

**Book Review:**                **Mindful Prevention of Burnout in Workplace Health Management**

**Editor:**                    **Ingrid Pirker-Binder**

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This book is relevant to every individual, organisation, company, occupational psychotherapist and the psychotherapist in private practice. It addresses burnout in the current context incorporating all of the factors that contribute to exhaustion and lack of performance. It also recommends ways of measuring and preventing burnout. It can be used as a handbook and reference book. The information is backed up by research which provides the reader with validation.

One of the benefits of this book is that it places responsibility on the individual and on the organisation to be healthy. Everybody should read this book, in particular managers and owners of organisations and businesses. The balance of work, rest and play in today's world has been blurred. The writings explain how when work takes over life, it is given priority over wellness. When this happens the body and mind break down. The emphasis therefore is on how to be and stay well and this is achieved by balance, giving the heart and organs of the body the time and space to recover from the usual and unusual stresses which accompany everyday living. There is plenty of information and advice in this book to support body and mind in order to stay in homeostasis.

### **Part 1 Human Resources in the Work and Economic World**

The first chapter written by Ingrid Pirker-Binder addresses work/life balance in a way which is necessary and achievable. It examines and analyses the contributions to exhaustion in the workplace and promotes Viktor Frankl's concept of meaning as a motivating factor. The author states that love of work is not enough, but that the working human needs sufficient time and recovery mechanisms. It is not just about relaxation but the body must not be disturbed by prolonged strain. It is about the preservation of the resilience of the heart. Integration of work in life is crucial to wellness.

Management demands a great understanding of one's own emotions. Management is not about strategy but about emotional control and social competence. When managers are appointed without these qualities it is necessary to provide a way in which they can acquire these attributes. Coaching is not enough for this, but requires the in-depth competence and skills of an occupational psychotherapist.

In the second chapter Martin Reich addresses leadership from the perspective of a Commercial Executive from the point of view of a controller of a health institution. In this instance he is assigned to management due to his function as a department head. He explores the different areas of leadership, vision, commercial aspects and the ability to bring together all of these areas.

Looking at leadership he mentions the core task being to create conditions which enable staff to complete their tasks competently and efficiently. He talks about managing in a way to control staff

being management under false pretences. In order for employees to want to do the tasks the magic words are communication and targeted consistent information. He says that balance here is of the essence, too much can be over filling and too little can cause uncertainty. In addition to this it is important to be aware that planning has to be in line with corporate management and that it is the controller's job, in this to keep the process moving while considering the needs of each employee and of the organisation.

Chapter 3 written by Ingrid Pirker-Binder looks at the contribution which meaning orientated occupational and business psychotherapy can bring to organisations. Psychotherapists understand businesses as living, social systems. They believe that the founders sow the seed and a vision and mission provide the framework for structure, processes and the culture. Fundamental to this is the philosophy of Victor Frankl's meaning of life. He extends the "psyche" and the "soma" into a third dimension the "spirit". This third dimension according to Frankl includes the conscience as a sense organ and acts as the highest moral authority. Meaning permeates the work as in the motivational incentive for the individual and motivational incentive for a group, team. In logotherapy workplace management one does not exclude the other. Logotherapy was founded by Victor Frankl.

The occupational psychotherapist will explore and investigate what is not working in the company and introduce effective measurements and analysis in order to move through the problems. This can address the difficulties which are faced when an employee presents with "stress-induced depression". The psychotherapeutic expert can answer these questions and advise and support executives and the employees.

In Chapter 4 Heinrich Anker looks at the Value Balance in Business. This is a reference model of a meaning-and performance-oriented corporate culture, and on the other hand an instrument for the analysis and diagnosis of existing cultures and their further development towards realisation and meaning and commitment of the employees. The core is an ethical one, it is about the growing health of the employees, their quality of life and the resultant growing power and desire to do their best, for their own benefit and that of the company, shareholders and other important groups.

It refers to Antonovsky's concept of health where the related existential categories of meaning and human appreciation can easily apply to the corporate world. He goes on to write about the importance of an understanding that health is inextricably linked to the concept of resilience, wanting to live in a meaningful way even in challenging times.

In chapter 5 Heinrich Anker looks at Diagnosis and Development of a Health-Promoting Corporate Culture with the Value Balance in Business. He acknowledges that management and management instruments are never neutral and objective and that this also applies to the instruments which he uses. His instrument is based on the finding of meaning-centered psychology (Viktor Frankl),

neurobiology, anthropology and medicine (salutogenesis). They all concede that human beings derive their vitality and their will for life and performance from the experience that their actions are meaningful and that they are valued as human beings. He states that if you want to strengthen performance capacity you must offer employees the experience of meaning and appreciation. The Value Balance in Business is used as a audit tool based on the fact that employees need to have meaning in their work.

### **Part 11 The Working People and Their Resources**

Ingrid-Pirker-Binder in Chapter 6 takes us to look at work-life balance in a way that incorporates the whole person, every aspect of their life, the working human-the exhausted human. She reminds us that in today's age of technology there is a danger of being "at work" all of the time. She warns against an exaggerated sense of duty or striving for perfection. The prevailing attitude "when I have finished this I will relax" can lead towards burnout. In her Life-Script Analysis she writes that anything inherited, acquired, learned, experienced and lived is brought into consciousness". All of the person matters and if he/she does not live up to his/her belief systems in work an inner negative tension builds up and results in exhaustion. Understanding that working time is life time is important. She says "One may also live during work!" It is important to examine one's life script and see where work may have impinged on life in a way that is injurious to health. By looking at this it is possible to have a new script.

In Chapter 7, The Working People and Their Energy Ingrid Pirker-Binder looks at prevention beginning with the statement that prevention cannot happen without including the needs of the body and names the key stakeholders as the mitochondria, the brain and the autonomic nervous system.

The mitochondria is responsible for energy. If lack of energy is caused for instance by too high a proportion of free radicals it will go into economy mode: too little energy produced. The intestine has a big significance in the functioning of the immune system. If stress lasts too long too much cortisol is produced and weakens the immune system. Proper nutrition plays a major part in wellness. Sleep is also important for proper functioning. Therapeutic interventions and relaxation training can help.

In Chapter 8 Ingrid Spona's information on Food Supplements is very informative and practical. She writes that chronic stress can lead to a multitude of complaints. Relevant dietary supplements can support the organism but which of them are useful and when should we take them? She provides a comprehensive description of what deficiency may occur and how food supplements can be supportive. She looks at the effect constant stress has on the brain and on the organs. She advises that the application of supposedly harmless remedies should be carried out in consultation with the

treating physician or therapist, also with regard to the quantity and suggests that it is best if deficits are detected by measurements so that they can be supplemented precisely.

In Chapter 9 Gerhard Moser and Ingrid Pirker-Binder write about how widespread symptoms can be attributed to lack of intestinal health. Food can be medicine or poison. Good nutrition is necessary for survival and is a fundamental pillar of prevention. Poor nutrition disturbs the body's balance resulting in a weakened immune system, chronic inflammation giving rise to infections and food intolerances. Psychological strain can affect the immune system. A re-evaluation is needed and this is where psychotherapy can help in providing support for changing lifestyle.

Chapter 10 written by Ingrid Pirker-Binder looks at how the workplace needs to accommodate the needs of the person so that self-management is attainable. Some people work well in an open space and some people need a closed door in order to concentrate. One size does not fit all. Working from home has challenges and opportunities. Flexibility is a plus ,however being distant from one's colleagues can be difficult.

Travel for work can be a health risk. Frequent travellers run the risk of exhaustion. Micro-breaks and regeneration times are important. The new media has made work omni present and it is important to take breaks. Waiting until all tasks are complete is outdated. Life needs to be lived instead of going by filled with work. Work can be integrated into life it need not be fatal.

In Chapter 11 Fialova,Simonek,Strastna and Pirker-Binder demonstrate how the Luscher Color Test measures the dynamics of functioning processes and attitudes. This diagnostic too is user friendly in the way in which it seems like a game and eliminates perceptual defences as much as possible. It identifies different types of behaviour and degrees of stress which provides intervention and prevention in a much faster and targeted way.

In Chapter 12 Ingrid Pinker-Binder demonstrates how biofeedback is very important in the area of personal development and resource management. It brings about a better understanding of the body and how it functions. It is a measurement which provides information to the individual about what is going on in the body and what specific changes need to be made to bring about regeneration where needed. It expands awareness and perception and supports change processes. With the knowledge about the functions of the body it provides protection against burnout which is a scourge in today's workplace. It is the bridge to freedom from stress. This book outlines in details the process and results of this great tool.

In Chapter 13 Ingrid Pirker-Binder writes about how now is the time for new beginnings in caring for and healing the body to achieve maximum results and also to engage in healing in a way that ensures a continuing healthy body. Good diagnostics are indispensable in occupational and business psychotherapy. Biofeedback provides accurate information. The importance of psychological health is becoming more understandable. It includes the whole human being, The harmonious interplay of body, brain and psyche.

**“Psychological health includes MINDFULNESS, meaning-centered occupational and business psychotherapy, integrates it into the working life. It combines economic knowledge with psychotherapeutic knowledge about psychological health. Occupational and business psychotherapy is dedicated to prevention, personality training, short-term therapy and counselling” (Pirker-Binder 2016 p. 236).**