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Using mindfulness and contemplative arts to facilitate team creativity and collaboration

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In keeping with the Summit's themes of positive psychology, mindfulness, and Buddhist and humanistic psychology, this presentation explores how mindfulness-based contemplative arts approaches may be utilized to facilitate team creativity and collaboration. The aspiration of this research is to support organizational innovation, foster mindful business practices, and promote positive social change and human flourishing. Based in the Buddhist traditions of meditation and mindfulness, contemplative arts can be understood as a type of mindful creativity practice. In connection with this research, the contemplative arts create a bridge between meditation, mindfulness, and creativity that may be employed in organizational contexts to facilitate team collaboration and innovation. The presenter's dissertation research explored the research questions: what are the perceived effects of a contemplative arts process with respect to creativity and collaboration within a small organization? What are the perceived effects on team creativity and collaboration of working with a creativity coach/consultant? In this qualitative, participatory action research study, the participant co-researchers included six members of a coaching firm based in Austin, Texas. The research process consisted of an initial consultation, four 90-minute contemplative arts working sessions, and a final debriefing session, along with written pre- and post-workshop surveys. Co-researchers' interview and focus group data, written survey responses, and the primary researcher's observations are currently being analyzed to determine the effects of the workshop process on individual and team creativity and collaboration. Results of a preliminary pilot study indicated that the contemplative arts process produced insights into both personal and team creativity and collaboration, including: relaxation and trust; a deeper sense of connection and appreciation among the team members; the integration of different modes of thinking and being.

Biography

Melinda J Rothouse is a Leadership and Creativity Coach, Consultant, Educator, Public Speaker, and Facilitator based in Austin, Texas. She is currently completing her PhD in Psychology/Creativity Studies, her research focuses on using mindfulness and contemplative art techniques to facilitate organizational creativity, collaboration, and innovation. As the Founder of Austin Writing Coach and Co-Founder of Syncreate, she helps individuals and organizations tap into their innate creativity for greater innovation, collaboration, and resilience. She is also a Musician and Photographer, and leads workshops and retreats on meditation, mindfulness, creativity, and contemplative arts. She is a certified Meditation Instructor and Teacher of contemplative arts and photography with Shambhala International.

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