



Mindfulness-Based Strategic Awareness Training - MBSAT:

**Mindfulness Training for Today's World of VUCA
(Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity)**

White Paper

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Content

1. The MBSAT protocol: A fresh approach to mindfulness in today’s workplace.....	1
2. Design and format of the MBSAT protocol.....	2
3. Strategic Awareness as pivotal orientation.....	2
4. The decision-making focus of MBSAT.....	4
5. The Positive-constructive orientation of MBSAT.....	5
6. Non-clinical target population.....	5
7. A meta goal for participants.....	7
8. The organizational and societal dimension of MBSAT.....	9
9. The ethical stance in MBSAT.....	11
10. Choice of topics	12
11. Signature interventions of MBSAT	13
12. Compatibility with the workplace	14
13. Conclusions and Outlook	16
Graph 1: The bell curve of mental states.....	6
Graph 2: Pathways to attain Strategic Awareness	8
Graph 3: The MBSAT Transformation Program.....	10

1. The MBSAT protocol:

A fresh approach to mindfulness training for the workplace

Our world today has become a shifting ground for most people. Economy and society are characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, often called the world of VUCA. Working in any organization or sector today means facing unexpected change, even the possibility to lose the means to earn one's living due to disruption in the markets. This is a daunting challenge for everyone, including people who are not active in the workplace but depend on its smooth running (families, people in government, education, health, etc.). This has given rise to the need for a new kind of mindfulness training that responds to these challenges.

There is a series of well-known mindfulness training protocols such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Mindfulness-Based Self-Compassion (MBSC) and several others, that have been around for many years and are successful in what they set out to achieve. They tend to focus on target populations with specific needs: MBSR is focusing on relieving stress symptoms resulting from physical pain or psychological pressure, MBCT is concentrating on the prevention of relapse into depression, MBSC seeks to liberate from excessive striving and harshness towards oneself, and so forth.

The author of MBSAT, a scholar-practitioner with a long, successful career in management and business¹, realized that there is want for a mindfulness training protocol for people in the workplace that does not start from a perceived deficit or issue to be solved but simply trains for mindfulness in the current challenging context of working and living. He designed a protocol based on his vast professional experience and academic training that is freely available and

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JHY has been teaching management, strategy, finance and Positive Psychology at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, and is Academic Director of two programs at IE University, Madrid: the Executive Master in Positive Leadership and Strategy EXMPLS, where he teaches the classes of Strategy, Risk and Finance and Mindfulness, and the MBSA (Mindfulness-Based Strategic Awareness) Teacher Training Program. Both programs attract highly qualified participants from many parts of the world, including Asia.

documented in detail² without any direct connection to a firm, organization or other type of institution. From this perspective MBSAT is a fresh, flexible approach to mindfulness training in the workplace that has its own characteristics and expands the options available currently offered by entities such as the *Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute* and *Potential Project*. It is equally appropriate for anyone seeking for ways of personal growth in this world of VUCA.

2. Design and format of the MBSAT protocol

The MBSAT protocol shares with other programs basic mindfulness techniques to stabilize the mind and uses a few of the mainstay mindfulness interventions such as body scan and sitting meditation. The calming and focusing of mental activity lay the necessary groundwork to get to the essence of MBSAT: the development of the capacity of strategic awareness and its application in the workplace and in daily life in general.

The MBSAT protocol follows the format of 8 weekly sessions also used in MBSR and MBCT. There is a simple, practical reason for this format, namely the objective to allow for sufficient time to practice between sessions so as to make transformative learnings more sustainable.

These similarities sometimes raise the question, what is specific about the MBSAT protocol that makes it apt for the workplace. The following paragraphs present the special features that give it its distinct character and are key in the context of our rapidly changing postmodern world where people face uncertainty and multiple complex challenges.

3. Strategic Awareness as pivotal orientation

A key feature of MBSAT is evident in the denomination of the program: Strategic Awareness is the meta goal and the main thread that weaves through the whole program.

In a world of VUCA, Strategic Awareness is the skill that enables you to discern emerging options and avoid dangers lurking in an opaque and entangled environment. It helps you to decide on your next move and make wise decisions that support sustainable wellbeing. People in the workplace spontaneously grasp the paramount importance and usefulness of strategic awareness as the continuous morphing and restructuring make them keenly aware of the need to look ahead. In the workplace, strategy also has the appeal to be the realm of the elite in an

² Mindfulness–Based Strategic Awareness Training, A complete Program for Leaders and Individuals, Wiley Blackwell 2017

organization, the privilege of leaders. Yet as a matter of fact we all are the leaders of our own lives and our vocation and innate wish is to make the best of it.

In order to achieve this Strategic Awareness must comprehend strategic *self*-awareness as well, that is the ability to align choices with personal aspirations and values. Ultimately it is an optimal alignment of external conditions and personal goals that ensures lasting wellbeing.

Strategic Awareness is key for decision making and in turn skillful decision making is key for a happy, fulfilling life. Impulsive, shortsighted decisions are a major source of frustration and persistent unhappiness in life. By focusing on Strategic Awareness, the MBSAT protocol puts skillful decision making at the core of its training.

This orientation involves a crucial shift in the approach to mindfulness. Usually mindfulness is defined as “paying attention in the present moment...*non-judgmentally*”. In MBSAT, mindfulness is defined as “paying attention... *with strategic awareness*” (MBSAT book p. 36). This stance may include moments of suspending judgment in order not to react hastily, but crucially it also involves a discerning quality.

Both definitions are grounded in the ancient mindfulness tradition but emphasize different dimensions. Being non-judgmental may be the most helpful stance for participants in MBSR, MBCT or similar programs, typically people suffering from chronic pain, stress disorders, depression or other ailments who get caught in negative spirals of physical and/or emotional hurt.

MBSAT’s target population in the workplace is not – or at least not primarily - starting from a deficit orientation and its priority is not seeking relief. The emphasis is on personal growth, meaning and fulfillment in life. Obviously, participants in other mindfulness training programs may have similar aspirations besides their main objective of stress management or avoiding relapse into depression etc. In other words, it is not so much a question of either-or but of positioning on a scale.

From a growth perspective it is most transformative to gain clarity about the direction to take and that is precisely what Strategic Awareness provides. MBSAT defines Strategic Awareness as capacity to observe with a discerning, evaluative quality that enables wise choices by allowing to see what is contextually skillful in professional and private life – for the benefit of oneself, the people one is responsible for and society in general.

(Please see also below paragraph 5. Non-clinical target population.)

In emphasizing this more cognitive dimension of mindfulness, MBSAT follows a well-established tradition of mindfulness that views the capacity to discriminate between negative and positive,

good and wrong, as an integral part of mindfulness. The Dalai Lama speaks in this connection of “analytical mindfulness.” (MBSAT book p. 37)

4. The decision-making focus of MBSAT

Strategic Awareness is a requirement for good decision-making and therefore important for wellbeing and success, as all sorts of decisions – some frequent and small, others more seldom and existential – shape our path in professional and private life.

The theme of decision-making appears in the MBSAT protocol mainly from three angles:

- a) Self-awareness is cultivated throughout the program and allows to become conscious of biases, conditioning and habitual patterns such as impulsive reactions, likes and dislikes that hinder wise decision-making. Furthermore, self-awareness provides clarity of personal goals and values.
- b) Loosening the patterns of reactivity and creating mindful pauses before responding allows for the emergence of Mindful Real Options that offer alternative courses of action, including the choice not to react at all and undertake nothing, just letting things be as they are.
- c) The ethical dimension of decision-making is addressed through the cultivation of friendliness (please see below paragraph 9). The cultivation of friendliness – including a friendly attitude in difficult relationships and towards strangers – enhances more considerate, socially responsible decision making. A concrete example of radical change in decision-making based on ethics and triggered by a MBSAT course can be found below in paragraph 9, The ethical stance in MBSAT.

Ultimately it is the alignment of all these aspects that allows for skillful decision making and ensures sustainable wellbeing.

The focus on decision-making has two important implications for the characteristic profile of MBSAT. Firstly, it confirms the developmental character of the protocol as a decision maker is someone in charge of shaping his or her future; skillful decision-making provides agency. Secondly, it demonstrates an action-orientation as decisions are usually followed by taking action. In other words, MBSAT is not a program that conduces to passivity – a fear sometimes expressed by potential participants who are not familiar with mindfulness and associate it with passive acceptance.

5. The positive-constructive orientation of MBSAT

MBSAT is not a restorative or healing program in orientation. It is more developmental in nature as it aspires to help non-clinical people cope with contemporary challenges and flourish in a disruptive environment. Hence it addresses a wide, varied audience with a large spectrum of aspirations.

The developmental quality of MBSAT is evident in the integration of Positive Psychology as one of its underlying disciplines as well as in the use of specific interventions such as Positive Reframing and the “Three good things” exercise. The most prominent reflection of Positive Psychology is the time dedicated to establishing Mindful, Positive Self-Portraits with participants based on an analysis of their strengths (Sessions 5 and 6) that serve as beacon for their personal growth and transformation.

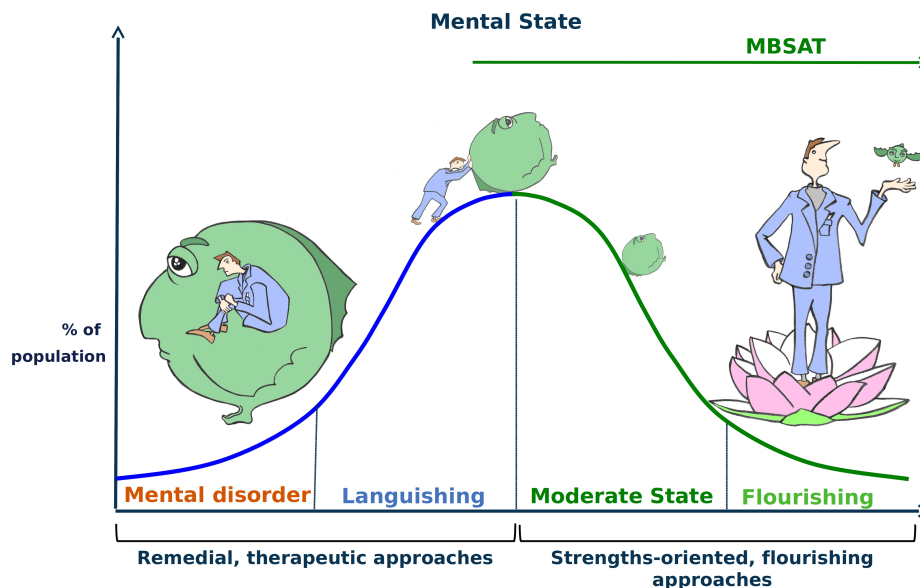
A keen observer will notice that the developmental quality pervades the protocol also in other, subtler ways. For example, the approach to difficulty by moving into it instead of a “fight or flight” reaction is in fact a constructive strategy of coping by embracing challenges mindfully and skillfully. MBSAT uses for this counterintuitive method the Japanese term “Irimi “(Session 5). A similar approach is used in other mindfulness programs as well, but the type of difficulty differs markedly. In MBSR for example participants train to stay with their physical pain, stress symptoms or uncomfortable experiences. In MBSAT the focus is on typical workplace and everyday problems such as the danger of losing one’s job, coping with an unfair boss, frictions with colleagues, financial worries, divorce, and so on and so forth. The different nature of these difficulties provokes a wide range of personal, sometimes harrowing experiences during exercises and experiential learning in the training program. Accordingly, very well qualified mindfulness teachers are required in order to lead the subsequent inquiries in a constructive and helpful way. What is necessary is a high degree of practical wisdom – not to give advice to participants but to assist them in finding their own mindful ways of responding.

6. Non-clinical target population

The examples of workplace challenges that are the focus of MBSAT as discussed in the preceding paragraph demonstrate that its target population is non-clinical. The following graph attempts to visualize this non-clinical orientation. Obviously, it is an approximation or conceptualization to better explain the positioning of MBSAT without any pretention to provide a precise and comprehensive picture of reality.

The graph starts from the premise that, like most natural phenomena, mental states follow the pattern of a so-called “normal distribution” or Gauss Curve, also called Bell Curve because of its bell-like shape. It means that the majority of people live in an intermediate mental state that is neither pathological nor truly happy, typically ranging from milder forms of languishing (in the graph below the area left of the center) to various degrees of moderate satisfaction (right of the center in the graph below). To the far left is a small percentage of the general population that suffers from mental disorders (depression, psychosis, neurosis, etc.) and to the far right the comparatively few lucky ones who have the good fortune to be truly flourishing (possibly fulfilled artists and other persons realizing a calling, professionals who truly love what they are doing, or mothers enjoying raising their kids, to name just a few possible examples).

The Bell-Curve of Mental States



MBSAT JH Young©

Graph 1

Adapted from F.A. Huppert and T.T.C. So

In principle, the population left of the center benefits mostly from remedial, therapeutic approaches, while the population right of the center is more predestined for strengths-oriented, developmental or transformational approaches.

The bandwidth of population that can potentially benefit from Mindfulness-Based Strategic Awareness Training is indicated by a green arrow in the upper part of the graph. It shows that MBSAT is an appropriate training for the great chunk of non-clinical population that ranges from slightly left of the center (i.e. in a mild state of languishing, yet well within the non-pathological

segment of general population) to the far right of the spectrum, inhabited by a small contingent of flourishing people who seek continued personal growth and are characterized by their love of life-long learning.

This segment corresponds to a broad motivation of participants, typically considerably less homogeneous than participants in MBSR and MBCT mindfulness programs. Amongst other MBSAT often attracts people in high level positions asking themselves questions about sustainable wellbeing, self-efficacy and dilemmas they encounter in professional and personal life. This makes teaching MBSAT a demanding task as a MBSAT teacher must be able to respond to a wide range of needs and create a context of trust and cohesion among people coming from different perspectives.

Experience shows that participants in MBSAT programs are often motivated to enroll, because they face an important decision, ask themselves questions about the direction in their lives or are in a transition from one phase of life into another. Often MBSAT also attracts people characterized by love of learning who are curious to explore new venues to live to their full potential. All these are non-clinical motivations characteristic of regular challenges all of us confront on our paths. The implication is not that everybody enrolling in a program such as MBSR or Self-Compassion is by definition clinical, but the fact is that the participants in such programs start from a perceived deficit or problematic situation and seek remediation.

A certain risk of MBSAT programs is to attract some participants with undiagnosed light psychopathologies (over-judgmental attitudes, narcissistic tendencies, addictive behaviors, etc.) that may have a disruptive impact on group dynamics in the course. It is the task of the teacher to communicate clearly the non-clinical, non-therapeutic nature of MBSAT before the program begins and advise persons with specific psychological needs to choose a different approach, including possibly counseling or outright therapy. Experience shows that people often appreciate such advice if it is offered in a discrete, sensitive and caring way.

7. A meta goal for participants

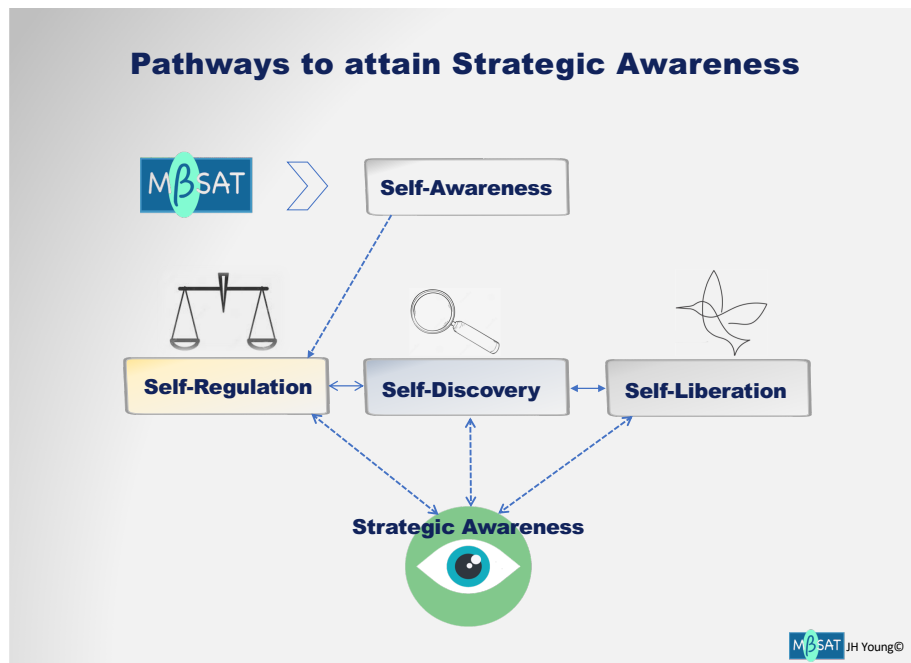
The notion of Strategic Awareness signals a broadly circumscribed aspiration of giving life a strategic direction that allows for sustainable wellbeing. From this perspective MBSAT can be thought of a hierarchy of objectives leading from a concrete, practical goal – skillful decision making based on strategic awareness (an awareness infused with practical wisdom) – to more comprehensive goals such as self-transformation and ultimately fulfillment in life.

The fact is that MBSAT offers participants choices as to how deeply they are willing to involve themselves, how intensively and consistently they want to practice and therefore how far-reaching their overall goal by engaging in MBSAT may be. While this is also true of other mindfulness programs this freedom of choice becomes particularly relevant with regard to self-transformation.

The foundations of mindfulness that are laid mainly in Sessions 1-4 cultivate the capacity to observe one-self, thus fostering self-awareness that leads to more skillful self-regulation. As participants proceed on this path of self-awareness they discover more and more about the patterns of their mind, somatic sensing, feelings and action impulses, in other words they enter a process of increasing self-discovery and as they succeed in loosening and adjusting ingrown habitual patterns they may approach varying degrees of self-liberation. While self-liberation may sound like a very lofty goal, it can be interpreted in very concrete, practical ways and in gradual steps. It can mean for instance freedom from biases, from exaggerated likes and dislikes or from repeating errors of the past. From this perspective self-liberation is practically synonymous with self-transformation.

The different stages of self-regulation, self-discovery and self-liberation are interconnected and each of them closely intertwined with strategic awareness. It is strategic awareness that lets participants catch glimpses of the connections between their patterns and their wellbeing, new opportunities and direction in life.

The graph below attempts to visualize the path via intermediate objectives to the comprehensive overall goal of self-liberation or self-transformation.



Graph 2

8. The organizational and societal dimension of MBSAT

MBSAT starts from the premise that all types of organizations are human systems. From this follows the conclusion that organizations can only profoundly change, if and when human resources evolve. Therefore, by fostering strategic awareness that feeds into wiser decision making and eventually self-transformation of people in the workplace, MBSAT also hopes to generate positive impulses, however small, for a beneficial evolution of the corporate world and of organizations and institutions in our society.

By reaching out to people in leading positions the positive impact of MBSAT on organizational contexts can be further leveraged and reinforced. Businesses, organizations and institutions are seen in MBSAT as the productive engine that drives the development of our society. By focusing on people in the workplace, MBSAT consciously takes on an active role in shaping society in a mindful, positive way.

This organizational/societal dimension is implicit in MBSAT and although perhaps not plainly visible in the foreground it is an integral, distinctive feature.

MBSAT uses the **model** on the following page to highlight the connection between personal growth and organizational/societal transformation.

The **left part**, colored in **bright red**, summarizes the main thrust of Stages I and II of the training program. Stage I corresponds to Session 1-4 and focuses on stabilizing the mind by addressing basic themes (attention training, integration of body and mind, awareness of worrying and self-awareness of personal patterns). Stage II consists of Session 5-8 and strives to achieve practical wisdom by cultivating responsiveness as opposed to reactivity, reflect on personal patterns such as the relation to money, a pervasive force in our society, generating open awareness to discern emerging options and developing a vision of personal best self as a beacon for strategic orientation. These outcomes are interlinked with the generation of friendliness as can be seen in the model. The term friendliness is used as synonym of empathy in MBSAT in order to avoid terms like compassion that sometimes provoke raised eyebrows in a business context. Friendliness has an ethical component similar to social responsibility and is given a high priority in MBSAT.

The **green part of the model** visualizes how the outcomes of Stages I and II of the training can translate into personal transformation by fostering generosity and wisdom and attuning to compassion.

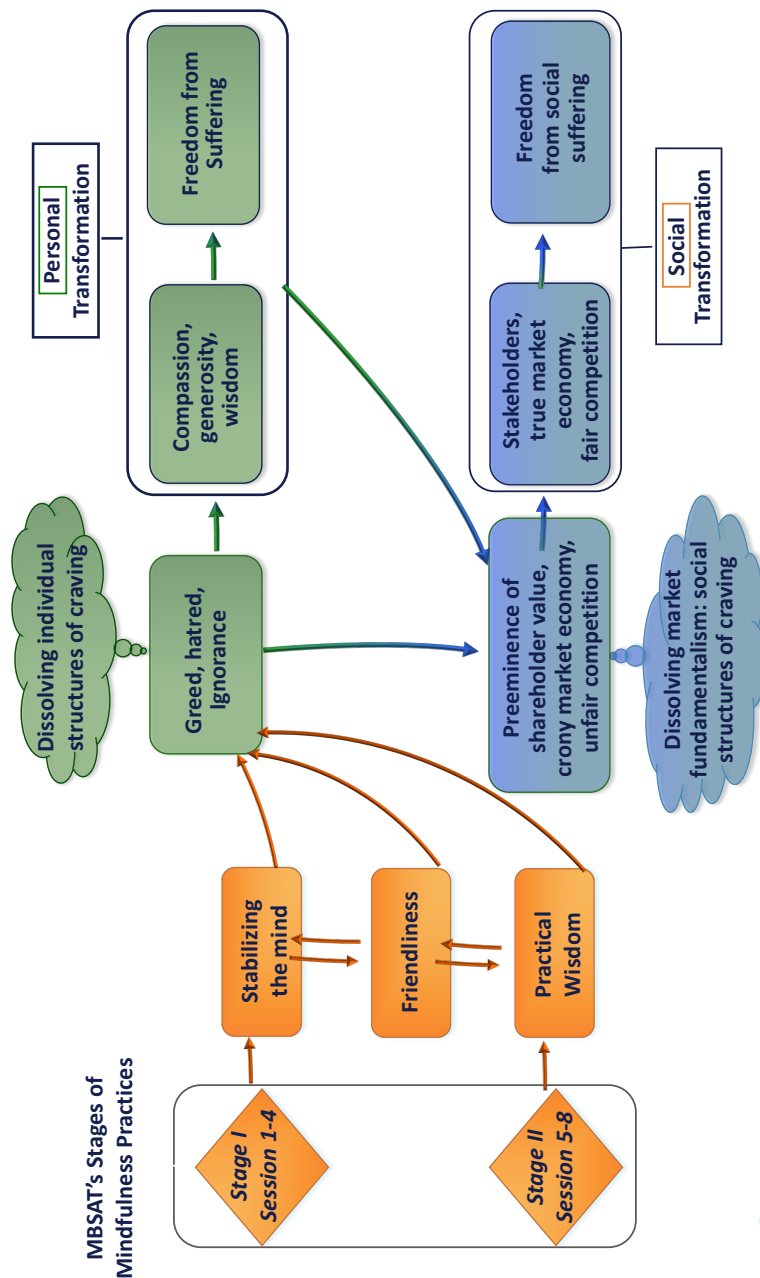
If and when such individual transformations reach a critical mass, what can be expected is a gradual transformation of society, visualized by the **blue part of the model**. It alludes to how overcoming greed, delusion and lack of empathy has the potential to influence basic concepts

such as the preeminence of shareholder value, unfair competition and crony market economy and stimulate the emergence of alternative concepts such as stakeholder value, fair competition and true market economy.

Ideally, this social change process will feed back into greater personal wellbeing of people in the workplace and create the willingness to cultivate mindfulness on a wider, organizational scale.

This vision is admittedly only a rough sketch of possible social changes. Nevertheless, it opens up the vista of a socio-economic future that is less prone to divide society in winners and losers. This leads us to the next aspect: ethics.

The MBSAT Transformation Program A Mindful Integrative View



Graph 3



9. The ethical stance in MBSAT

MBSAT's premise is that people know quite well what is ethical and what is not and that the actual problem is the discrepancy between this knowledge and actual behavior. Especially in the workplace with its money-driven dynamics and the pressure on people to meet hard-to-achieve quantitative objectives the temptation to cut corners and condone causing harm to others is considerable. Many crises such as the recent diesel scandal in the automotive industry, the financial collapse of 2007 due to deceitful mortgage securitization and numerous others may illustrate this on a large scale. MBSAT's Strategic Awareness Training helps leaders and managers with their strategic profit-seeking decision-making to avoid later regretting unwise decisions that lead to repercussions such as reputation loss, law suits, heavy fines, even jail sentences, etc. – the kind of negative consequences affecting not only those responsible but entire organizations and their stakeholders and in effect destroying value - the kind of negative outcomes we often see in the news.

The hope in MBSAT is that cultivating mindfulness will mitigate egocentric attitudes and widen the perception so as to become more susceptible to the needs of the people around us. This is the foundation to act more consistently with ethical criteria on one's own accord.

This approach based on self-motivated ethical behavior is more effective and powerful as might seem in the light of the proliferation of ethical prescriptions. One of the most impacting experiences in the course of teaching MBSAT has been the case of a businessman and investor who approached Juan Humberto Young, his teacher and author of this White Paper, quite unexpectedly during a break in a MBSAT program. With a hug and holding back tears he said: "I just made a major decision. I'm going to withdraw from a very lucrative investment on ethical grounds. I'm in a consortium to build an arms factory. After following the MBSAT course I just haven't the heart anymore to go ahead with an investment that will generate so much destruction and suffering. My business partners are already informed. They are quite dismayed, because the project is in an advanced stage of execution."

The focus in MBSAT is not social ethics per se; however, it considers ethics a critical factor in the workplace and in the organizational/institutional world in general. At the same time, the protocol needs to adjust sufficiently to today's workplace context to be understood and taken seriously. As mentioned above, MBSAT therefore uses the terminology of friendliness to integrate an attitude of sensitivity and responsibility towards others that is in fact an ethical stance.

Thus, the whole Session 7 is dedicated to "Friendliness - Opening the Heart", including a meditation dedicated to friendliness. In a business context, the invitation to open the heart can

be quite evocative. Addressing this issue explicitly is a candid stance of MBSAT, especially in combination with its implicit societal dimension.

MBSAT's ethics are contextual, however, rather than axiomatic. Business leaders in particular are often confronted with ethical dilemmas. Firing people for example may be an objective necessity in an extreme financial situation or in a disruptive competitive landscape. Yet firing people for financial reasons and at the same time rewarding executives with lush bonuses is another matter. Being able to solve ethical dilemmas in a mindful, socially responsible way is the real art of managing and should be a calling for managers.

10. Choice of topics

In line with its aspiration to be relevant and practical for people in the workplace and for daily life MBSAT includes topics in its program that are not integrated in any other mindfulness-based program to our knowledge. The two most evident topics in this regard are “Mindful Real Options” (Session 5) and money, respectively our relation to money (Session 6).

The term of Mindful Real Options has been created as a reference to Real Options in Finance theory so that people in the business world can easily relate to it. Mindful Real Options emerge when people are aware of their habitual patterns and - instead of acting impulsively - create a pause for mindful reflection before responding. In this pause alternative courses of action come to mind that are precisely Mindful Real Options and an integral part of Strategic Awareness. Essentially, this signifies the transition from reactivity to responsiveness, from reacting to responding. It is analogue to the term “decentering” that is used in other contexts. MBSAT strives to use a terminology that is familiar in a business context and awakens interest for people in management that constitute an integral part of MBSAT's target population.

Money on the other hand is a pervasive force in economy and society, a necessity for our livelihood and a major source of worries as well as of power and pleasure. Money is closely linked to our aspirations in life, our drivers and fears. A mindfulness-based protocol for the workplace and daily life such as MBSAT to exclude this topic would be a serious omission and a significant curtailment of the program. But it required courage and skill to formulate the session in a way that is not alienating. Behavioral Finance, Behavioral Strategy and Positive Psychology have proven to be important disciplines to design the session in a well-grounded, scientific fashion.

The objective of tackling this sensitive topic is clearly stated in Session 6: The idea is to move from “Powerful Money” (POMO – money as an instrument of power) to “Mindful Money” (MIMO – money as a useful tool that has to be managed mindfully). Participants in MBSAT are invited to

meditate on their relation to money and the experiential learning deriving from this meditation has proven to provide many key insights that have the potential of self-transformation.

The intervention “From POMO to MIMO” also produces practical, down-to-earth benefits. One of the MBSAT students who is a trader by profession, made it a habit to do 5 minutes of meditation on money daily and in addition practiced about ten times per day MBSAT’s brief, informal signature intervention that takes only a few moments (“CEO of BETA”, please see following paragraph). The outcome: his Alpha increased and his cholesterol decreased! (Alpha is a measure that indicates the return on investment that is in excess of the average market return. An increased Alpha means that the trader is in effect “beating the market”. The bigger Alpha, the successful the trader.)

11. Signature interventions of MBSAT

MBSAT offers a short, informal practice that has been an instantaneous hit with participants across the board and appears to be the practice people use more regularly than any other. It is called CEO of BETA.

The CEO of BETA is MBSAT’s key signature intervention. The acronym BETA stands for body sensations, emotions, thoughts and action impulses, the acronym CEO for catching, evening out and opening.

The term BETA has been chosen in reference to Finance theory where it denominates a risk factor. Hence it is a familiar term to many in management positions and it is also easy to remember for everyone else. It is a brief practice of 3-5 minutes that can be done during the day in any situation. The first step consists in becoming aware (“catching”) of one’s physical and emotional state, one’s mindset and drive to act. The second step calls for focusing on the breath to calm the BETA (“evening out”) and step 3 consists in opening up and returning to the tasks ahead with an open, mindful awareness.

This 3-steps design corresponds to the 3-Minutes Breathing Space exercise that is an integral part of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy. The great value of BETA is to explicitly integrate all aspects of human experience, especially body sensations and emotions, two aspects that are often suppressed in the workplace or considered as hindrances. In addition, the term “CEO of BETA” optimally connects with people in the workplace as it feels good to be one’s own CEO.

Nevertheless, it is an extremely versatile intervention that can be applied with great success in a wide range of contexts. A MBSAT student working with mothers decided for example to share

this practice with mothers of autistic children. The positive changes that followed were beyond expectations and touched on all aspects of daily life. One mother reported that for the first time She and her son was capable of sitting still together long enough so that she could cut his hair.

Four other signature interventions have been briefly mentioned in the paragraphs above. This results in the following list of interventions that characterize MBSAT:

- CEO of BETA
- Mindful Positive Self-Portrait – MPS (paragraph 5 above)
- *Irimi* or moving into a difficulty (paragraph 5 above)
- Meditation on friendliness (paragraphs 8 and 9 above)
- From POMO to MIMO (paragraph 10 above)

While the CEO of BETA is a very short practice that can be done anytime anywhere, the following interventions are more complex practices and require more time. The last three also involve sitting meditation.

All of these signature interventions are derived from Contemplative Positive Psychology and Cognitive Therapy practices and have been redesigned to deploy their full effectiveness within MBSAT. What is special about them is amongst other their integration into one coherent training program.

12. Compatibility with the workplace

There are a series of other features typical of MBSAT that make it appealing for a workplace context and more easily to assimilate for non-clinical, active people. Here is a brief overview of such aspects:

- Pedagogical approach:

In contrast to protocols such as MBCT and MBSR, MBSAT combines experiential learning with conceptual explanations based on scientific research. For non-clinical participants used to rational arguments a minimum of cognitive explanations has proven necessary to create an initial willingness to engage in exercises and experiential learning.

- Presentation:

MBSAT uses a lively style of presenting and interacting with participants that is congruent with what people are used to in the workplace. It also uses other tools familiar in an

organizational context such as graphics or even sometimes slides (sparingly though). This would be inadmissible in other, clinically oriented programs.

- Teachers:

MBSAT has started to train its own teachers. In selecting candidates, the objective is to recruit professionals with working experience in business and other organizations or institutions that can fully connect with the experience of the target population. In most other mindfulness-based programs most teachers come from a therapeutic and/or psychological background.

- Inquiries:

The inquiry after each exercise or practice is an integral part of each mindfulness-based program. It consists in sharing individual experiences in the group in order to generalize learnings. In more clinically oriented programs, in particular in MBCT (maybe less so in MBSR), long silences before anyone musters the courage to speak up are normal. In MBSAT the interchanges follow a dynamic that is more similar to communications in the workplace, although great care is taken to leave enough room for everyone to express him- or herself and speak from their first-person experience, not from conceptual thinking.

- Applicability:

Emphasis is on issues that matter in the workplace and in daily life and can be readily implemented. One such issue is for example Mindful, Positive Communication, that is discussed in Session 7. This practical orientation also shines through in many other instances in the program, for example in the meditation on friendliness, when participants are invited to think of person in fleeting encounters and of persons with whom they have a difficult relationship.

- Terminology:

In addition to the specially coined terms mentioned above (Mindful Real Options, CEO of BETA, etc.) MBSAT takes care to use a vocabulary that is easily understood by its non-clinical and mostly professional target population. A case in point is the replacement of “acceptance” by “allowance”. In mindfulness the term of acceptance is normally used to refer to a non-judgmental stance. However, acceptance often conjures the idea of lethargically letting things be as they are even if they are not satisfactory at all, thus suggesting resignation. Allowance may seem only slightly different, but it inspires more

the idea of being fully aware of something without denying it and after reflection taking action mindfully. Experience shows that this type of subtle adjustments helps avoid misunderstandings.

13. Conclusions and Outlook

The design of MBSAT with its specific orientation towards the needs of people in the workplace obviously has been facilitated by the fact that its author has intimate knowledge of the business world and the world of institutions.

It is logical that it makes a decisive difference, whether a program in the workplace is designed and delivered by a therapist or clinical psychologist or in contrast by someone from the business world or a professional experienced in an organizational context. Likewise, it is logical that a business-oriented teacher giving a course to participants with clinical needs may reap mitigated results. The background of MBSAT's author inevitably influences the features discussed above: the orientation of the program, the interventions and exercises, the examples used, the style of presentation, the interaction with the participants, and so forth. To this date even many well-known programs and courses are being led by mindfulness experts that come mostly from a psychological, therapeutic or sometimes spiritual background. To become a qualified MBSAT teacher working experience in a non-clinical context is therefore an asset. For psychologists or therapists teaching MBSAT require more adaptation and attunement to the target population.

Each mindfulness-based program has its purpose and meaning and is helpful for a specific target population. As the discussion above shows, MBSAT is a protocol designed for non-clinical persons in the workplace or persons otherwise involved in today's hectic life and therefore has distinctive features appropriate and useful for this specific population. What it shares with other programs are the basic mindfulness techniques and the format of 8 weekly sessions. There is a simple, practical reason for the format, namely the objective to allow for sufficient time to practice between sessions so as to make transformative learnings more sustainable.

As MBSAT expands and reaches a growing number of participants in different corners of the world the protocol is likely to further evolve in line with the needs of its target population, new research findings and new ideas how best to train Strategic Awareness. Thus, the graphics included in this document are not in the MBSAT book that serves as manual for the protocol. Neither is the term CEO of BETA in the book as it was created after its publication.

It is natural and proof of openness and liveliness that the MBSAT protocol is also likely to further evolve over time. What will be persistent, however, is its orientation as a mindfulness program for the workplace and a non-clinical population with its emphasis on Strategic Awareness.