pointed out that people pursue goals for the sake only to achieve them, meaning that achieving the goal would not necessarily need to lead to also receiving any of the other PERMA elements of positive emotions, engagement, relationship or meaning. The MAPP student (Senia Maymin) felt that achievement should be a stand-alone component, and Seligman agreed (Seligman, 2011, pp. 18). I can relate to this as I was in sales for fifteen years. Sometimes sales is not pleasant, it is hard, with tough personalities to work with, and sometimes you wonder whether you are making any difference in the world (not much positive emotion, engagement, relationship or meaning), but when you have a goal set, it does create motivation by just the thought of achieving that goal. I was the kid that liked to win at everything, so achievement has been an important part of my life's PERMA.

Seligman (2011, pp. 20) properly provides the caveat that he is not endorsing that what he calls the "achieving life" is the best life or would be something that works for all. But, it is an element that describes how some people get most, some, or even a little of their well-being. It can also be an area (as could all the components of PERMA) that if it is lacking, could cause a lack of well-being. In the area of *organizational mattering*, however, Yaden et al. (in prep) are giving achievement a front row seat with recognition. They are proposing that it is critical that an employee perceive that their work is having an impact on their organization, that it contributes

to the organization's success, and that it influences the functioning of the organization. It is through achievement, or in the case of their model, perceived achievement that an employee matters at work. I say perceived achievement because the Yaden et al. (in prep) model asks employees about their perceptions of the success, quality, impact and influence of their work, but it does not actually gather results confirmation from the organization as I mentioned in the *organizational mattering* section earlier in this paper. In their studies, they have correlated achievement to self-efficacy, raises, promotions, and employee retention. In the case of achievement, *organizational mattering* does not just ignite the A in achievement; achievement is one of only two critical elements for *organizational mattering* to occur.

PERMA Summary. Mattering does not only facilitate PERMA, but PERMA at work can facilitate mattering (ex. your work relationships can lead you to feel like you are cared for, and that you would be missed if you were not there, or your achievement can lead to organizational mattering). This is also important, because PERMA could be considered the “how” of human flourishing, and has been found to be correlated with *subjective well-being* (Seligman, personal communication, October 28, 2017).

There are a variety of other positive psychology theories, terms, and concepts that I have chosen to cover briefly in this paper as I believe they have a strong application, association, or impact on mattering. Those topics are: *broaden and build theory*, positivity ratio and Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS).

Broaden and Build Theory

We can use well-confirmed and tested principles to understand better how mattering could impact well-being. By taking the beliefs that have already been substantiated, developed or uncovered with regards to positive psychology and mattering, and applying them to human

flourishing, we can develop a more substantiated knowledge and appreciation for how mattering can impact employees and organizations, and we can better communicate, teach and practice these theories. In this paper, we will review Barbara Fredrickson's (2009) *broaden and build theory* because I believe it is one of the primary theories that support the positive impact of increasing mattering and the *work namaste* framework.

Barbara Fredrickson's (2009) *broaden and build theory* indicates that experiencing positive emotions (such as joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love) broadens our receptivity to new ideas, opinions, and actions by making us more creative, open, and grateful. This openness enables us to grow and build positive and resilient personal resources (intellectual, social, psychological and physical resources), which can create an upward spiral of positive emotions, positive experiences, and growth. The *broaden and build theory* was shown to impact well-being through a study by Fredrickson (2009, p. 84) called "The Open Heart Study" where two hundred workers increased their daily intake of positivity, and not only did they feel more positive, but they experienced increasing positivity and growth by being more mindful, appreciative, and creative in reaching goals. Additional research on positive emotion indicates that individuals who experience positive emotion as the dominant emotion in their lives are more successful across a wide variety of well-being measures (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

I argue that mattering affects our emotions, and has the capacity to facilitate positive emotions. The feeling of mattering provides a type of richness that allows it to be utilized as a tool and resource to leaders and their team members. Mattering can be utilized as a tool to grow the positive emotions that Fredrickson's (2009) theory requires. Creating a feeling of mattering within our employees can help us create the positive

emotions that can lead to the upward spiral (Fredrickson, 2009), provide the positive emotion in PERMA (Seligman, 2011), and increase work performance (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

Positivity Ratio

The next positive psychology concept that has a relationship with mattering, and that I would like to cover in this paper is the positivity ratio (Fredrickson, 2009). Fredrickson (2009, pp. 120) proposes that positivity has a “tipping point” which is a ratio of the positive and negative emotions in your life, or what she terms *The Positivity Ratio*. She originally proposed a three to one positivity ratio (positive to negative) that was necessary to nurture human flourishing (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Fredrickson, 2009). Although this specific ratio has been challenged (Brown, Sokal, & Frieman, 2013), Fredrickson (2013b) provides data that supports that having more positive versus negative emotions still remains important to human flourishing. Also, Fredrickson (2013b, pp. 7) points out that positive emotions are valuable up to a limit (you can have too much positive emotion), and that negative emotions can be harmful or helpful depending on the “contextual appropriateness and dosage” in relation to positive emotions (all negative emotions are not bad, but too much can be tough to handle). As an example of a positive result, but negative affect situation is the research that indicates that fear can narrow our focus which can focus our energies towards our goals and help us achieve them (Harmon-Jones, Gable, & Price, 2013). This leads Fredrickson (2013b) to propose that there is a value in continuing to evaluate our positivity tipping points although there is still more research to do on this subject.

Why is this important to mattering? Leader interactions with their employees can create positive or negative emotions (or both). We have discussed how mattering can provide positive

emotions in the workplace (Jung & Happner, 2017; Marcus, 1991; Yaden et al., in prep). The point of this section is to bring awareness to leaders that the balance of positive to negative emotions can impact an employee's ability to flourish on their team (Seligman, 2011).

I would also like to bring into this discussion an interesting article by Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, and Vohs (2001) titled *Bad is stronger than good*. I give you the title because it tells the story of their research which shows that bad news, emotions, events, and relationships have a stronger impact on a person than good news. They go as far as to say that they “have found bad to be stronger than good in a disappointingly relentless pattern” (Baumeister et al., 2001, pp. 362). This pattern is important because it leads me to propose that a leader cannot just create a single positive event to outweigh a single negative one, as the negative one will weigh down our ratio of positive to negative, causing us to need more than one positive emotional event to outweigh a single negative emotional event.

I believe that focusing on creating a culture where an employee feels that they and their work matter, and by eliminating as many behaviors in the workplace that create *anti-mattering* (Flett, 2018), a leader can provide a steady flow of positive emotion that can help counteract the negative emotions that are sometimes uncontrollable in the workplace (ex. a system shuts down, co-worker disputes, or poor economy/lack of sales). It is up to the individual leader to estimate what might be a good ratio for their team and its individuals and to inject positivity when it is needed. This can come in the form of fun events or team building, but also can align with the factors of mattering (indicate to team members that they are valued, depended upon, and special or that their work had a specific impact/give recognition). *Work namaste* provides an equation for leaders to generate positivity on their teams.

If you would like a more comprehensive overview of different components of positive psychology written for the general public (in addition to the research articles listed in the reference section of this paper), I have provided a list of suggested reading in Appendix E.

Positive Organizational Scholarship

Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) is the scientific study of positive processes and states within organizations that unlock latent sources of performance and culture (Cameron et al., 2003). This is an entire body of work that studies the natural resources we have within an organization and its people to drive more results without necessarily spending any more money or investing in any more capital. The premise is that resources like positive emotions, positive relationships, and meaning (Dutton, Glynn & Spreitzer, 2008) are already available to leaders within an organization, but they need to be activated to benefit from their potential positive impact (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). Flett (2018, pp. 157) comes to a conclusion in his book that “feelings of mattering represent a highly protective resource that can promote thriving, flourishing.” I could not find any POS-specific research that indicated that mattering was being studied and considered as one of these latent sources of energy that could create results, however, I have linked mattering to the elements of POS (positive emotion, positive relationships, and meaning), therefore, mattering can be deemed an important ingredient for organizations who want to unlock potential through POS.

IV - What Impacts Mattering?

Other than those items in the actual definition or surveys of *interpersonal, societal, anti-mattering, and organizational mattering*, there are other variables that can impact mattering in a work setting. In a study conducted by Schieman and Taylor (2001) of in-person interviews of nine hundred ninety-four employed adults age eighteen to fifty-five from Toronto, Canada, it

was found that gender, education-level (for women only), and job task composition had an impact on *interpersonal mattering*. They used questions based upon the Rosenberg and Marcus (1987) General Mattering Scale to conduct their study. In their findings, they share that working women have a larger sense of *interpersonal mattering* than working men, even after they adjusted the data for differences in status, role and job attributes. Education was found to have an impact on the quality of job a person was able to secure (more independence, control, complexity and supervisory responsibilities), and then, job quality created more *interpersonal mattering*. That makes logical sense. But, with women, quality of job did not account for all of the increase in *interpersonal mattering*. Education was found in and of itself to create *interpersonal mattering* in the women in the study (Schieman & Taylor, 2001). This was not the case for men. In terms of job quality, the study did not find a significant gender difference, but it did uncover a positive effect on *interpersonal mattering* by adding more autonomy, complexity, and challenge to the work as well as an increase in *interpersonal mattering* for those who supervise others. Each of these led to varying levels and aspects of feelings of *interpersonal mattering* at work.

David Rohall (2003) conducted a study with Russian army officers who were going through an organizational downsizing to see how *interpersonal mattering* was impacted by different social conditions. He also used questions based upon the Rosenberg and Marcus (1987) General Mattering Scale to conduct his study. He found that *interpersonal mattering* increased the closer the officer lived to a city, the more social interaction the officer had, and if the officer was still employed. This has an impact in the corporate setting as working remotely policies become more popular and organizations have a more dispersed workforce. The impact of employees living farther from city centers, and their co-workers, could decrease social

interactions in general which have been shown through this study to decrease the perceptions of *interpersonal mattering*.

V - How Mattering is Measured

Given the impact that mattering can have on the variety of elements of a successful personal and professional life (including all elements of PERMA), a discussion on how to measure mattering is critical. There are several individual and work measurement tools that have been utilized in the mattering research. As we have discussed above, the subject of mattering has received some attention, but not as much as other areas of psychology. The science of measuring mattering is far from complete. I will provide a brief overview of the current primary measurement tools available (a mattering measurement timeline with details on the survey questions and rating scales listed below is available in Appendix C).

General Mattering Scale (GMS) (Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987)

This scale consists of *interpersonal mattering* questions for each of five areas of the mattering definition: attention, interest, being missed, importance, and dependence. This scale has been utilized more frequently than the other scales. However, its validity is not well documented.

The Mattering to Others Questionnaire (MTOQ) (Marshall, 2001)

This questionnaire consists of an eleven question survey evaluating *interpersonal mattering* of adolescents to their mother, father, and friends.

Interpersonal Mattering Index (Elliot et al., 2004)

This index consists of a twenty-four item *interpersonal mattering* index based upon three factors: awareness, importance, and reliance.

School Counseling Mattering Survey (SCMS) (Rayle, 2006)

This six-question survey measures the importance factor of *interpersonal mattering*. It was aimed at measuring school counselor's *interpersonal mattering* to students, administrators, parents, and teachers as well as to the school and their profession.

College Mattering Inventory (CMI) (Tovar, Simon & Lee, 2009)

This twenty-nine question survey measures *interpersonal mattering* among college students with the following factors: general college *interpersonal mattering*, *interpersonal mattering* vs. marginality, *interpersonal mattering* to counselors, *interpersonal mattering* to instructors, *interpersonal mattering* to students, and perception of value.

Work Mattering Scale (WMS) (Jung & Heppner, 2017)

This ten question scale measures what the researchers categorize as *societal mattering*, and *interpersonal mattering* primarily in a general sense and from the components of importance, being missed, and appreciation. There are also two societal questions that tap into the perceptions of achievement (or impact) which are found in the definition of *organizational mattering*.

Anti-Mattering Scale (AMS) (Flett, 2018)

This is the first assessment that focuses on measuring the feelings of not mattering (*interpersonal mattering* focused).

Organizational Mattering Scale (OMS) (Yaden, Reece, Kellerman, Seligman, & Baumeister, in prep)

This seven-question survey measures the achievement and recognition factors of *organizational mattering*.

Scoring the Scales

In general, the currently utilized scales each measure a select list of components (chosen by the researcher), and the sum of the scores from each component leads to an overall mattering score (although, to add to the confusion, some researchers have averaged the scores instead). If a leader utilizes one of these scales, and the overall sum (or average if you choose that method) for mattering is low on their team or with an individual employee, the leader could narrow down the cause by looking at the individual component scores from the questionnaire (which component(s) were lowest or drove the sum down).

The summing or averaging of the scores of each component requires additional investigation as I am not confident the sum or the average would even give an accurate depiction of a person's feeling of mattering. This investigation could be accomplished by adding an additional general question like this: On a scale from one to ten (ten being highest), how much do you feel you matter at work? And, you could include Gordon Flett's (2018) question from the *anti-mattering* questionnaire: How much do you feel like you don't matter? Then, the score from these questions along with the score from the sum of the components (or the average) could be compared to see if the sum of the components (or the average) leads to a similar overall perception of mattering or not matter.

As an example, an employee might be low in one component of *interpersonal mattering* and high in all others (leading to a higher summed score), but they could still feel they do not matter (low score on the general questions). An employee also could be low in many components of *interpersonal mattering*, but high in one particular area, and score their overall mattering questions very high. In the positivity ratio section of this paper, I covered research that shows that events that cause negative emotions have a stronger impact on a person than events

that cause positive emotions (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). This research could provide substantiation that an overall high sum or average of the individual components could hide an overall feeling of not mattering as one particular component that is low could cause an individual to have very low feelings of mattering, and override the more positively scored components. As an example, an employee could feel unappreciated because their leader is not strong at recognition efforts, however, they could know that their leader and team depends heavily on their work. That lack of appreciation could drive a significant lack of mattering with that employee or an entire team which would not be uncovered without including a general question in the survey.

Measuring *Work Namaste*

In order to measure *work namaste*, I propose that each of the components of *interpersonal mattering*, *societal mattering*, *organizational mattering* and *anti-mattering* could be individually measured in a customized questionnaire using questions that have been utilized by past researchers (to date, there is not even a single questionnaire or scale that includes all eight components of *interpersonal mattering*). It would be important to have a general mattering question (how much do you feel you matter at work?) and it would be beneficial to ask the questions from the vantage point of different relationships (ex. do you matter to your boss, your co-workers, and your peers).

I do not believe mattering is an either/or situation. I believe it is contextual. However, a feeling of not mattering in one context can impact other contexts. There is more research that should be done on how long a feeling of mattering can last after an experience, and whether certain experiences create more feelings of mattering than others. This is why it is so important that leaders take the time to coach their employees around mattering, as it is an individualized

feeling and perception that has to be uncovered. A more comprehensive survey can provide leaders with good information to use in a coaching conversation. I will provide more details and instructions for coaching around mattering in the application section at the end of this paper.

VI - Mattering Summary

As we discussed earlier in this paper, increasing *interpersonal mattering*, *societal mattering* and *organizational mattering* (and decreasing *anti-mattering*) in the workplace can increase a variety of positive factors, and protect against a variety of negative factors by employing authentic tactics that help that employee feel they are seen, valued and relied upon, and to feel that their work is recognized and has a positive impact (as well as other factors in the *work namaste* framework). Adam Grant (2016) writes that when we believe our actions matter, we are committed, and we find our voice. He provides a model in his book *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World* where he outlines four choices a person has for handling any disappointing or frustrating situation depending on their sense of mattering: neglect, persistence, exit, and voice. According to Grant (2016) when we think our actions do not matter (whether interpersonally or organizationally), we either make the minimum effort necessary (neglect - disengagement), or we miserably keep going despite not agreeing with the situation (bitter persistence). The only other option when we think our actions do not matter is to leave the situation (employee turnover). When we do not feel our work matters, especially over a long period of time, we lose our “voice” (Grant, 2016, pp. 80). Flett (2018, pp. 40) also writes that when people are ignored, not listened to, or frequently interrupted, they feel like “they have no voice.”

Losing our voice at work through long-term frustrating or devaluing circumstances (with no perception of a change or an ability to control the situation) could be a form of helplessness at

work created by “prolonged bad events” like Seligman (2018, pp. 376) discusses in his new book *The Hope Circuit*. Prilleltensky (2014, pp. 1) states “In helplessness, no matter what we do or think, we feel doomed.” What people need in this circumstances is a feeling of control, something that gives them hope. This control could come from the self-efficacy (believe that you have the capability to succeed) found in *organizational mattering* and Prilleltensky’s (2014) impact component, or the hope could come from a supervisor providing a sign of importance or dependence as found in *interpersonal mattering*. It could also be found by an indication that your work is making a difference in your community (*societal mattering*). Or, it could come from the actual achievement of a work goal (results). Mattering can provide the hope necessary to trigger the sense of control that turns off our instinct to become helpless at work (Seligman, 2018). This re-engages us in our work, or maintains our engagement, and can be the most powerful impact on thriving at work. The *work namaste* framework can provide leaders with a map to follow to increase mattering, or to figure out where mattering is being built, and where it is being torn down.

VII - Application: How Leaders and Organizations Create Mattering

Over a third of the impact on a person’s well-being is created outside of a person’s genetics or life circumstances (Bao & Lyubomirsky, 2014). This means that efforts towards creating well-being (through *work namaste* or other means) can have an impact. This is good news for organizational leaders who desire to create flourishing in their employees through *work namaste*. Positive interventions (PI’s) are what we call the efforts or tactics to create well-being. A positive intervention (PI) is an intervention that is evidence-based, intentional, and that is designed to increase well-being by enhancing that which causes or constitutes well-being in (non-clinical) human populations. PIs must be evidence-based, meaning that evidence or

research indicates that the PI will have a positive impact (J. O. Pawelski, personal communication, October 8, 2017). Why is impact important? Because the word intervention is based upon the Latin word *inter venire* and means “to come between” (J. O. Pawelski, personal communication, September 10, 2017). The connotation is that a PI is an action that is intending to have a positive impact. According to Pawelski, evidence can be grounded in three manners: theoretical, experimental, and evaluative. Theoretical grounding involves grounding the design of your PI from a theoretical perspective (ex. Barbara Fredrickson’s (2009) *broaden and build theory*). Experimental grounding involves testing the PI in a carefully crafted environment to see if the PI has the desired effect (ex. testing at Penn’s Positive Psychology Center). Evaluative grounding takes the PI to another level by piloting the PI in the actual environment where the PI will be conducted (ex. in a hospital with children). It may be difficult to have evidence that is valid in each of these areas, but my recommendations will include those areas that show evidence of positive impact, and that are grounded in the theories of positive psychology.

It is important to mention that employees also have a responsibility towards mattering. This paper is written for the purpose of providing leaders with recommendations. However, we do need to consider that no matter what the leader’s intentions are, there are components of mattering that are subjectively evaluated by the employee in the various measurement tools and survey questions. Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) pointed out that mattering is a perception by the person, a feeling they have based upon what they do or do not observe. Therefore, regardless of the leader’s intentions, efforts and actions, dimensions of mattering must be created within and perceived by the employee (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981), and they might be blocked by thinking traps as we cover in this application section. The employee must be willing and able to connect with their leader, and there could be many circumstances (including mental

health deficits that we will not consider in the scope of this paper) that blocks a sense of mattering that are not within the leader's control or influence.

I will propose two possible ways that supervisors could create *work namaste*: coaching to overcome mattering thinking traps and a coaching focus on strengths.

Coaching to Overcome Mattering Thinking Traps (MTTs)

No matter what sort of mattering we are discussing, mattering is a perceived situation where one is considering their own mattering or lack of mattering from their own vantage point. A thinking trap is the automatic response your brain has, especially when you are feeling stressed, and this rigid pattern of thinking can get in the way of your awareness of key pieces of information resulting in inaccurate predictions and inaccurate explanations about the cause of events (Reivich & Shatte, 2003; Tversky & Kahneman, 1983). Since mattering is a perception, it can be impacted by thinking traps. I am defining a mattering thinking trap (MTT) as simply when one thinks they or their work does not matter, but, in reality, they do matter to their leadership, and/or their work does matter to the organization. In essence, *work namaste* includes *interpersonal mattering* and *societal mattering* (I matter), *organizational mattering* (my work matters therefore I matter), and *anti-mattering* (I do not matter). When I say mattering thinking trap, I am covering all definitions of mattering in the *work namaste* framework.

Rosenberg and Marcus (1987, pp. 3) admit that measuring *interpersonal mattering* is “an uncertain and imperfect process, the feeling of mattering, may or may not be accurate.” They describe the perception of *interpersonal mattering* as an “inferred significance,” and a sort of “role-taking” (Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987, pp. 2-3). And, Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) indicate that *interpersonal mattering* is a motive for behavior, that if one does not think they matter, it influences their actions. This is why I think a leader being aware of and coaching to

MTT's is so important. A leader needs to confirm that their intentions resonate with their employees; that their employee feels and understands what the leader is trying to project. Leaders need to be aware of employees' mattering thinking traps (MTTs), and take the time to coach employees through and around their MTTs to more accurate, productive and positive thoughts, and therefore, resulting actions.

The ATC Model (K. Reivich, personal communication, March 4, 2018) provides a strong basis to coach employees to more acceptable consequences or results (as well as provides the foundation for *work namaste*). See Figure 2 on page 29 of this paper for a reminder of the basic ATC Model. There are many ways our employees can negatively impact their own performance, and this can be influenced by how an activating event (A) creates thoughts or thinking traps (T) which produce undesirable consequences (C) (Reivich & Shatte, 2003). I will expand upon this model with my own philosophies by further defining that consequences can come in the form of unproductive behaviors that lead to unacceptable results. And, adding a feedback loop from undesirable consequences to possibly creating more thinking traps (or at least sustaining or reinforcing the existing thinking traps). See Figure 4 for a depiction of the expanded ATC Model.

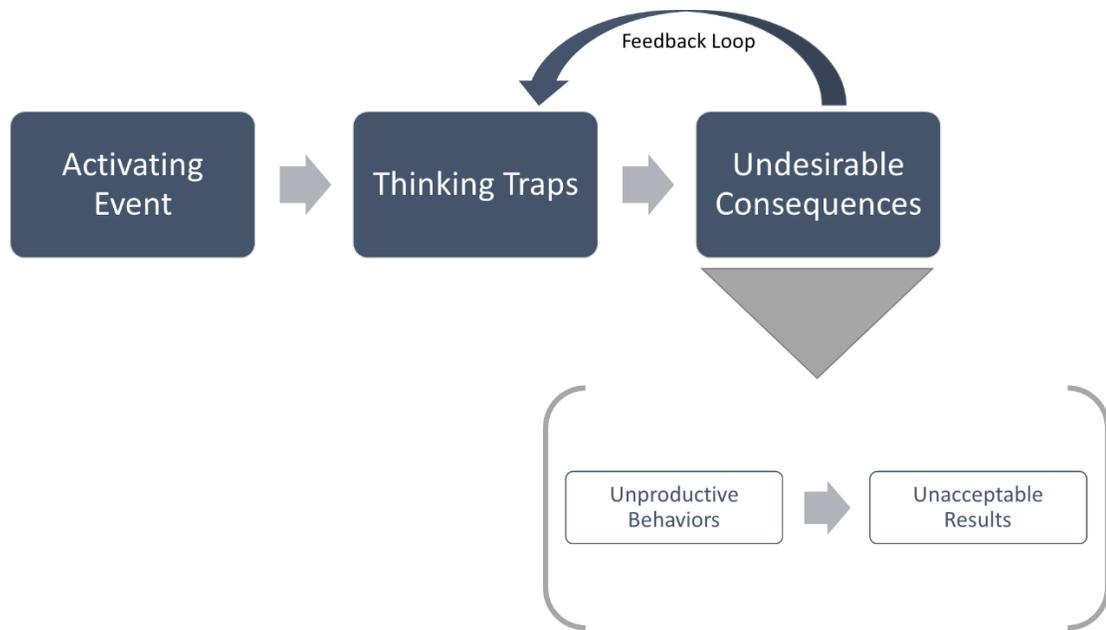


Figure 4: Expanded ATC Model

Many leaders (especially sales leaders) will attempt to improve results (key performance indicators) by focusing on unproductive behaviors, or the lack of activity or action altogether. They will have conversations with employees primarily about activity, ineffectiveness, and inefficiency. And, they will create the deficit-based environment I talked about in the introduction of this paper. This also makes the employee feel like they are nothing more than their work. In this example, the leader has ignored the thinking traps that are creating the undesirable consequences, and thus the unproductive behaviors and unacceptable results will continue. Or, sometimes the employee can for a limited time improve their productivity and/or performance, but then it is not sustainable because they are still fighting against their thinking traps. This is when employees fall back into old bad habits, and the leader wonders why the employee cannot seem to sustain performance when the leader has observed that they can do the job. Those thinking traps will eventually take over again, and the behaviors will again become unproductive. I call this being stuck in a low production cycle (see Figure 5). The thinking traps

I am talking to you about generically at this point could be the mattering thinking traps I defined above. The employee’s unproductive or unsustainable behavior could be driven by inaccurate perceptions that the employee has that they or their work does not matter.

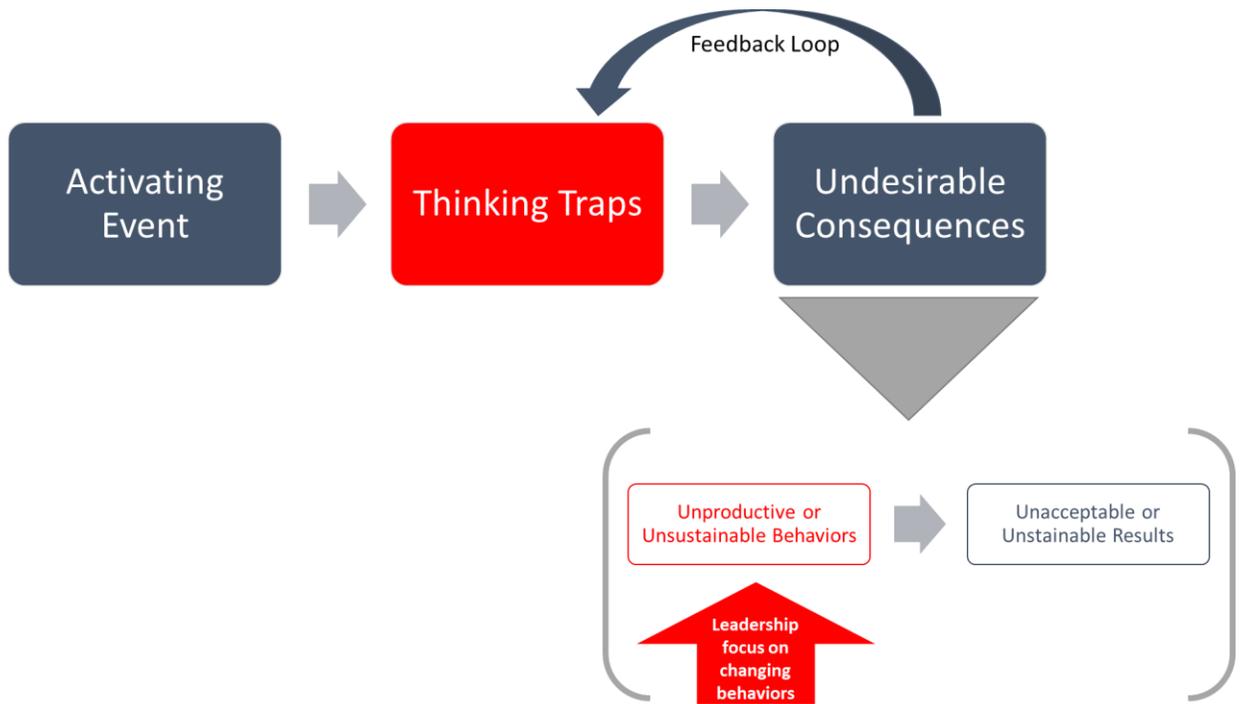


Figure 5: Stuck in a Low Production Cycle

There is a solution. You can create a high production cycle that is fueled by uncovering MTT’s (See Figure 6). By listening to your employees’ lyrics about mattering, asking questions about how they feel, and confirming your intentions, you can uncover and address MTTs that lead to unproductive behavior, and therefore a lack of acceptable performance. You can coach an employee to adopt thoughts of mattering (or perceptions) that are more productive through the questions you ask, and the words that you use. Or, uncover unproductive and destructive behaviors on your teams that are causing employees to feel they do not matter. See Appendix F

for a sample list of MTT’s and responses and questions a leader can use to build a dialog with their employee. This process of simply caring about their employees’ performance and investing in their success through coaching, and showing through this coaching that you depend upon them will also show that you are listening and noticing the details about how they are thinking and working. I propose that this process would lead to *work namaste*.

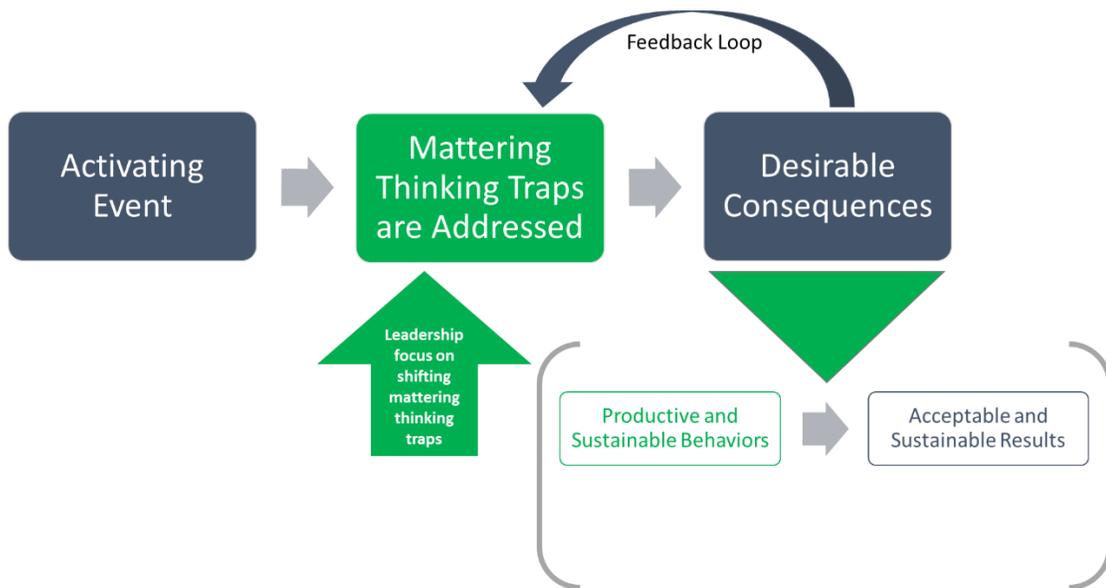


Figure 6: High Production Cycle – Fueled by Uncovering Mattering Thinking Traps (application of fig. 3)

Coaching to MTT’s can be especially important when an employee has changed teams or roles, or has significant differences from others in their environment (such as personality, culture, race, or sexuality) as when we are in a new environment that is unfamiliar, or an environment where we do not feel we fit in, we can feel marginalized (Schlossberg, 1989). Marginality can elicit a feeling in people that they do not matter (Schlossberg, 1989). This does

not mean they actually do not matter, but the feeling of marginality brings about the perception that they do not matter. Rebecca Goldstein (1983, pp. 22) created a term called the “mattering map” to describe this circumstance. Her concept is that our perception of whether we matter depends upon what is valued in that particular circumstance (or using her language – what region of the mattering map are we currently visiting?). As an example, if humor is valued, and we are not funny, we may not feel we matter in that particular environment (region of the mattering map) based upon the reaction that we get from those around us, and the impact that has on our perceptions of being valued, important, or interesting.

As an example, imagine you are an individual contributor and you are invited to a leadership meeting to present the results of a special project. While you are at that meeting, no one proactively talks to you, and when you sit down at a table, no one sits near you until there are no more seats. You could feel marginalized because you are not at the same management level as others in the room (and maybe networking with someone with a title is what is valued within this group), and that could lead you to think that you, your position, and your work must not matter. Could this impact the energy you bring to your presentation? Could you feel less confident, and fail in front of this important audience? Yes. This is possible. The activating event (A - leadership meeting-no attention) leads to thoughts (T - marginalized-lack of mattering) that lead to consequences (C-lack of energy). Could this be impacting the success of our diversity and inclusion initiatives? I think it is something that is worthy of future research on how feelings of marginalization could lead to a lack of feelings of mattering, and how that could be negatively impacting the performance of our diverse employees. And, how could coaching to MTT’s positively impact this situation? Those are all good questions for future research.

Coaching to MTT's can also provide what Dutton (2003) describes as a *high-quality* connection between the employee and their leader. Dutton proposes that the "energy and vitality of individuals and organizations alike depends on the quality of the connections among people in the organization." (Dutton, 2003, pp. 1). A *high-quality* connection is a connection that creates three subjective experiences. The first is positive energy which Dutton (2003, pp. 7) describes as the "fuel" of great organizations. The second experience of a *high-quality* connection is a "sense of positive regard" which is described as being "known and loved." (Stephens, Heaphy, & Dutton, 2011, pp. 386). This sounds a great deal like *interpersonal mattering*. Finally, a *high-quality* connection is felt by both participants in the connection, or what is called "felt mutuality" (Stephens et al., 2011, pp. 386). An MTT coaching conversation is an opportunity for a leader to create a *high-quality* connection with their employee. Increasing the perception of mattering could assist in increasing the probability of future *high-quality* connections as the employee felt more appreciated and cared for. *High-quality* connections have been found to increase individual well-being, health, engagement, and learning, and in organizations, it has been found to improve cooperation, coordination, change management efforts, and feelings of attachment to one's organization (Dutton, 2003). A feeling of not mattering on the side of the employee, could undermine a leader's attempt to have a *high-quality* connection, and block the benefits that *high-quality* connections can provide.

For the reasons stated above, I highly propose that leaders weave into their coaching conversations some questions that uncover whether their employees feel they and their work matter. Also, by listening closely to an employee's comments, and asking a few further questions, you can uncover the trap behind the trap, or the mattering thinking trap that could be driving a complaint or a negative comment. Coaching to MTT's will help employees see and

feel that they matter, and create a *high-quality* connection between the employee and their leader. In the following section, I will cover how a strength-based coaching practice can increase our employee's perceptions of mattering by building on the High Production Cycle Model in Figure 6 above.

Strengths-Based Coaching to Increase Mattering

The next tactic I propose to create *work namaste* is for a leader to adopt a perspective on employee development and performance management that focuses on creating awareness of a person's character strengths and focusing efforts on how to utilize those strengths in new ways to create *work namaste*. This strength-based focus and attention towards positive individual traits is a focal point for the field of positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), and I believe it can lead to a sense of mattering. First, I will give a bit of background on strengths, and positive psychology, and then I will provide a few recommendations on how these concepts can be creatively utilized by a team leader to create *work namaste*.

As a part of positive psychology's progress, a classification of human strengths and virtues was created in 2004 and was named the Values in Action (VIA) Classification. The VIA Classification defines twenty-four character strengths, and the VIA Character Strengths Profile measures a person's self-assessment of each strength and their opinion of its importance to their performing as their best selves. These strengths include items such as zest, spirituality, self-control, kindness, and bravery. The assessment builds awareness of strengths, allows an individual to explore those strengths, their impact and their current utilization, and then apply those strengths to current situations to achieve and maintain success, also known as the Aware-Explore-Apply Model (Niemic, 2018). Martin Seligman (2002) indicates that using these strengths creates excitement and energy as well as improves learning curves and that people

desire and crave to use their strengths. (Seligman, 2002, p. 160). This is a great example of working with what is right versus the deficit-based approach. Other studies agree and align with Seligman's opinions. A study by Peterson and Seligman (2004) found that adults who thought their jobs were congruent with their character strengths also found their jobs to be most fulfilling. A study by Hone, Jarden, Duncan, and Schofield (2015) found that the awareness of and the use of strengths created significantly greater odds of flourishing than those that were not as aware or used their strengths the least. Interestingly enough, this same study (Hone et al., 2015) found that feelings of appreciation increased the odds of flourishing as well (and this is one of our components of *interpersonal mattering*).

Niemiec (2018, pp. 20) relates character strengths to *interpersonal mattering*, *societal mattering* and *organizational mattering* by proposing that the implementation of character strengths in the workplace “is being and doing.” He defines the being of character strengths as how our strengths give us a view of our identity, and “helps us to be ourselves” (Niemiec, 2018, pp. 20). In this being of character strengths, he is reinforcing *interpersonal mattering* and *societal mattering* in that our employees want to feel unique, and special, and they want to be recognized, valued and depended upon for who they uniquely are as people at work and in the world. Niemiec defines the doing of character strengths as how we express our strengths in the workplace – how we put our strengths into action. This aligns with *organizational mattering*, as employees want to be recognized for their unique contributions and resulting performance in the workplace. Unfortunately, a Gallup study shows that only twenty percent of employees think their supervisors know their strengths, and only thirty-three percent say they have an opportunity to use their strengths every day (Niemiec, 2018). Any leader has the opportunity to change these

percentages and benefit from the value of strengths-based coaching, and the resulting feelings of *work namaste*.

Using character strengths in an optimal way has shown to lead to a variety of positive outcomes (Freidlin, Littman-Ovadia, & Niemiec, 2017; Niemiec, 2018). These strengths create a pathway to well-being as defined by PERMA discussed earlier (Seligman, 2011). The study I mentioned above by Hone et al. (2015) found that using your strengths can make you eighteen times more likely to flourish, and another study connected signature strength use with work engagement, productivity, work satisfaction and finding meaning in one's work (Niemiec, 2018, p. 23).

To avoid the negative results from a deficit-based focus of employee development, and to gain the benefits of a strength-based focus listed above, leaders can have their employees take the VIA Character Strengths Profile, and they can use Niemiec's (2018) Aware-Explore-Apply Model in coaching sessions to assist employees to achieve their personal and professional goals as well as increase their well-being and *work namaste*. The strengths assessment, the model, along with traditional coaching skills, gives leaders a trifecta of tools to grow their employees, increase their perceptions of all types of mattering, expand their perceived impact, and increase their performance results. This focus taps into an employee's need to matter: to be noticed, cared for, invested in, and noticed for their true selves (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Rosenberg, 1985; Flett, 2018).

Another important aspect of this focus on character strength is that it not only helps people feel seen for their true selves (impact on *interpersonal mattering*), but it can also help them develop more character or actually be a better version of themselves at work (impact on *organizational mattering*). Grusec and Redler (1980) performed an experiment with a group of

children where either their behavior was praised, or their character was praised. The children that received the character praise (versus the ones that received behavior praise) were more likely to utilize that character strength in the two weeks following the intervention. Bryan, Adams, and Monin (2013) performed a somewhat similar experiment with adults which also showed that appealing to a person’s character instead of their behavior had a positive impact. In their study, they were able to significantly decrease cheating by asking adults to “please don’t be a cheater,” instead of “please don’t cheat” (Bryan et al., 2013, pp. 1001). As we discussed above, coaching in a business context is primarily about behavior or activity (especially in sales). The question leaders normally ask is how can their employee do more (efficiency), and how can they do it while producing more and better results (effectiveness). A better strategy could be to tap into an employee’s character strengths that lead to the desired result. My diagram in Figure 5 below outlines how character strengths can fit into the modified ATC model.

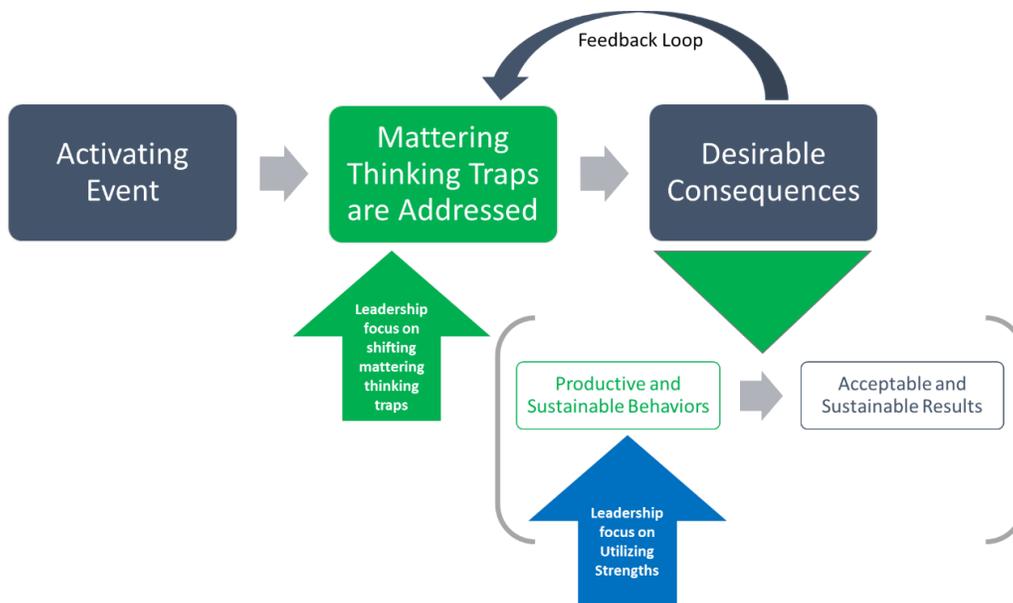


Figure 5: High Production Cycle – Fueled by Uncovering Mattering Thinking Traps and Utilizing Strengths (application of fig. 3)

How could this strengths-based coaching focus increase mattering? As defined above under our *work namaste* definition, an employee wants to feel noticed, appreciated, and special and they want to know that their leader is invested in their success (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). They also need to feel impactful, and to get recognition (Yaden et al., in prep). Having a coaching relationship with your employee revolving around their character strengths will personalize the conversation as each employee will utilize a unique combination and degree of the 24 VIA character strengths in an unlimited number of contextual situations (Niemic, 2018). The employee will feel respected for their individuality, and the time that is invested in these conversations will show that the leader is dedicated to their success. It has also been shown that when we utilize our strengths on the job, we can increase work performance (van Woerkom & Meyers, 2014), and therefore, our impact.

Can you have a strengths-based approach without training or a focus on mattering, and get the same impact? I believe that having awareness and knowledge about mattering helps leaders to understand the importance of a strength-based approach better, and this allows them to tailor their approach to the component of mattering that they have uncovered as lacking in their employee. Knowing where the employee feels a lack of mattering, and also knowing the employee's strengths, allows a leader to create mattering through the strength-based approach while also addressing "anti-mattering" (Flett, 2018, pp. 97) with their strengths as well. I believe a focus on mattering will moderate the results a leader gets from a strength-based approach (enhance the possible impact).

Love. I cannot complete this section on strengths without covering the concept of love. I believe that in order to implement and sustain a strengths-based leadership approach and to create a sense of mattering, a leader needs to love their people. I do not mean a type of romantic

love here. Barbara Fredrickson (2013a, pp. 17) describes the emotion of love as a “connection” and as “positivity resonance.” I believe that a person makes another person feel they matter when they feel noticed, valued, and special for who they are, and not for who they are not. A leader can show love by seeking to notice their employee’s value and impact, by helping them find, explore and utilize their strengths so that they can increase their mattering, and by being available enough to be certain that employees know that they matter.

Here is an example from my local association soccer coaching days. My daughters attend a small school district, and so the travel teams normally only have the opportunity to have one team, and everyone makes the team. There are a variety of skill and ability levels on that team, so it makes it difficult to compete against some of the larger school districts who have more athletes to choose from. However, my goal as a coach matched my personal mission which if you remember from the introduction to this paper is to *zestfully love people to help them develop to their potential*. I encouraged each player and recognized their efforts. I made each team member feel valuable. And, I helped them to find their strength, and use that on the soccer field. I loved the players for what they could do, and not for what they could not yet accomplish. And, I put them in a position where they could feel more successful. I think that people can feel whether you love them, or whether you are faking it. I loved these players, and they responded with passion, energy, and effort. The team succeeded beyond other teams in our association’s history. The same kind of love can apply in our corporate environments.

In the book *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*, there is a small section on the topic of love and caring (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013). The authors propose that conscious cultures go beyond being a great place to work to also creating a deep sense of meaning and a variety of resulting performance factors. They outline seven characteristics of a

conscious culture, and include in that list the combined characteristic of love and caring (along with trust, accountability, transparency, integrity, loyalty, and egalitarianism). They say that conscious cultures are “marked by genuine, heartfelt love” (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013, pp. 219). They believe that in order to create more love, we need to create a culture where it is acceptable to express love and care. I think discussions about mattering and MTT’s, as well as strengths-based coaching are both excellent and appropriate ways a leader can express their care and love in the workplace.

I would like to see future research on the linkage between love and mattering in the workplace, as well as love and strength-based leadership. I believe there is a relationship here that gets to the root of how a leader can sustain a culture where people feel they matter. I was excited to see a small section on love in Marcus’s (1991) article in the literature on *interpersonal mattering*. Marcus (1991) indicates that mattering and love are both focused on what you have to give, and the resources that both parties bring to the equation. The question might be whether a leader can sustain their love and attention towards the people that report to them as fellow human beings, and whether they are performing or not performing, love them through the experience to create the best opportunity for them to succeed.

VIII - Other Considerations

In order to be most effective, coaching activities, and positive interventions (PI’s) need to be designed to have a lasting impact, and they need to be customized to the participant. Positive change is created that leads to positive events, positive emotions, and ideally, an increase in well-being. The challenge is that humans adapt to the impact of the PI, and then, that particular PI is not as effective anymore. A person will get used to the activity or expect a certain result, and both of these cause the boost in well-being to decrease or cease to exist over time (Bao &

Lyubomirsky, 2014). This adaptation can be avoided by implementing a wide variety and a larger number of activities that provide an ongoing stream of attention to the employee including relationship-building activities, incorporating activities that are aligned with intrinsic and self-determined goals, and including activities that focus on appreciation and gratitude (Bao & Lyubomirsky, 2014). This needs to be done while also managing expectations and setting realistic aspiration levels for the results.

It is also important to point out again that just because a leader has a goal of creating *work namaste* on their team, and we are discussing this topic in the context of positive psychology, it does not mean that the leader is always positive. In our examples and ideas above to create *work namaste*, the leader is coaching in a way that is authentic to their emotions, the performance situation, and transparent to the employee. Kashdan and Biswas-Diener (2014), authors of *The Upside of Your Dark Side*, provide a variety of examples in their book where it is beneficial for a person (or leader) to tap-into their negative emotions (such as anger, sadness or anxiety) when the situation warrants it. They describe a research study where leaders took on either a fake cheerleader persona or a commiserating, yet supportive persona when employees were faced with tedious, yet important tasks. Employees performed better in the second example when the leader was not bringing a fake positivity to the situation but was being authentic and encouraging to the reality of the work. Employees will feel when a leader is genuine and authentic, and reward that with trust, honesty, and performance.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI). And, finally, in order to combat the deficit-based change management strategies of corporate life, leaders should consider an *Appreciative Inquiry*-focused change management philosophy and practice (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). *Appreciative Inquiry* is the recognition of the good in a system by the questions that are asked in

order to prioritize and plan change (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). AI approaches progress and improvement in an organization by asking questions from a positive strengths-based standpoint versus a focus on problem-solving and uncovering issues. What does AI have to do with mattering? According to Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010), AI works because it allows people to be known for more than just their title or role, but also in how they relate to others, and for their unique selves (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). It also creates an environment where employees feel heard, focuses on the dreams of our employees, allows employees to choose how they want to contribute, provides support for action, and rewards and recognizes positivity (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). This sounds a great deal like AI creates *interpersonal mattering* (attention, interest, individuation) and supports *organizational mattering* (action leads to achievement). I would recommend research on the linkages between organizations that deploy AI and levels of mattering in those organizations.

IX - Conclusion

In the United States, only twelve percent of employees feel their employer listens to and cares about them (Maritz Research, 2011). Does this leave eighty-eight percent of our employees to feel like they do not matter? This is a staggering potential reality. Mattering is a critical component to an employee's success in the workplace (Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Prilleltensky, 2016; Jung, 2014; Flett, 2018; Yaden et al., in prep). A deficit-based leadership strategy can break-down the ability for an employee to feel that they matter by creating a culture of fear, exhaustion, and cynicism (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Chapman & Sisodia, 2015). A coaching focus on mattering thinking traps and character strengths can lead an employee to think and say: I feel seen and noticed, I feel cared about and valued, I feel

depended and relied upon, I feel my leader is proud of my success and/or emotionally invested in what happens to me, I feel my leader would miss me if I were not here, I feel my leader is interested in what I have to say or what I do, I feel my efforts are appreciated, and I feel noticed for my true self and my uniqueness. And, they will also know they are impactful (at work, and possibly in society), and feel recognized. They will consider their environment a place to work where they matter. Through a culture of mattering, leaders can grow an employee's capability to flourish thus increasing work effectiveness and performance. The opportunities to experiment and the tactics to create a culture of *work namaste* are endless, and positive psychology practitioners can use *work namaste* as a playground for creating human flourishing and work performance.

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Appendix A – Definitions of Mattering Timeline

Year	Authors	Type of Mattering	Definition Components
1981	Rosenberg and McCullough	Interpersonal	<u>3 components:</u> Attention Importance Dependence
1985	Rosenberg	Interpersonal and Societal	<u>Plus 2 components:</u> Ego Extension Feeling Missed Defined Interpersonal vs. Societal Mattering
1987	Rosenberg and Marcus	Interpersonal	<u>Plus 1 component:</u> Interest Renamed Societal Mattering as Global Mattering or General Mattering
1989	Schlossberg	Interpersonal	<u>Plus 1 component:</u> Appreciation
2004	Elliott, Kao, and Grant	Interpersonal	<u>New Categories and Terminology:</u> Awareness: Awareness Relationship: Importance and Reliance
2014	Prilleltensky	Societal	<u>New Categories and Terminology; Plus 1 component:</u> Recognition Impact (new component of impact of actions)
2017	Jung and Heppner	Interpersonal and Societal	<u>New Definition: Mattering at Work</u> Interpersonal Societal
2018	Flett	Interpersonal	<u>Plus 1 component:</u> Individuation
2018	Flett	Anti-Mattering	<u>New Definition: Anti-Mattering</u>
Unpublished	Yaden, Reece, Kellerman, Seligman, and Baumeister	Organizational	<u>New Definition: Organizational Mattering:</u> Recognition Achievement

Appendix B - Components of Various Forms of Mattering

Interpersonal Mattering:

Name of Component	Employee Thought	Based upon Research By
Attention (Awareness)	<i>I feel seen and noticed.</i>	Rosenberg and McCullough, 1981; Elliot, Kao, and Grant, 2004
Importance	<i>I feel cared about and valued.</i>	Rosenberg and McCullough, 1981
Dependence (Reliance)	<i>I feel depended and relied upon.</i>	Rosenberg and McCullough, 1981; Elliot, Kao, and Grant, 2004
Ego-extension	<i>I feel people are proud of my success and/or emotionally invested in what happens to me.</i>	Rosenberg, 1985
Being missed	<i>I feel people would miss me if I were not here.</i>	Rosenberg, 1985
Interest	<i>I feel people are interested in what I have to say or what I do.</i>	Rosenberg and Marcus, 1987
Appreciation	<i>I feel my efforts are appreciated.</i>	Schlossberg, 1989
Individuation	<i>I feel noticed for my true self and my uniqueness</i>	Flett, 2018

Societal Mattering:

Name of Component	Employee Thought	Based upon Research By
General	<i>I feel I matter to the world, society, or to my organization</i>	Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenberg and Marcus, 1987
Importance	<i>I feel I am important to the world, society, or to my organization.</i>	Rayle, 2006; Tovar, Simon, and Lee, 2009

Anti- Mattering:

Name of Component	Employee Thought	Based upon Research By
General	<i>I do not feel I matter.</i>	Flett, 2018

Organizational Mattering:

Name of Component	Employee Thought	Based upon Research By
Recognition	<i>I feel my work is recognized by others at work.</i>	Yaden, Reece, Kellerman, Seligman, and Baumeister, in prep
Achievement	<i>I feel my work has a positive impact on my organization.</i>	Yaden, Reece, Kellerman, Seligman, and Baumeister, in prep

Appendix C - Mattering Survey Timeline

<p>1987</p>	<p>General Mattering Scale (Rosenberg & Marcus, 1987) Mattering questions were created for each of 6 areas of the mattering definition: attention, interest, being missed, importance, ego-extension, and dependence. The General Mattering Scale removed ego-extension as it was thought that to have others invested in one’s success would only apply to people who were famous. Most GMS scoring has been done by summing across the five items. However, some researchers have divided the sum by the number of items to come to an overall average. R = Respondent, Asked from the perspective of mother, father, sibling, spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend, a close friend, a close relative</p> <p>Existential Interpersonal Mattering Questions: Interest in R as a person Amount of thought given to R Interest in what R says Interest in what R thinks and feels Pride in R’s achievement Perceived Importance of R Notice when R is away Missing R when R is away</p> <p>Dependent Interpersonal Mattering Questions: Needing R for advice Needing R to talk to Needing R for help Needing R not to be lonely Needing R for moral & emotional support</p> <p>General Mattering Scale (GMS): (1) “How important do you feel you are to other people?” (2) “How much do you feel other people pay attention to you?” (3) “How much do you feel others would miss you if you went away?” (4) “How interested are people generally in what you have to say?” (5) “How much do other people depend on you?”</p>
<p>2001</p>	<p>The Mattering to Others Questionnaire (MTOQ) (Marshall, 2001) Eleven question survey evaluating interpersonal mattering of adolescents to their mother, father, and friends. Each person has ideas or feelings about how other people see them. I am interested in how you think people think about you. Choose the rating you feel is best for you and circle the number provided (5 point Likert Scale: 5 – a lot – strongest degree of mattering, 3 – somewhat, 1 – not much – least degree of mattering)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel special to my_____. 2. I am needed by my_____. 3. I am missed by my_____when I am away. 4. When I talk, my_____tries to understand what I am saying. 5. I am interesting to my_____. 6. My_____notices my feelings. 7. My_____gives me credit when I do well.

	<p>8. My _____ notices when I need help.</p> <p>9. I matter to my _____.</p> <p>10. People have many things to think about. If your _____ made a list of all the things s/he thinks about where do you think you'd be on the list? 5 (top) 4 3 2 1 (bottom)</p> <p>11. If your _____ made a list of all the things s/he cares about, where do you think you'd be on the list? 5 (top) 4 3 2 1 (bottom)</p>
<p>2004</p>	<p>Interpersonal Mattering Index (Elliot et al., 2004) Twenty-four item interpersonal mattering index based upon three factors: awareness, importance, and reliance. Scoring has been done by summing across the three factors (*reverse scoring the negatively worded questions).</p> <p>Interpersonal Mattering Index Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree – 5 point Likert scale 5 – Strongest degree of Mattering 1 – Least degree of Mattering</p> <p><u>Awareness</u> Most people do not seem to notice when I come or when I go.* In a social gathering, no one recognizes me.* Sometimes when I am with others, I feel almost as if I were invisible.* People are usually aware of my presence. For whatever reason, it is hard for me to get other people's attention.* Whatever else may happen, people do not ignore me. For better or worse, people generally know when I am around. People tend not to remember my name.*</p> <p><u>Importance</u> People do not care what happens to me.* There are people in my life who react to what happens to me in the same way they would if it had happened to them. – Ego Extension My successes are a source of pride to people in my life. – Ego Extension I have noticed that people will sometimes inconvenience themselves to help me. When I have a problem, people usually don't want to hear about it.* Much of the time, other people are indifferent to my needs.* There are people in my life who care enough about me to criticize me when I need it. There is no one who really takes pride in my accomplishments.* – Ego Extension No one would notice if one day I disappeared.* If the truth be known, no one really needs me.*</p> <p><u>Reliance</u> Quite a few people look to me for advice on issues of importance. I am not someone people turn to when they need something.* People tend to rely on me for support. When people need help, they come to me. People count on me to be there in times of need. Often people trust me with things that are important to them.</p>
<p>2006</p>	<p>School Counselor Mattering Scale (SCMS) (Rayle, 2006) Measuring Importance Factor of Mattering only Scale: 4 pt. Likert Scale - 1 – not at all - 4 – very much</p>

	<p>How important do you feel you are to the following persons in your school workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Administrators • Parents • Teachers <p>How important do you believe you are to your school’s overall environment? How important do you believe you are to the professional school counseling profession?</p>
<p>2009</p>	<p>College Mattering Inventory (CMI) (Tovar, Simon, & Lee, 2009) Validated a construct definition of interpersonal mattering among college students that incorporated the following factors: general college interpersonal mattering, interpersonal mattering vs. marginality, interpersonal mattering to counselors, interpersonal mattering to instructors, interpersonal mattering to students, and perception of value. The instrument has 29 questions.</p> <p><u>General College Mattering</u> There are people on campus who are sad for me when I fail in something I set out to do. Some people on campus are disappointed in me when I do not accomplish all I should. People on campus are generally supportive of my individual needs. People on campus seem happy about my accomplishments. I sometimes feel pressured to do better because people at the college would be disappointed if I did not. There are people at the college who are concerned about my future. There are people at the college who are genuinely interested in me as a person. Other students are happy for me when I do well in exams or projects.</p> <p><u>Mattering vs. Marginality</u> Sometimes I feel alone at the college. Sometimes I feel that no one at the college notices me. I often feel socially inadequate at school. Sometimes I get so wrapped up in my personal problems that I isolate myself from others at the college. I often feel isolated when involved in student activities (e.g., clubs, events). I often feel that I do not belong at this college.</p> <p><u>Mattering to Counselors</u> If I stopped attending college, my counselor(s) would be disappointed. Counselors at the college generally show their concern for students’ well-being. My counselor is generally receptive to what I have to say. I believe that my counselor(s) would miss me if I suddenly stopped attending college. If I had a personal problem, I believe that counselors would be willing to discuss it with me.</p> <p><u>Mattering to Instructors</u> Sometimes my instructors simply do not listen to what I have to say. My instructors sometimes ignore my comments or questions. I receive thoughtful and timely comments on my work from my instructors.</p>

	<p>I often feel my instructor(s) care more about other things than me as a student. I sometimes feel my instructor(s) want me to hurry up and finish speaking. Instructors appear genuinely happy when I do well in class. If I had a personal problem, I believe that instructors would be willing to discuss it with me.</p> <p><u>Mattering to Students</u> Some students are dependent on my guidance or assistance to help them succeed. When in groups, other students tend to rely on my contributions. Other students rely on me for support. Students in my classes show interest in me because I make good contributions.</p> <p><u>Perception of Value</u> It is comforting to know that my contributions are valued by my instructors. There are people at the college that sincerely appreciate my involvement as a student. Knowing that other people at the college care for me motivates me to do better.</p>
<p>2017</p>	<p>Work Mattering Scale (WMS) (Jung & Heppner, 2017): Participants were asked to respond to each item with options that range from 1 (disagree very much) to 6 (agree very much)</p> <p><u>Societal Mattering</u> I think that society values the work I do. (importance) I feel my work meets a societal need. (importance) I am connected to society through my work. (general) People say that my work influenced their life. (achievement) My work influences people’s lives. (achievement)</p> <p><u>Interpersonal Mattering</u> My coworkers/colleagues would be disappointed if they knew that I may leave my job. (being missed) I feel like I matter to my colleagues/coworkers. (general) My coworkers/colleagues value my ideas and suggestions. (importance) My boss/supervisor would be disappointed if they knew that I may leave my job. (being missed) My coworkers/colleagues appreciate my support and help. (appreciation)</p>
<p>2018</p>	<p>Anti-Mattering Scale (AMS) (Flett, 2018): Constructed a six-question survey to measure the lack of <i>interpersonal mattering</i>. Utilized a four-point Likert scale (not at all – 1, a little – 2, somewhat – 3, a lot – 4) How much do you feel like you don’t matter? How often have you been treated in a way that makes you feel like you are insignificant? To what extent have you been made to feel like you are invisible? How much do you feel like you will never matter to certain people? How often have you been made to feel by someone that they don’t care about what you think or what you have to say?</p>
<p>2018</p>	<p>Organizational Mattering Scale (OMS) (Yaden, Reece, Kellerman, Seligman, & Baumeister, in prep): Constructed and validated a seven-question survey to measure the achievement and recognition factors of organizational mattering. Utilized a rating of strongly agree to strongly disagree – 5 point Likert scale.</p>

	<p>Achievement My work contributes to my organization's success. The quality of my work makes a real impact on my organization. My work influences my organization's functioning.</p> <p>Recognition My organization praises my work publicly. My co-workers praise my work. I am well known for the quality of my work in my organization. My work has made me popular at my workplace.</p>
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Appendix D – Comparison of Gallup Q¹² Questions to Mattering Components

Gallup Q¹² Questions	Interpersonal Mattering Alignment (attention, importance, dependence, ego-extension, being missed, and interest.)	Organizational Mattering Alignment Recognition Achievement
Do you know what is expected of you at work?		
Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work right?		
At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?		
In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	Attention	Recognition
Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	Attention	
Is there someone at work who encourages your development?	Ego-Extension	
At work, do your opinions seem to count?	Importance	
Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	Importance	
Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?		
Do you have a best friend at work?	Being Missed	
In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	Attention	
In the last year, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?	Ego-Extension	Achievement

Appendix E - Recommended Positive Psychology Book List

1. Achor (2010). *The happiness advantage: The seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance at work.*
2. Csikszentmihalyi (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience.*
3. Diener & Biswas-Diener (2008). *Happiness: Unlocking the mysteries of psychological wealth.*
4. Duckworth (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance.*
5. Dutton (2003). *Energize your workplace: How to create and sustain high-quality connections at work.*
6. Dweck (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success.*
7. Esfahani Smith (2017). *The power of meaning: Crafting a life that matters.*
8. Fredrickson (2009). *Positivity: Groundbreaking research reveals how to embrace the hidden strength of positive emotions, overcome negativity, and thrive.*
9. Haidt (2006). *The happiness hypothesis: Finding modern truth in ancient wisdom.*
10. Lyubomirsky (2007). *The how of happiness: A new approach to getting the life you want.*
11. Peterson (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*
12. Peterson & Seligman (2004). *Character Strengths and Virtues.*
13. Prilleltensky (2016). *The laughing guide to well-being: Using humor and science to become happier and healthier.*
14. Reivich & Shatte (2002). *The resilience factor: 7 keys to finding your inner strength and overcoming life's hurdles.*
15. Schwartz (2004). *The paradox of choice: Why more is less.*
16. Schwartz (2015). *Why we work.*

17. Schwartz & Sharpe (2010). *Practical wisdom: The right way to do the right thing.*
18. Seligman (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment.*
19. Seligman (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being.*
20. Seligman (2018). *The hope circuit: A psychologist's journey from helplessness to optimism.*

Appendix F – Sample Mattering Thinking Trap Conversations

<p>EMPLOYEE LYRICS <i>(what a leader might hear)</i></p>	<p>THINKING TRAP <i>(what an employee might be thinking)</i></p>	<p>MATTERING THINKING TRAP <i>(what might be the trap behind the trap)</i></p>	<p>LEADER LYRICS/QUESTION <i>(what might show the employee that the employee matters, and shift the employee’s thoughts and/or get the employee into positive, productive action)</i></p>
<p><i>“Management doesn’t want us to make money.”</i></p>	<p>FIGHT OR FLIGHT: They see something as a threat, not a challenge (or ultimately an opportunity).</p>	<p>They don’t care about us. They aren’t invested in our success.</p>	<p><i>“I want you to achieve your income goals. Your goals are important to me. How can we co-create a plan around this?”</i></p>
<p><i>“You don’t understand. I just have too much paperwork.”</i></p>	<p>HELPLESS: They see something as a constraint, not a resource.</p>	<p>They don’t notice me/my situation.</p>	<p><i>“I can see that paperwork is an obstacle for you, and I want to be sure I know how the paperwork process works. How can I learn more so that we can create a solution together?”</i></p>
<p><i>“There just isn’t a way to make this budget.”</i></p>	<p>STUCK: They are ruminating, not problem-solving.</p>	<p>They don’t appreciate how hard this job is.</p>	<p><i>“I appreciate how hard you work to make your budget every year. This year is a tough year. What haven’t we thought of or what haven’t we tried?”</i></p>

<p><i>“This new product isn’t going to sell.”</i></p>	<p>JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS: They are making assumptions without (much) evidence.</p>	<p>Last time I sold a bunch of new product, and I didn’t get any recognition. Why should I even try?</p>	<p>“It’s so important to our company to sell these new products, and I really appreciate how you were a sales leader last time we rolled out a new product. This time around, I promise to share with senior leaders the list of top sellers, and I want your name on that list. What ideas do you have to help our entire team sell more?”</p>
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