

# Shaping the Organizational Culture of the Future with Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence

by Johanna Rauls and Dr. Svea von Hehn

## External change requires internal transformation

Hardly a day goes by without discussions about demographics, artificial intelligence, or the transition to a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral economy. Change is now part of our daily lives and is characterized by the concept of the BANI-World: We operate in a world that can be described as **brittle**, **anxious**, **nonlinear**, and **incomprehensible**.<sup>1</sup> Thus, almost everything is constantly changing. External changes demand an inner transformation – at the individual, team and organizational levels. This way, individuals and organizations can remain adaptable, shape a culture of innovation, and maintain composure and clarity during turbulent times.

## Mindfulness helps maintain calm amidst the storm

The attitude that helps us navigate the changes in the external world can be described as “conscious”. Another word for this is mindfulness, which means being consciously present in the here and now, and thus being able to be with what is, without immediately shaping it into existing concepts and structures. Existing notions are based on past experiences, but to create something new, to effectively adapt to the changes around us, a mindset capable of grasping and

embracing the new is needed. Emotional intelligence which is rooted in mindfulness provides access to this mindset and inner change.

With mindfulness comes awareness, and consequently, a perspective as if directing from a higher vantage point, seeing and guiding the direction. Emotional intelligence is the vehicle through which mindfulness becomes effective.

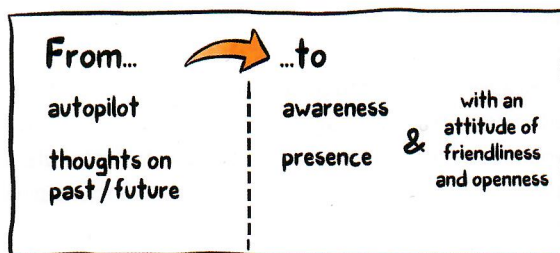
The BANI-World doesn’t have to be threatening! It can also be experienced in all facets of vitality: as colorful, shimmering, surprising, and wonderful. It is possible not to resist but rather to “embrace” BANI with a stance of trust, paradoxically enabling clearer vision, deeper understanding, more fitting solutions, and better decisions.

## Beyond optimization: a holistic approach to mindfulness and emotional intelligence

Due to its proven stress-reducing effects, mindfulness is sometimes misunderstood as a form of “optimization tool” within performance-driven society. However, it’s more sustainable to consider individuals systemically within the organization and establish mindfulness and emotional intelligence following a holistic approach, both within teams and the culture. This approach has a range of positive effects, as demonstrated by scientific studies.<sup>2</sup>

## The effects of mindfulness and emotional intelligence for individuals, teams, and organizations

- At the individual level, mindfulness and emotional intelligence foster enhanced concentration and problem-solving capabilities, well-being, adeptness in navigating uncertainties, focus and presence, as well as self-compassion and empathy for oneself and others.



Mindfulness is a state of awareness with non-judgmental attention to the present moment.

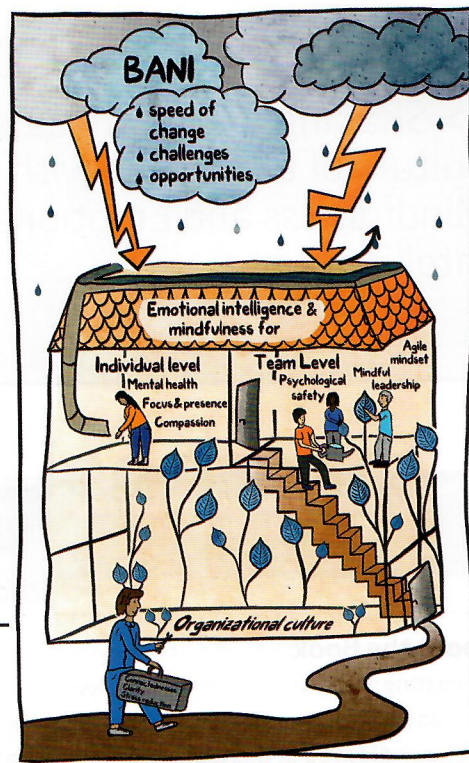
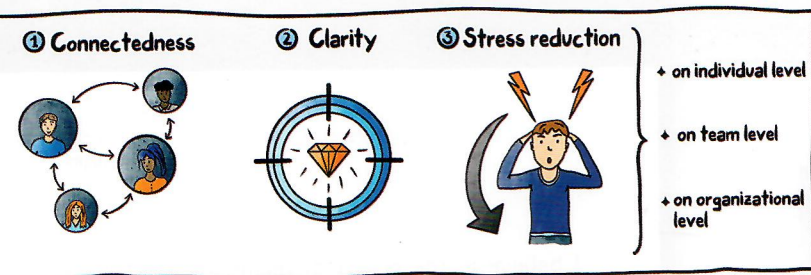
<sup>1</sup> Cascio, J. (2020, 29. April). Facing the Age of Chaos. Medium. <https://medium.com/@cascio/facing-the-age-of-chaos-00687b1f51d>. Abrufdatum: 09.01.2023.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Eby, L.T. et al (2019). Mindfulness-based training interventions for employees: A qualitative review of the literature. *Human Resource Management Review*, 29(2), 156-178; Janssen, M. et al (2018). Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on employees' mental health: A systematic review. *PLoS one*, 13(1), e0191332. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0191332>; Lomas, T. et al (2019). A systematic review and meta-analysis of the impact of mindfulness-based interventions on the well-being of healthcare professionals. *Mindfulness*, 10(7), 1193-1216.



Emotional intelligence and mindfulness in the workplace.

Mindfulness and emotional intelligence can be cultivated through connectedness, clarity and the reduction of stress.



- At the team level, mindfulness and emotional intelligence serve as pivotal drivers for psychological safety, a mindful leadership style, and agile collaboration.
- At the organizational level, a mindful organizational culture acts as a fertile ground for nurturing emotional intelligence and a proactive approach to change management.

### A progressive culture should not be left to chance – How can mindfulness and emotional intelligence be cultivated?

Mindfulness and emotional intelligence don't occur by happenstance in the realm of work. There are levers of influence that one can engage with:

- Connectedness
- Clarity
- Stress reduction

In some organizations, the sense of connection is so pronounced that a kind of “softened culture” could benefit from an increase in clarity. On the other hand, there are those that excel in delegation and performance feedback, but lack the sense of connection. Those should be adjusted by starting to consider human needs and emotions in the workplace. Even minor adjustments – known as rituals or routines – such as in team meetings, lead to a gradually more emotionally intelligent culture, thereby fostering a human-centered approach to conducting business. These endeavors typically yield results only when stress is reduced; otherwise, new habits can hardly take root. How such an internal transformation can be sustainably achieved across all levels is described by us in our book **“Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence for Organizations”** featuring pragmatic tips and insights drawn from both scientific research and practical experience. >>



**Johanna Rauls** is a psychologist and a doctoral candidate at the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in the field of mental health. She completed her Psychology studies in Heidelberg, Berlin, and in the United States. As a Fulbright scholar during the academic year

2021-22, Johanna spent two semesters at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where she had the opportunity to further her expertise in mindfulness research. During her studies, she worked as a Senior Consulting Analyst at RETURN ON MEANING, primarily involved in projects related to emotional intelligence and mindfulness. In this book, Johanna combines her enthusiasm for scientific research with her longstanding passion for mindfulness.



**Dr. Svea von Hehn** is an entrepreneur, a PhD psychologist, and a multiple certified mindfulness coach. She has been practicing mindfulness for over 30 years. The founder and partner of RETURN ON MEANING GmbH has been internationally active for over 25 years, including several

years at McKinsey. Her areas of expertise lie in cultural transformation, leadership, and emotional intelligence.

All figures by Ylva Schmökel.

Headshots: Ralf Hiemisch.



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### About the Book

Navigating life with emotional intelligence and mindfulness adds value to both ourselves and our environment. This book aids you in this journey with practical and easily applicable tips. Whether you're in education or on the cusp of retirement, whether you're a team member or a leader – you stand to benefit from a well-stocked toolbox that empowers you to cultivate or enhance emotional intelligence and mindfulness across the three realms of the individual, the team, and organizational culture. Drawing from years of consulting experience and supported by scientific insights and interviews featuring renowned experts sharing their experiences, this book is a comprehensive guide.

### Overview of Contents

- How to cultivate emotional intelligence: the three levers of connection, clarity, and stress reduction
- Key components of the agile mindset
- Mindful leadership
- Healthy work and managing stress, uncertainty, and complexity
- Emotionally intelligent cultural transformation: the I-SNAP-I framework model
- Interviews with renowned experts from business (including SAP SE, Robert Bosch GmbH, Viessmann Climate Solutions SE) and academia (Dr. Britta Hölzel, Prof. Johannes Michalak)
- Psychological insights and findings from the world's largest mindfulness study in organizations

### Shop the book

<https://shop.haufe.de/prod/achtsamkeit-und-emotionale-intelligenz-in-organisationen>

### Interested in continuing the conversation?

Feel free to reach out: [johanna.rauls@outlook.com](mailto:johanna.rauls@outlook.com) or contact me on LinkedIn

# Data for a Brighter Future

by Jan Moellmann

I believe in the power of technology, entrepreneurship and our agency as humans to build a brighter future. The rise of impact investing and impact entrepreneurship is a great expression of this. More and more people are using their talent, time and resources to work on a sustainable future, acknowledging that there is more at stake than just money. Impact investing and entrepreneurship are both trying to generate intentional and measurable positive social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. However, the difficulty faced by these actors is that there is a lack of data that would help to identify, incentivize and manage impact in a transparent, credible and efficient way.

Most, if not all, things that scaled extraordinarily well over the last decades were based on the availability of data that was then used for data-driven decision-making. Maximizing something requires measuring this something – be it user engagement for Facebook, delivery times for instant delivery services or simply financial returns for an asset manager. Now, what we need to scale fast to avoid collapse and to work towards a future in which the planet and people thrive is positive impact; hence, we need to measure this impact. If we had the right data available, it would be possible to make better consumer decisions, to manage by impact objectives, to incentivize impact through regulation and even to bake impact into financial products to make sure that impact-generating enterprises have access to the funding they need to realize and scale their projects and products.