

# Mattering: Shaping Organizational Leadership Practices

Linda Marie Ellington, Southern New Hampshire University, USA\*

## ABSTRACT

Mattering, a concept rooted in social psychology, holds significant implications for organizational leadership dynamics. This article provides an overview of exploration into the multifaceted role of mattering in organizational leadership. Mattering refers to the perception that one is essential and meaningful to others in a given context and its impact on leadership dynamics is profound. Drawing from literature and empirical studies, this article examines how mattering influences various aspects of organizational leadership, including employee engagement, motivation, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. The article delves into the different dimensions of mattering, including interpersonal mattering (individual level) and collective mattering (group level) and their interplay within leadership contexts. The literature underscores the critical role of mattering in shaping effective organizational leadership practices. It sheds light on how leaders can foster a sense of mattering among team members to cultivate a positive work environment and enhance overall organizational outcomes. As organizations continue to navigate complexities in the modern workplace, understanding and harnessing the power of mattering can contribute to more impactful and empathetic leadership strategies.

## KEYWORDS

Mattering at the Intersection of Change Leadership

## INTRODUCTION

Mattering is a complex construct influenced by various factors, including social relationships, achievements, and societal roles. It involves the perception that others care about and value one's opinions, emotions, and contributions. Evaluating one's life as meaningful has been linked to measurable psychological and physical benefits. Most people seemingly think about whether their lives matter beyond the narrowness of their day-to-day existence. In a study conducted by Costin & Vignoles (2020), they found that deciding whether a person's life is meaningful or not, people seem to ask whether their life matters despite their smallness in time (homo sapiens have existed for more than 200,000 years, and the Universe has existed for more than 13.73 billion years) and space (the vastness of the Universe (p.877).

DOI: 10.4018/IJAET.329603

\*Corresponding Author

This article published as an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and production in any medium, provided the author of the original work and original publication source are properly credited.

Incorporating mattering into organizational leadership requires a genuine commitment to valuing each individual within the organization. It goes beyond transactional interactions and focuses on building meaningful relationships and connections. By fostering a sense of mattering, leaders can create a more engaged, motivated, and fulfilled workforce that contributes positively to the organization's success. Incorporating mattering into leadership can have several benefits, including improved employee engagement, enhanced job satisfaction, increased productivity, and a more positive workplace culture. How mattering can be integrated into leadership practices: open communication, empowerment, personalized development, inclusivity and diversity, well-being support, meaningful work, and accessible leadership.

## **FOUNDATIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF MATTERING**

In leadership, the foundations of mattering refer to the fundamental principles and concepts that underlie the perception of importance, value, and significance that leaders establish within their teams, organizations, or communication. This concept could be applied in several ways.

**Employee engagement and motivation:** Leaders who prioritize creating an environment where employees feel seen, heard, and appreciated establish a strong foundation of mattering. This can lead to increased job satisfaction, productivity, and retention.

**Building trust:** Trust is a cornerstone of effective leadership. Leaders who demonstrate consistent consideration for their employees establish trust by showing that individuals matter. This involves being approachable, transparent, and acting in ways that align with the well-being and growth of their team members.

**Clear communication:** Leaders who ensure that their communication is respectful, transparent, and tailored to individual needs convey that each person's input and understanding matters. By actively listening and addressing concerns, leaders establish open lines of communication that strengthen the foundation of mattering.

**Recognition and feedback:** Leaders who provide constructive feedback and recognize achievements demonstrate that they are invested in the growth and development of employees. This recognition reinforces the notion that each effort is important and contributes to overall success.

**Autonomy:** Leaders who provide autonomy within a supportive framework reinforce the foundation of mattering.

Essentially, the foundations of mattering in leadership revolve around creating an environment where individuals feel valued, respected, and significant. This approach can improve collaboration, morale, and overall organizational performance.

The definition of mattering has origins in both psychology and philosophy. Psychological definitions, called interpersonal mattering or societal mattering, focus on assessing relationships, feelings, and meaning to others or society. Philosophical definitions of mattering focus on how one perceives one's actions as important or impactful to others. In this article, I use a philosophical definition of mattering called organizational mattering. The most relevant sense of mattering in organizational settings is the impact of one's actions (Yaden & Baumeister, 2019).

## **ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERING**

Organizational mattering refers to the perception and experience of individuals within an organization that their presence, contributions, and individual identities are significant, valued, and meaningful. It is the sense that one's involvement and actions within the organization have an impact, and they are recognized and appreciated as unique and important members of the organization's community. This concept highlights the importance of acknowledging and nurturing the individual's sense of worth and relevance within the broader organizational context.

In contrast, organizations that neglect the concept of mattering might face negative consequences such as low morale, higher turnover rates, reduced employee commitment, and a decline in overall organizational performance. Therefore, fostering a sense of mattering among employees is crucial for creating a thriving, productive, and successful organizational environment. Several positive outcomes can emerge when employees feel they matter within the organization.

**Employee Engagement:** Engaged employees are emotionally invested in their work, motivated to contribute their best efforts, and committed to the organization's goals.

**Job Satisfaction:** Employees who feel they matter are more likely to be satisfied. This satisfaction can lead to lower turnover rates, as employees are less likely to see opportunities elsewhere when they are content and fulfilled in their current roles.

**Collaboration and Teamwork:** When individuals feel valued and respected by their colleagues, they are more likely to work effectively and support each other's efforts, creating a supportive and harmonious work environment.

**Customer Satisfaction:** Employees who feel they matter are more likely to provide excellent customer service. They understand the impact of their actions on the organization's reputation and customer relationships.

**Organizational Reputation:** Organizations prioritizing mattering are often seen as employee-friendly and socially responsible. This positive reputation can attract top talent and enhance the organization's brand image.

## **MATTERING IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP**

Effective leaders understand that recognizing the importance of each individual's contributions is not just beneficial for the employees but also for the success and growth of the organization. Gordon Flett (2018, p. 4) said, "You cannot understand someone without having a sense of whether they feel as though they matter and of how much they need to matter." The concept of mattering can profoundly affect both leaders and those they lead. The implications are important in the context of leadership.

**Leadership Effectiveness:** Leaders prioritizing mattering are more likely to inspire and motivate their teams. When team members feel valued and important, they are more likely to follow the leader's vision and direction.

**Ethical Leadership:** Mattering is closely tied to ethical leadership. Leaders who genuinely care about the well-being of their team members are more likely to make ethical decisions that consider the impact on individuals and the broader community.

**Long-Term Success:** Leaders who prioritize mattering create a positive legacy. Their leadership style and positive impact on their team members can have a lasting effect on the organization's success and reputation.

**Retention and Loyalty:** Leaders who make team members feel important and recognized create a sense of loyalty. Employees are more likely to stay with an organization where they feel their work is valued, reducing turnover rates.

**Innovation and Creativity:** Mattering encourages individuals to share their ideas and insights without fear of rejection. Leaders who foster an environment where team members believe their input matters are more likely to tap into diverse perspectives, leading to increased innovation and creativity.

**Trust and Communication:** Mattering is closely tied to trust and open communication. It creates an environment where open dialogue is more likely to occur. This leads to better collaboration and problem-solving.

**Organizational Culture:** The sense of mattering contributes to the overall culture of an organization. A culture that values and recognizes the contributions of every individual fosters a positive and inclusive work environment.

**Conflict Resolution:** When employees feel they matter, conflicts can be addressed more effectively. Leaders who understand the importance of mattering can approach conflicts with empathy and work toward solutions that address all parties' underlying needs and concerns.

## RESEARCH ON MATTERING

Action-oriented mattering in an organizational context is part of recognizing one's efforts, as opposed to any personal or emotional sentiment expressed by coworkers. In a meta-analysis of 558 studies of organizational support, Kurtessis et al. (2017) found that employee perceptions concerning the extent to which the organization values their actual contributions strongly predicted positive orientation towards the organization, along with worker productivity and well-being. These results suggest that organizational mattering is critical for employees and leaders, as organizational functioning improves when workers feel their work matters.

When people feel included, they are more likely to engage actively, contribute their unique perspectives, and feel a sense of belonging. Mattering is crucial in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). DEI initiatives aim to create environments where individuals, regardless of their background, feel included, empowered, and valued. Mattering is a fundamental component of inclusion. Equity involves providing fair opportunities and resources to all individuals and addressing systemic barriers and biases. When individuals feel their voices are heard and their contributions are acknowledged and valued, it contributes to a more equitable environment.

As in DEI, leaders can take several actions to foster mattering.

**Promote active listening.** Create spaces where individuals can openly express their experiences, concerns, and ideas and feel heard and understood. Listen to different perspectives and ensure everyone's voice is respected and heard.

**Highlight and celebrate the unique contributions** that individuals from diverse backgrounds bring to the organization. Acknowledge and reward their achievements and ensure they are given equal opportunities for growth and development.

**Cultivate a sense of belonging.** Foster an inclusive culture where everyone feels welcomed, accepted, and valued for who they are. Encourage collaboration, teamwork, and relationship-building across diverse groups.

**Address bias and discrimination.** Take proactive steps to identify and address visible and invisible biases and discriminatory practices within the organization.

**Empower individuals to make a difference.** Provide opportunities for individuals to take an active role in shaping the culture to be an action-oriented mattering organization. Encourage everyone to contribute ideas, participate in decision-making, and take leadership roles.

If leaders do not foster mattering, they are not honestly assessing their leadership actions. Leaders need to create a healthy, productive, and sustainable work environment that supports the well-being of employees and the long-term success of the organization as a whole.

## ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Assessing the perception of importance, value, and significance within an organization is crucial for several reasons related to organizational health and effectiveness.

**Retention and turnover:** Organizations that prioritize making employees feel like they matter are likely to experience lower turnover rates, reducing the costs associated with recruitment and training.

**Resilience:** A strong foundation of mattering can help employees weather setbacks and uncertainties more effectively.

**Long-term organizational success:** An organization that focuses on mattering fosters a positive cycle of success. Engaged and valued employees contribute to improved organizational performance and growth.

The concept of mattering is closely related to organizational health and employee well-being. Leaders should prioritize open communication, recognition programs, opportunities for skill development, and creating a culture of inclusivity and respect. Regular feedback, one-on-one meetings, and involving employees in decision-making processes can also help employees feel that their voices are heard, and their contributions are valued. Ultimately, the sense of mattering contributes to a healthier, more engaged, and more successful organization. Mattering is connected to organizational health in several ways.

**Well-being and mental health:** Feeling valued and significant at work positively affects mental health outcomes. Employees who feel they matter are less likely to experience stress, burnout, and other negative mental health issues.

**Inclusivity and diversity:** Fostering an environment where all employees feel they matter, regardless of their background or identity, promotes inclusivity and diversity. This leads leaders to a broader range of ideas, which can benefit the organization's overall performance.

**Leadership and empowerment:** Leaders who actively listen, support, and empower their team members enhance their sense of mattering. Empowered employees are likelier to take initiative and contribute to the organization's growth.

Deficit-based leadership strategies can break down the ability of an employee to feel that they and their work matter (Lamperski, 2018). However, despite the importance of mattering in personal and occupational domains, there needs to be more research on the health of organizations that promote mattering. However, literature has shown that organizations high in engagement and mattering perform much better on multiple outcomes than organizations with low levels of employee engagement. These outcomes include productivity, profitability, customer satisfaction, turnover, safety, and quality (Grawitch & Ballard, 2016; Harter et al., 2002; Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Changes in skills, competencies, engagement, and motivation characterize modern working life. This has implications for an organization's health, i.e., creating an environment that will contribute to employee health and achieve organizational outcomes. Schwartz and Hasson (2013) introduce the concept of alignment, which can illuminate a healthy organization. They describe vertical, horizontal, and diagonal alignments as the lining up of different aspects of what is going on in an organization to integrate the organization's strategy and systems to create sustainable health.

Ballard and Grawitch (2016) posit that despite the ubiquity of workplace wellness efforts and general agreement about the importance of a healthy workforce, many efforts regarding employee and organizational outcomes need to be revised.

## **CREATING AND SUSTAINING A HEALTHY MATTERING ORGANIZATION**

Creating and sustaining a healthy organization is an ongoing effort that requires continuous attention and adaptation. There are a few steps leaders can take to achieve a healthy organization.

**Lead by example:** Leaders should model the behavior and values they expect from their employees. Demonstrating empathy, integrity, and a strong work ethic sets the tone for the entire organization.

**Define a clear vision and values:** Establish a clear and inspiring vision for the organization's future and communicate it to all employees. Define core values that guide decision-making and behavior throughout the organization.

**Foster open communication:** Encourage transparent communication across all levels of the organization. Listen to employees' concerns, ideas, and feedback, and provide regular updates on company progress and changes.

**Empower employees:** Provide employees with autonomy and decision-making opportunities within their roles. Empowered employees feel a great sense of ownership and are more likely to be engaged in and committed to their work.

**Promote work-life balance:** Encourage a healthy work-life balance by setting reasonable expectations for working hours and respecting personal time. Avoid overloading employees with excessive workloads.

**Recognize and reward:** Regularly acknowledge and reward employees for their contributions. Recognition can be in verbal praise, awards, promotions, or other incentives that align with their motivations.

**Encourage feedback:** Implement mechanisms for employees to provide feedback on various aspects of the organization. Act on constructive feedback to show that the organization is committed to improvement.

**Adapt to change:** Be open to change and adaptable to new challenges. Organizations that can pivot and evolve quickly are better positioned for long-term success.

**Promote health and well-being.** Offer wellness programs that focus on physical and mental health. Consider initiatives such as stress management workshops, flexible work arrangements, and access to fitness facilities.

**Invest in relationships:** Build strong relationships with employees, customers, stakeholders, and partners. Strong relationships are the foundation of a healthy and sustainable organization.

**Measure organizational health:** Regularly assess the organization's health through employee surveys, performance metrics, and other relevant indicators. Use this data to make informed decisions for improvement.

## **PUTTING MATTERING INTO PRACTICE**

A healthy organization requires leaders to adopt leadership practices that prioritize employee well-being, foster a positive culture, and drive overall organizational success. Three workplace practices can contribute to creating and maintaining a healthy organization.

### **Practice One: Create an Organizational Culture That Promotes Mattering**

For this article, I use Schein's (2017) definition of organizational culture, which supports the notion that organizations invent, discover, or develop the cultural components (values, beliefs, assumptions, behavioral norms) that regulate how their members should behave as they pursue common goals. In a study by Shuck and Reio (2014), employee engagement (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) facilitated the relationship between a positive psychological climate, personal accomplishment, and psychological well-being. They found that high levels of engagement were associated with high levels of accomplishment and well-being. In another study, organizational cultures with high performance practices and perceived organizational support were positively related to employee well-being and negatively related to low physical well-being (Veld & Alfes, 2017). Employees' perceptions of mattering are important for engagement, productivity, and well-being (Dutton et al., 2016; Flett, 2018; Jung & Heppner, 2017; Reece et al., 2019; Worline & Dutton, 2017).

When the workplace culture is rewarding, affirming, and supportive, employees can derive a great sense of mattering, which, in turn, is related to greater autonomy, life satisfaction, physical health, and overall well-being (Flett, 2018, as cited in Prilleltensky, 2019).

Enacting a culture of mattering means interacting in ways that convey interpersonal recognition and appreciation. Organizational members feel their actions make a difference, and others in the organization depend on them. In a culture of mattering, co-workers express "affection, caring, generosity, and tenderness without expecting specific organizational benefits" (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016, p. 126)—compassionate acts foster trust and collegial relationships (Lilius et al., 2008). A culture of mattering helps employees feel valued through expressions of respect and dignity (Liao & Rupp, 2005), trust (Jiang & Proubst, 2015), and engagement (Engelbrecht et al., 2017).

The experience of adding value is no less important than the experience of feeling valued. When employees perceive that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being,

they are more likely to take proactive measures to collaborate and create innovative ways to improve performance (Caesens et al., 2016).

### **Practice Two: Assess to Determine Progress on Including Mattering**

Is there a rigid reality in your organizational structure that shows that mattering is natural, linear, and always moving forward, leading you to deny the persistence of mattering? If so, this denial remains a big obstacle to real progress in the orbit of mattering.

What to do? One idea is to adopt the *groundwater approach* from The Groundwater Institute. This approach is a metaphor for a simple tale of a dying fish that goes like this:

*If you have a lake in front of your house and one fish is floating belly-up dead, it makes sense to analyze the fish. However, what should you do if you come out to that same lake and half the fish are floating belly-up dead? This time, you have got to analyze the lake. Now...picture five lakes around your house, and half the fish are floating belly-up dead in every lake! What is it time to do? It is time to analyze the groundwater. In other words, we have a groundwater problem; we need groundwater solutions. <https://www.groundwaterinstitute.com/>.*

Another idea is using existing instruments to evaluate perceptions of mattering importance to others or society in general. One such measure, the General Mattering Scale (DeForge & Barclay, 1997; Marcus, 1991), reflects feeling value based on how others view the individual on dimensions such as importance, attention, and how they add value to others. A 24-item interpersonal mattering index (Elliott et al., 2004) revealed three latent factors named *awareness*, *importance*, and *reliance*, which reflect feeling valued and adding value. For instance, an awareness item reflecting the importance of feeling valued is (1) whatever else may happen, people do not ignore me, (2) feeling important is a way to feel valued, (3) people do not care what happens to me, and (4) people count on me to be there in times of need.

Another tool is the mattering to others survey, which measures the significance to others in society (France & Finney, 2009). Items reflect feeling-valued statements such as (a) often, people trust me with things that are important to them, (b) sometimes, I feel almost as if I were invisible, and (c) people do not care what happens to me. Items reflecting adding value are when people need help, they come to me, and quite a few people look to me for advice on issues of importance.

Recently, some research has expanded the mattering measurement to investigate interpersonal and societal mattering at work. The work mattering scale (Jung & Heppner, 2017) includes items about feeling valued, such as (1) I think that society values the work I do, and (2) my coworkers/colleagues would be disappointed if they knew that I might leave my job.

Prilleltensky et al. (2020) state that the culture of mattering (CoM) survey is a tool for investing time in learning. When developing the survey, they created a measure that reflected the unique culture of mattering by generating items that reflected how an organization's specific culture related to feeling value or adding value. One example is an item that pertains to the organizational value of caring and feeling valued simultaneously. Their survey was created with the dual goal of addressing an organizational value and an aspect of mattering.

### **Practice Three: Humanizing the Experience of Mattering**

A humanized space is a space in which less of us is hidden, and more of us are known. Employees feel valued, seen, respected, and safe in humanized environments. They perceive mattering through the actions of their leaders. However, often, leaders do not see the value in embracing emotions and needs, possibly because these can be unpredictable. Matheson et al. (2021) referenced Bettez (2008), who identified seven humanizing practices grounded in dialogue and activism. They are promoting a mind/body connection, conducting artful facilitation that promotes critical thinking, engaging in explicit discussions of power, privilege, and oppression, maintaining compassion for students

(learners/employees), believing that change toward social justice is possible, exercising self-care, and building healthy communities.

Leaders have a key role in providing a bridge from humanizing principles to humanizing practices. If you are grappling with different dimensions of practice, review the work of Peercy et al. (2022) as they discuss humanizing by promoting respect, building trusting relationships, valuing everyone's background knowledge, and focusing on what people can do and achieve. When you humanize the organization, it is not people who have to suppress their human feelings, aspirations, and beliefs when they are at their workplaces; it is the organization itself that needs to be redefined by the human norms of human beings.

As a result, leaders must begin looking beyond traditionally touted engagement initiatives and instead focus on day-to-day behaviors that drive organizational energy. Thankfully, we have the work of Somos (2014), who outlines four ways leaders can begin to humanize their workplace, create conditions that allow employees to flourish and thrive, be passionate and innovative, have a purpose, and fuel great business results (pp. 1-2).

**Be authentic:** When they see it, employees know a carefully orchestrated message designed to look like a tailored suit. This can lead to mistrust, ultimately having the opposite effect of what leaders seek. Perhaps surprisingly, to leaders, employees appreciate direct and often difficult conversations, even in negative times and even when their leaders appear imperfect. Why? When leaders address these issues realistically, it gives employees a sense of optimism for the future.

**Simplify the complex:** Leaders can significantly increase the odds that their project will succeed by ensuring employees feel mentally and physically prepared for any task, not only at the beginning but for the duration. One way is for leaders to frequently instill a mental picture of what success will eventually look like in team members. Use visuals whenever possible. There is tremendous power in whiteboarding a project or an idea, particularly when there are many moving parts. Break things into smaller chunks, prioritize, and choose one item to move forward faster. Creating simplicity is one of leadership's biggest challenges—but it also presents opportunities to harness the power of teams.

**Face-to-face conversations:** Have more face-to-face conversations, especially in difficult times. Be willing to step into potentially difficult conversations to get to the heart of the matter. Step in without judgment or criticism. Oftentimes, all it takes is uncovering the unmet needs of those employees through direct, face-to-face conversation.

**Infuse (appropriate) fun:** Workplaces that create a fun-friendly environment will see employees give more effort and be more innovative. However, The challenge for leaders is understanding what is considered fun to their employees. Good leaders can make their team feel special and important. However, when trying to infuse fun into the workplace, leaders must ensure it is appropriate based on who their employees are.

Ultimately, humanizing employees' experiences in the workplace and creating a sense of connection is about building a community where people feel more energized and motivated to do their best work. As a result, improving the employee experience will pay big dividends to the organization. Not only that, but employees will have more energy at the end of the day for their communities, families, and other important relationships

## CONCLUSION

Based on the reviewed literature, mattering leads to engagement and well-being but also puts in place structures and practices to nurture mattering throughout the organization. The concept of mattering profoundly impacts organizational leaders, fundamentally shaping their leadership approach and the organization's overall health. By recognizing the significance of each individual's contributions and fostering an environment where every member feels valued and heard, leaders can enhance employee engagement, cultivate a positive culture, and drive innovation. The practice of mattering extends beyond traditional leadership paradigms, emphasizing empathy, active listening, and a genuine



commitment to the workforce's well-being. Through the lens of mattering, leaders can optimize organizational performance and create an atmosphere where individuals are empowered to excel, resulting in a harmonious and thriving workplace.

Leadership is one of the most important dimensions in organizational sciences. In fact, leadership quality has been linked to various outcomes within organizational psychology, such as well-being, safety climate, and organizational performance (Gilbreath, et al., 2004). Literature suggests that mattering leadership is critical for developing a healthy organization. Leaders, of course, play a critical role in developing a healthy organization. Leaders are the catalysts for creating meaningful connections with employees, which is critical for bringing about job and work-related attitudes from employees (Gilbreath, et al., 2004; Carmeli & Vinarski-Peretz, 2010; Sparr & Fairness, 2008). When leadership is perceived as healthy and effectively balances people and productivity concerns, it creates an engaging workplace for employees and greater returns for the organization (Raya & Panneerselvam, 2013). This article presented three practices to achieve such employee engagement and returns: create an organizational culture that promotes mattering, asses to determine progress on including mattering, and humanize the experience of mattering.

## REFERENCES

- Ballard, D. W., & Grawitch, M. J. (2016). Concluding remarks—Into the future. In M. J. Grawitch & D. W. Ballard (Eds.), *The psychologically healthy workplace: Building a win-win environment for organizations and employees* (pp. 257–262). American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14731-012
- Bettez, S. C. (2008). *Social justice activist teaching in the university classroom*. Information Age Publishing.
- Caesens, G., Marique, G., Hanin, D., & Stinglhamber, F. (2016). The relationship between perceived organizational support and proactive behavior directed towards the organization. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 25(3), 398–411. doi:10.1080/1359432X.2015.1092960
- Costin, V., & Vignoles, V. L. (2020). Meaning is about mattering: Evaluating coherence, purpose, and existential mattering as precursors of meaning in life judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 118(4), 864–884. doi:10.1037/pssp0000225 PMID:30614732
- Davis, G. F. (2015). Celebrating organization theory: The after-party. *Journal of Management Studies*, 52(2), 309–319. doi:10.1111/joms.12094
- DeForge, B., & Barclay, D. M. III. (1997). The internal reliability of a general mattering scale in homeless men. *Psychological Reports*, 80(2), 429–430. doi:10.2466/pr0.1997.80.2.429 PMID:9129362
- Dutton, J. E., Debebe, G., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2016). Being valued and devalued at work: A social valuing perspective. In B. A. Bechky & K. D. Elsbach (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: Best papers from the Davis Conference on Qualitative Research* (pp. 9–51). Information Age Publishing.
- Eldor, L., & Shoshani, A. (2016). Caring relationships with school staff: Exploring the link between compassion and teacher work engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59, 126–136. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2016.06.001
- Elliott, G. C., Kao, S., & Grant, A.-M. (2004). Mattering: Empirical validation of a social-psychological concept. *Self and Identity*, 3(4), 339–354. doi:10.1080/13576500444000119
- Engelbrecht, A. S., Heine, G., & Mahembe, B. (2017). Integrity, ethical leadership, trust, and work engagement. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 38(3), 368–379. doi:10.1108/LODJ-11-2015-0237
- Flett, G. (2018). *The psychology of mattering: Understanding the human need for significance*. Elsevier.
- France, M. K., & Finney, S. J. (2009). What matters in the measurement of mattering? A construct validity study. *Measurement & Evaluation in Counseling & Development*, 42(2), 104–120. doi:10.1177/0748175609336863
- Gilbreath, B., & Benson, P. G. (2004). The contribution of supervisor behavior to employee psychological well-being. *Work and Stress*, 18(3), 255–266. doi:10.1080/02678370412331317499
- Groundwater Institute. (n/d). *The Groundwater approach: Building a practical understanding of structural racism*. Groundwater Institute. <https://www.groundwaterinstitute.com/>
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(2), 268–279. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.87.2.268 PMID:12002955
- Jiang, L., & Probst, T. M. (2015). Do your employees (collectively) trust you? The importance of trust climate beyond individual trust. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 31(4), 526–535. doi:10.1016/j.scaman.2015.09.003
- Jung, A.-K., & Heppner, M. J. (2017). Development and validation of a work mattering scale (WMS). *Journal of Career Assessment*, 25(3), 467–483. doi:10.1177/1069072715599412
- Kurtessis, J. N., Eisenberger, R., Ford, M. T., Buffardi, L. C., Stewart, K. A., & Adis, C. S. (2017). Perceived organizational support: A meta-analytic evaluation of organizational support theory. *Journal of Management*, 43(6), 1854–1884. doi:10.1177/0149206315575554
- Lamperski, R. J. (2018). Work Namaste: The importance of mattering at work and how a leader can create an environment where employees feel they and their work matter. *Scholarly Commons*. <https://repository.upenn.edu/entities/publication/a460f6e3-6229-4727-8549-854b2df76992>

- Liao, H., & Rupp, D. E. (2005). The impact of justice climate and justice orientation on work outcomes: A cross-level multi-foci framework. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(2), 242–256. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.90.2.242 PMID:15769235
- Lilius, J., Worline, M. C., Maitlis, S., Kanov, J., Dutton, J. E., & Frost, P. (2008). The contours and consequences of compassion at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(2), 193–218. doi:10.1002/job.508
- Marcus, F. M. (1991). *Mattering: Its measurement and theoretical significance*. [Unpublished manuscript].
- Matheson, A., Dillion, P. J., Guillen, M., & Warner, C. I. (2021). People mattering at work: A humanistic management perspective. *Humanistic Management Journal*, 6(3), 405–428. doi:10.1007/s41463-021-00113-1
- Peercy, J., Tigert, J., Fredricks, D., Kidwell, T., Feagin, K., Hall, W., Himmel, J., & DeStefano, M. (2022). From humanizing principles to humanizing practices: Exploring core practices as a bridge to enacting humanizing pedagogy with multilingual students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13, 103653. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2022.103653
- Prilleltensky, I. (2019). Mattering at the intersection of psychology, philosophy, and politics. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 1–19. doi:10.1002/ajcp.12368 PMID:31407358
- Raya, R. P., & Panneerselvam, S. (2013). The healthy organization constructs: A review and research agenda. *Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 17(3), 89–93. doi:10.4103/0019-5278.130835 PMID:24872666
- Reece, A., Yaden, D., Kellerman, G., Robichaux, A., Goldstein, R., Schwartz, B., Seligman, M., & Baumeister, R. (2019). Mattering is an indicator of organizational health and employee success. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. doi:10.1080/17439760.2019.1689416
- Schein, E. H. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (5th ed.). Wiley.
- Schwarz, U., & Hasson, H. (2013). Alignment for achieving a healthy organization. *Salutogenic Organizations and Change*, 107–125. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-6470-5\\_7](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-6470-5_7)
- Shuck, B., & Reio, T. G. Jr. (2014). Employee engagement and well-being: A moderation model and implications for practice. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 21(1), 43–58. doi:10.1177/1548051813494240
- Somos, A. (2014). Humanize your workplace. *Leadership Excellence*, 31(6), 1–2 <https://portal.juiceinc.com/files/documents/HR.com-Article/pdf>
- Sparr, J. L., & Sonnentag, S. (2008). Fairness perceptions of supervisor feedback, LMX, and employee well-being at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 7(2), 198–225. doi:10.1080/13594320701743590
- Veld, M., & Alfes, K. (2017). HRM, climate and employee well-being: Comparing an optimistic and critical perspective. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(16), 2299–2318. doi:10.1080/09585192.2017.1314313
- Worline, M., & Dutton, J. (2017). *Awakening compassion at work: The quiet power that elevates people and organizations*. Berrett-Koehler.
- Yaden, D. B., & Baumeister, R. F. (2019). Mattering is an indicator of organizational health and employee success. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. <https://doi:10.1080/17439760.2019.1689416>

Linda Marie Ellington is a Faculty in Organizational Leadership Business (2014-current), Director of Graduate Studies (2004-2014), IBM Corporation (1981-2003), Associate Editor, *Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology* (JAVET), Published Writer, Academic Research, Peer Reviewer, Children's Book Author, Volunteer Florida Literacy Doctoral Dissertation Committee Member