How to Use Wellbeing Principles as the Conceptual Basis for the
Physical Planning of a Co-working Space

by

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A dissertation submitted to the

International Management Centers Association

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of Doctor of Philosophy

Viva Voce examination passed under the supervision of

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February 16th, 2019

Abstract

For a growing segment of today's workforce, the stagnant design of the traditional workspace is increasingly perceived as problematic: poor lighting, open plans, fixed and unvarying working locations, poor ergonomics, and noise all limit creativity, productivity, and health.

This study is a personal and original response to the feelings of a new generation of workers who desire to blend work and life and are motivated to bring their interconnected, holistic selves to the work environment. For these employees—and those who are self-employed—a co-working model is especially attractive. Focusing on co-working workspaces, this Explication articulates a model that codifies principles of wellbeing as they apply to the actual construction of such a space, reporting on tests of the veracity of the application and describing future research to develop these concepts further.

The findings presented in this Explication emerge from key elements of this author's 20 years of relevant experience: a phenomenological involvement with co-working, ownership of a co-working space, a detailed review of relevant literature, and mixed methods research to identify and verify operational principles of wellbeing in the context of constructing a new co-working space. The research identified four *desiderata* that can optimize wellbeing for members in a workspace: (1) building a mix of private offices versus open space to mitigate the noise and privacy factor; (2) crafting a multi-location experience for multiple work settings throughout the day; (3) generating ample space, light, and views, regardless of where members are working; and (4) designing an environment that is warm, healthy, and inspiring.

The buildout of a co-working space based on wellbeing principles is an important contribution to technology that can achieve employee wellbeing proactively rather than only as an afterthought.

Key Words: wellbeing, co-working, workspace

Preface

I would like to thank and acknowledge the help and support I have received throughout this challenging doctoral journey. Without the encouragement and collaboration of so many people I would never have been able to finish.

To Tracy Kite, who has been a role model and guide on this journey, more than she can ever know. To Richard Hale and to other members of the IMCA faculty, especially Karen Jackson for all of her help. To Elyssebeth Leigh for making me think differently, championing my cause and escorting me to completion. To my doctorate action learning set, who provided ideas, feedback and collaboration. Especially to Carole, who has become my friend in the process. To Amy, who has pushed me to places I never thought my mind could go, and of course, to Hans Maurer.

To the members and staff of the Village Workspaces, who took the time to give me endless feedback and have been so integral to this project—without whom I could not have done this. Thank you for finding your work home in the Village Workspaces, flourishing and helping us to flourish as a result. And a big "Thank You" to the 38 who took 40 minutes out of their day to let me interview them.

To my partners in the Village Workspace, Lewis and Oli, for allowing me to implement my ideas and for our ongoing journey together, changing workspaces for the next generation.

Introduction

This Explication presents the research that I have carried out to articulate a clear and original model that uses key principles of wellbeing as a framework for the construction of co-working spaces. The research responds to a new generation of workers who desire to feel positive about blending work and home life and are motivated to bring their true, holistic selves to work. With my belief in the transformative power of such positive emotions in the everyday world of work, my goal is to advance everyone's sense of wellbeing at work by pushing the boundaries of the workplace environment to maximize and achieve just that outcome.

The project is built on a foundation of the themes that have governed my work for the last 20 years in the personal development and entertainment fields: *to connect*, *to be healthy*, *to flow*, *to take notice*, *to learn*, *to give*, and *to be sensitive to environmental factors*. The use of some of these building blocks culminated in a model that guided a design and buildout of a co-working space known commercially as the Westside Village Workspace in Los Angeles.

As sources of data (Figure 1.1), relevant literature was used regarding co-working and wellbeing. This study is based on five years of lived experiences and the use of a heuristic inquiry as a proactive participant in four co-working spaces and includes data from semi-structured interviews and a survey with members of the Santa Monica Village, a small co-working space of which I am the co-owner. I synthesized data to decide on the elements and the prioritization of elements in building out the 14,000-square foot Westside Village space. Part of this process was to obtain a rank ordering of the wellbeing features the co-working members liked in that workspace, which led to a cost-benefit prioritization of features.

Later, after 12 months of observation of members' use of the Westside space, I conducted informal interviews to evaluate the extent to which the current design for workspace wellbeing was working as intended and to identify needs for further research or re-design.

The Explication of these findings suggests that four principles should be applied in the construction model for co-working spaces. These are: (1) *to flow*, (2) *to connect,* (3) *to be healthy*, and (4) *to be sensitive to environmental factors*. Supporting the cogency of these principles as applied, for example, in the construction of the Westside Village Workspace, one may see the reflection of these principles in a mix of private offices versus open space to mitigate the noise and privacy factor; in crafting a multi-location experience for multiple work settings throughout the day; in generating ample space, light, and views, regardless of where members are working; and in designing an environment that is warm, healthy, and inspiring.

The use of wellbeing principles as the conceptual basis for the physical planning of a co-working space contributes to the scholarly domain concerned with optimizing workspace performance and satisfaction. This work occupies that niche in which the primary design motivation is the centering of employee wellbeing, as opposed to leaving such matters to afterthoughts, hindsight, and post hoc add-ons.
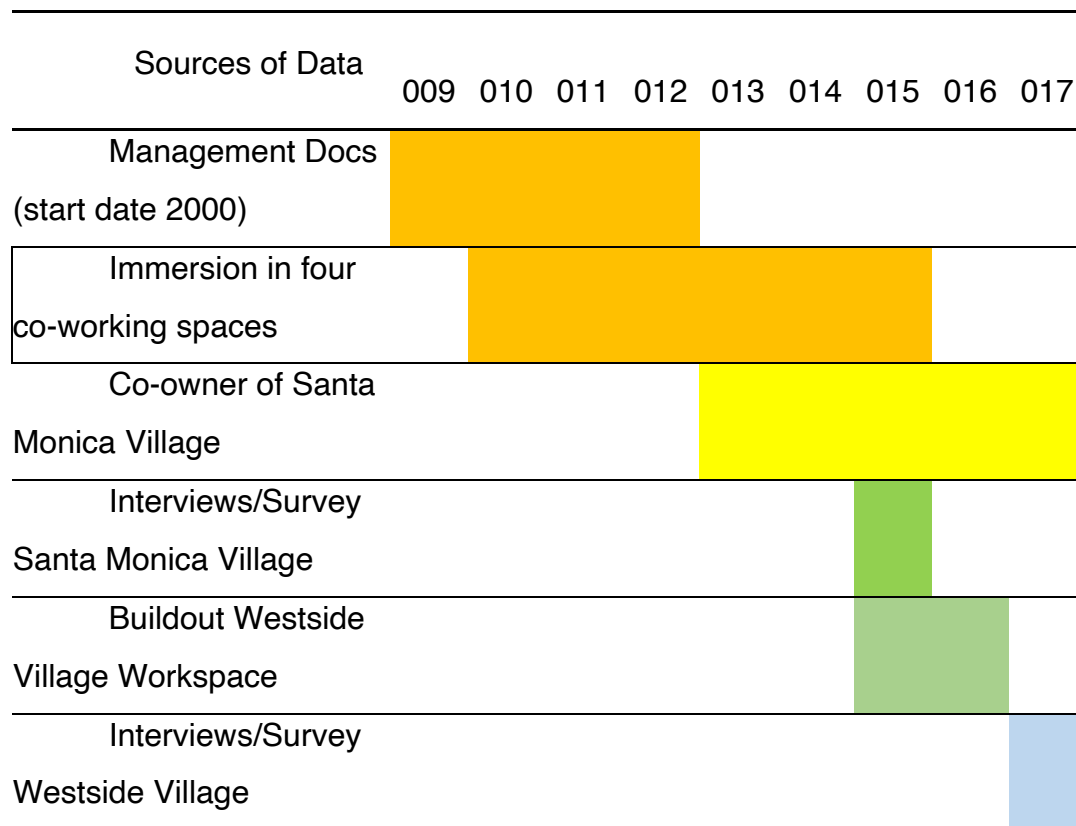
Sources of Data	009	010	011	012	013	014	015	016	017
Management Docs (start date 2000)	▓	▓	▓	▓					
Immersion in four co-working spaces		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓		
Co-owner of Santa Monica Village					▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Interviews/Survey Santa Monica Village							▓		
Buildout Westside Village Workspace							▓	▓	
Interviews/Survey Westside Village									▓

Figure 1.1. Timelines for the collection of data.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Wellbeing in the Workplace

The Need for a Wellbeing Model

For the large and growing segment of today's interconnected workforce, the stagnant design of traditional workspaces, fixed and controlled by the employer, is increasingly perceived as problematic and limiting because of such attributes as poor lighting, open plans, no choice as to where to work, a lack of seating options and work arrangements, poor ergonomics, and noise issues, all of which impose limits on creativity, productivity, and health. (Delany, 2004; Vetch & Newsham, 2000).

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) report there were 30.4 million lost working days in 2015-2016 due to depression, anxiety, and workplace stress. These illnesses occurred from overuse of computers and other technologies, from sitting too long, and from other sources of pain and demotivation that comes with working in an office whose design does not take into account the wellbeing of workers (Health and Safety Executive, 2017).

Recent research shows that workplace design is a key factor in job satisfaction and other positive work indicators (Murphy, Robertson, & Carayon, 2014). Workplaces that are consciously designed to consider the physical and psychological health of the workers who occupy them are more successful than those lacking in such design, and employees working in the former are more productive (Murphy, Robertson, & Carayon, 2014; Parker, 2014). Many conventional space-centric designs emphasize material productivity, often to the exclusive benefit of the employer (O'Neill et al., 2015).

Although there has been increased attention by employers given to the physical and psychological health of employees over the last two decades, especially by large companies with many employees, research in the United States has shown only a 24% involvement in wellness programs when employees have a choice to opt in (O'Boyle &Harter, 2014).

In contrast to stagnation and the limits current design imposes on the creativity, personal involvement, and growth of employees, we have seen an increasing demand for people-centric workplace designs that are more attuned to employees' needs.

Bringing the Whole Self to Work

Another important change that is affecting how people view their livelihoods is an increasing adoption of healthy behaviors (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Good et al., 2015; Hill et al., 2001). People are now more and more concerned with taking care of their whole selves in employment scenarios and not just their working selves, as was the case of the conventional industrial employment model of the past (Aldrich-Wincer, 2015).

Productivity was the primary goal for earlier generations, who brought their work-only selves to their places of employment, even though these places gave little attention to their needs. Many sources credit the millennial generation for the increasing number of organizations that now embrace employee wellbeing as a necessary ingredient of wholesome employment (Creighton, 2014). The influence of the millennial generation is growing because its members bring their whole selves into the office. Millennials are said to be more collaborative, a generation that seeks out forms of work that can blend with greater ease into their personal lifestyle choices (O'Neill et al., 2015; Sundsted et al., 2009), elements not sought out by previous generations.

Researchers who study wellbeing have come to realize that neglecting the employees'

physical and emotional needs can affect both workers and organizations in negative ways (Boyd,

1997; Danna & Griffin, 1999). For example, workers who suffer from poor health and low levels

of wellbeing in the workplace are likely to be less productive and more likely to be absent from

work (Boyd, 1997; Danna & Griffin, 1999; Rahman, Ferdausy, & Kara, 2012). We are now

seeing a greater recognition of the importance of achieving a good work/life balance by

employees finding fulfilling employment that contributes to their overall quality of life.

The Changing Nature of How We Work

Working remotely is increasingly common in the current work environment—one of the

more profound effects that evolving technologies are having on the nature of employment.

Especially given the general pursuit of cost-efficiency, opportunities to undertake entrepreneurial

and freelancing endeavors are increasingly available for those who can work independently.

One consequence of this new directionality in the nature of work has been the emergence

of co-working spaces that provide an alternative to the traditional 9-to-5 work environment,

which often required an expensive and time-consuming commute and a commitment to spending

several hours in one place. Co-working is an alternative to the conventional regime. In alignment

with the needs of emerging entrepreneurs and freelancers, co-working contracts are flexible and

allow small to medium-size businesses, as well as freelancers, to maintain a relatively low

overhead. Given the shifting economy, independent contractors and entrepreneurs can better

control cost variance by sharing workspaces (Botsman & Rogers, 2011; Cappelli & Keller,

2013). Such benefits, however, may be lessened should employees be less than fully satisfied

with the wellbeing conditions of their workspaces.

Co-working and Wellbeing

What is Co-Working?

Co-working is an emerging phenomenon. Co-working is a style of work that involves a shared workspace. Typically, co-working has been an attractive alternative for those professionals who would ordinarily work from home, such as freelancers or business people who travel frequently and then end up working in relative isolation (Butler, 2008). However, in recent years, the co-working movement has also influenced how more conventional employers relate to their employees.

Part of the nature of co-working spaces is their multi-purpose layout. Co-working spaces provide a mix of work environments in their configurations, with open spaces as well as a planned commitment to closed office space. Co-working also has a social component that re-aligns traditional work relationships among colleagues. In the emerging forms of co-working, there is more of a sense of community and a voluntary coming together of a group of people who are working independently but sharing values that make them want to work in the company of such individuals (DeBare, 2008).

A co-working space provides the independent contractor and entrepreneur a set of colleagues and coworkers, something not available when they work alone from home. Members are often interested in the synergy that can happen from working with like-minded people who value the same working arrangements (Miller, 2007).

Co-working spaces offer individual freelancers and smaller businesses the benefit of having a physical space dedicated to work and the chance to be around other small businesses and the people who inspire these businesses (Spinuzzi, 2012). Employers also adopt co-working models so that some of their salaried employees gain the flexibility of finding dedicated

workspaces closer to home. This can improve the attractiveness of a salaried position, as it shortens travel distances and gives time back to the employee, who would otherwise have to commute to the office. These changes in the nature of employment represent important societal shifts.

The co-working trend has become prominent in workplace cultures in recent years. According to the Global Co-working Survey (Deskmag, 2017), it is estimated that 1.7 million people will be working in around 19,000 co-working spaces around the world by the end of 2018—compared to just 1,130 such spaces in 2011.

Definition of Wellbeing

There is no clear consensus on any absolute definition of wellbeing. However, the 2017 Oxford Dictionary describes wellbeing as "the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy." Wellbeing is more of an umbrella term for several different emotional and physical states. Wellbeing involves feelings like contentment but also evokes a person's state of physical health and feelings of fulfillment and self-worth. Fulfillment and self-worth are also intertwined in what we generally understand the term wellbeing to mean. Wellbeing is, therefore, a cumulative and integrative term. People experience a state of wellbeing when they feel positive emotions, find themselves to be in a pleasant mental state of contentment, happiness, and feel little to no negative emotions like depression and anxiety. Wellbeing also suggests contentment with life and positive functioning (Andrews, 1976; DeBare, 2008; Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997; Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Workspace Wellbeing and Positive Psychology

Traditional psychology has focused almost exclusively on mental illness, particularly neuroses and psychoses. Recently, however, more and more empirical attention has been given to studying positive emotions, as reflected in the work of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and Frederickson (2001). This turn in psychology has led to a concentration on wellbeing and an understanding what motivates people to work and find meaning in their lives. Positive psychology is the study of strengths and personality traits that help people think their way to happiness and to a life where they can flourish (Seligman, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Scholarly research (e.g., Frederickson, 2001) has turned away from the traditional, pathological view of human psychology to re-focus on the mental characteristics and psychological attributes that help human beings succeed. Frederickson is known for developing what is referred to as the *broaden-and-build* theory. She argues that positive emotions flood our brains with dopamine and serotonin, chemicals that make people feel good. These crucial biochemicals also play a role in assisting our brains to process and store information. They help us to retain information longer and to make neural connections, so that we can think more creatively and quickly, become more skilled at problem solving, invent new ways of doing things, and help ourselves to become more productive. My interest in workplace wellbeing research uses Frederickson's broaden-and-build theory as a catalyst to learning how to build wellbeing causalities directly into the construction and design of co-working spaces with the goal of helping to improve the quality of members' work as they receive more personal satisfaction and reward.

The Research Questions

Building a co-working space that uses wellbeing principles in the physical framework of the workspace design is my contribution to the scholarship on workplace wellbeing and co-working spaces, where wellbeing principles are often relegated to retrospective afterthoughts or add-ons to the office space design. Underlying my research were two interrelated questions:

Research Question #1. Could I identify and confirm principles of wellbeing that could find physical embodiment as an integral part of the construction in a buildout of a co-working space?

Research Question #2. How would such principles apply in practice?

The Significance and Overview of the Study

My intention is to articulate a clear and original framework that targets aspects of wellbeing as guideposts in the construction of a co-working space to serve as a blueprint for other entrepreneur-designers to follow. This model of co-working and office design should help companies to prioritize the need *to flow*, *to connect*, *to stay healthy* and *to be sensitive to the environment* in their own workspaces. Companies that apply the recommended approach will be fulfilling members' wellbeing needs, increasing their enjoyment of the co-working experience, and, inevitably, enhancing members' productivity. Many of the possible means of projecting wellbeing features into a co-working space remained unexplored. This study will assist organizations of all kinds to identify potential applications in their own workspaces.

My Situated and Contextual Interpretations of the Co-working Lifestyle

Beginning in 2012, I wanted to do more than present my knowledge of wellbeing in another seminar or by writing another book. I wanted to contribute to the body of knowledge on wellbeing and work life by making a concrete and practical contribution to the field. The current research represents the result of my personal quest over the last seven years for knowledge in this new field of co-working and my desire to position myself at the forefront of wellbeing in co-working spaces. What makes this Explication unique is that it is not just a model for co-working construction that does not yet exist but is a holistic integration of my personal career trajectory and my evolving point of view. I participated fully in the process and then made that knowledge and research explicit in my findings.

My journey has not been without difficult moments, and many times I have struggled to express in writing my inner spiritual journey and to reconcile that with the outer physical journey, covering the years immersed in the workspaces of others, my experiences as a co-founder of the Santa Monica Village, and as the designer of the buildout of the Westside Village Workspace. However, this contribution is a reflection of who I am and the career choices that I have made. What makes this Explication unique is that I draw on a unique combination of experiences from which I have forged tangible results for use in co-working spaces.

Methodological Considerations and Systemic Overview of the Project Process

The research I have pursued along the way has been largely heuristic in nature. The heuristic approach is a form of qualitative research that was pioneered by Clark Moustakas (1990) during his career as a humanistic psychologist. Moustakas (per Hiles, 2008) used the term *heuristic* to describe

the process of an inner search for knowledge, aimed at discovering the nature and meaning of an experience. It is an approach that offers a significant departure from mainstream research in that it explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the researcher to the extent that the lived experience of the researcher becomes the main focus of the research (p. 418).

Heuristic inquiry (HI) is often autobiographical and draws on the tacit knowledge that the researcher has by virtue of personal participation in a set of personally experienced events. The study's topics and research questions are usually conceived by the researcher based upon the researcher's personal interests and on the experiences that have had a personal influence. As Hiles explains in his definition of the term, "What HI does is make this participatory process explicit, and moreover, it makes this the major focus of inquiry" (p. 418).

The current research has been developed from data drawn from a number of sources. The oldest and most formative of these sources I refer to as the "Management Documents." These are written records of singular events in my life's unfolding that have had the most profound effects on my understanding of my place in the universe, on my sense of purpose and direction, and on my fundamental vocational and avocational interests. More important, in these management documents lie the prototypical notions that were, through my own Explication of the artifacts, to evolve into seven principles, some of which would undergird the construction of wellbeing. focused co-working spaces. The second source is more synchronic than historical and consists of the set of perceptions that I have derived through and from my many years of lived experiences, commencing in 2010 as a proactive participant in four co-working spaces over five years and as a co-founder and developer of two other co-working spaces.

In addition to these sources, my research stands on two independent, more formal supports. The first has been a purposive exploration of the relevant academic research literature on co-working and wellbeing. The second has been the data and the analysis of this data from various formal qualitative studies, one conducted one year after my acquisition of a partnership interest in a Santa Monica co-working space and the other conducted two years later and roughly one year after the buildout of a new co-working space in West Los Angeles.

In the former study, semi-structured interviews and a survey were administrated for the purpose of confirming and ranking the veracity of tentative principles for constructing a co-working space whose core goal was the wellbeing of its members. The data from the first study in Santa Monica would verify the validity of such principles and provide a model from which plans for the Westside location could be conceived and put into production. The second study, similar in form to the first, involved a questionnaire and survey of members of the new buildout to evaluate how well the design principles did, in fact, reflect the sense of wellbeing of the members, how they could be improved, and how future research could and should be formulated.

Figure 2 depicts my journey to create an original framework based on practical principles to build a co-working space with wellbeing at the core of the concept.

1.
Management Documents - public and published work in lifestyle and entertainment fields, providing thematic inspiration for the wellbeing principles.

6.
Interviews & survey as co-owner with members of Westside Village 1 year after opening to test the chosen principles in practice.

2.
Lived experience immersed inside 4 co-working spaces over 5 years, commencing in 2010.

How I used wellbeing principles as the conceptual basis for the physical planning of a co-working space.

4.
Experiences as co-owner of Santa Monica Village. Plus interviews & surveys with members to provide insights & rank wellbeing principles for subsequent creation of Westside Village.

3.
Literature research on co-working and wellbeing.

5.
Construction of Westside Village space in Los Angeles synthesizing the chosen interacting wellbeing principles and subsequent observations of use.

Figure 2. My journey to build a principle-based co-working space capable of inducing wellbeing for its members.

The Journey Toward Explication

Action Learning

This Explication is built around a core ethos of *action learning*. This educational process requires individuals to study their actions and experiences to improve performance and solve problems. Action learning means learning from and with each other from action and concrete experience and from actions taken as a result of the learning that has taken place.

Reg Revans pioneered the notion of *action learning* in the 1940s; it was a deceptively simple approach to human development. His idea was that small groups of "comrades in adversity" get together to learn from each other's failures and victories rather than from "expert" instruction. His goal was to empower people to take responsibility for their processes and outcomes. Revans (1998) believed, "There can be no learning without action and no action without learning" (p. 381). The self-awareness required for the action learning process enables individuals to test and build their leadership skills in a safe and supportive environment, while helping to develop critical thinking skills at the same time. Revans' formula was $L = P + Q$, where L is learning, P is programmed knowledge, and Q is questioning insight.

Action learning was a core part of my explication journey with the IMCA on the Doctoral Senior Executive Action Learning (SEAL) program, which I began in April 2013. Participants from different countries and representing different businesses came together to form action sets and were encouraged to question and challenge each other's thinking toward our doctorate studies and individual subjects. We asked innovative questions to help us discover new insights and find creative solutions. This method to learning is "essentially a democratic, non-prescriptive and group-based approach" (Kozubska & Mackenzie, 2011). Revans believed that in a changing world, people must be masters in asking questions.

My experience with action learning within the doctorate program with my learning set and supervisors changed my thinking and the way that I worked. I had to describe how I gained knowledge by doing extensive research, whether it was through extensive literature searches, my lived experience, or how I interviewed. I also learned to develop critical thinking skills and solve problems to develop the doctoral level work presented herein. Beyond my doctorate learning set, my other learning sets included the members of the Village Workspace locations, and the other co-founders—Oliver Barry and Lewis Maler. I also gathered considerable feedback from a public workshop. The work in this study has been presented to CEOs, office space developers, and academics.

The Public Workshop

The Flourishing Workspace is a public workshop in which I have presented my original contributions. The workshop so far has been delivered to professors at UCLA and California State University, as well as to companies such as the international office real estate firm, Cresa and Douglas Emmet, who own and operate multiple A class office buildings in Southern California. It has also been presented to CEOs and public school teachers in Los Angeles. The opinions, suggestions and comments from the participants were collected at the time of the workshop in order to gather feedback and to influence how I develop and deliver my original contribution as a keynote for the future. Participants contributed by way of filling out feedback forms at the end of the seminars: a collection of the summarized comments are included in the Appendix section.

The Management Documents

A body of data vital to my professional and personal development is found in the collection that I have termed *management documents*. These documents are a collection of markers that track and highlight the evolution and transformative achievements of my career. The management documents are critical because they are the source of the thematic inspiration for the initial seven buildout principles for wellbeing-centered co-working spaces.

The management documents focus on 15 episodes that captured my attention during my career journey. The process of explication, which I have applied to these episodes, provides for "revelation, analysis, development, clarification, moving from implicit to explicit, making sense of experience . . ." (Kozubska, 2006, p. 30). The process enabled me to investigate the terrain that I had covered and to advance my journey toward an original contribution to the body of knowledge on the nexus of wellbeing and workspaces.

Organization of the Explication

The next chapter presents a review of the literature that assesses relevant sources in the scholarship focusing mainly on co-working spaces and wellbeing and where working spaces and wellbeing in the workplace intercept.

Chapter 3 examines the philosophical, ontological, and epistemological perspectives that give analytic substance to this work. In connection therewith, I offer a detailed explanation of my use of heuristic inquiry, traditional semi-structured interviews, and a survey. Combined, this research provides data that, when analyzed, leads to my findings on wellbeing in the workplace.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the themes from my management documents that became the principles I use in the buildout of a new co-working space in West Los Angeles. The chapter also

14

includes further discussion of the existing literature on the chosen principles of wellbeing in the workplace and the contemporary researchers who have influenced my decision to incorporate some of these principles into the buildout of a workspace.

In Chapter 5, I discuss my immersive heuristic journey, which began when I joined the Writer's Junction in 2010 and, thereafter, pursued in three other co-working spaces, where I was a researcher, an observer, and a user. The chapter reflects on how these four co-working spaces—The Writer's Junction, Cross Campus, WeWork in Los Angeles, and Henry Wood House in London—contributed to the wellbeing of the members. I recognized that the four spaces had differing underlying models for creating such results for members. I also experienced and made explicit the importance of my lived experience immersed inside of the co-working space, without which it would be difficult to identify and understand the strengths and weaknesses of varying models and be able to draw insights from each.

Over the five years of almost daily involvement in co-working spaces, I took notice of noise issues, privacy issues, poor ergonomics, unhealthy snacks, inadequate quality lighting, lack of outside views, inconsiderate division of space, minimal variety in the available work stations, and the limited availability of options to change one's posture throughout the day. At the same time, each space proved to be useful in my own model.

Notwithstanding the value of my participation as a workspace member, the experience needed to be supplemented, since viewing a co-working space as a commercial venture also demanded inputs from the owner's perspective. Ownership of a co-working space—the Village Workspace in Santa Monica, acquired by me and my husband in 2013—provided such inputs.

Chapter 6 examines my experience as co-owner of what was formerly the Working Village and is now the Westside Village in Santa Monica. Approximately a year after acquiring

the 3,500-foot co-working space, I developed a two-part data collection instrument. The purpose of the instrument was to determine (a) what the users of this space liked about it, what they did not like, what could be improved, and how and (b) how these users would rank the seven principles in order of meaningfulness to their wellbeing. The purpose of the instrument was to provide insights that could guide planning for the buildout of the Westside site. Eighteen Santa Monica members volunteered their participation.

Part 1 of the instrument was based on five open-ended questions that were repeated for each of the seven wellbeing principles. Part 2 was a simple survey, but the findings gleaned from the Santa Monica survey were critical. The ranking of the seven principles became the priority for the buildout features and construction budget of the Westside Village workspace. As a contribution to practice, the analysis of interview and survey data would determine which principles should be incorporated into construction stage planning for co-working spaces and whether there were any redundancies or gaps in our working model.

At the end of chapter 6 I created a visual representation of the component structures of the principles that emerged from the data inputs, notably, from the literature, my management documents, my work inside other co-working spaces, and the data-gathering instruments employed with Santa Monica Village.

In Chapter 7, I discuss my findings and the subsequent construction of the Westside Village. As I worked with the seven principles conceptually, I realized over time and through the heuristic journey that certain principles were more relevant to co-working space buildouts than others. From my immersive experiences and the Santa Monica location research findings, I selected the four highest-ranked principles as priorities for a space buildout. These four priority

wellbeing principles—drawn from the original seven wellbeing principles—were (1) *to connect*, (2) *to be healthy*, (3) *to flow*, and (4) *to be sensitive to environmental influence*.

Chapter 7 also examines how I discovered the crossover between the wellbeing principles and the physical factors that embodied these principles and how I would need to consider the interaction of the principles in practice. As a result, a four-factor model emerged for the construction stage.

My research on wellbeing, plus the literature research, culminated in (a) the development of a practical plan for the construction stage of the Westside Village project and (b) the answer to my second research question, namely, how the principles interact in practice. I show how I devised a way to address several design factors that improved work processes and addressed physical and psychological wellbeing in the workplace. I show further how to integrate the four wellbeing principles into construction plans suitable for cost-efficient implementation. If the goal of wellbeing of members was to be served in the buildout of the co-working space, four problems had to be solved all within a budget. Chapter 7 examines these problems.

Chapter 7 also examines another set of interviews and surveys that I administered to co-working space members, this time from the new Los Angeles West Village Workspace, which had just been completed. The purpose of the interviews and surveys was to determine whether the completed buildout effectively addressed the wellbeing principles.

In its conclusion, my Explication provides a final overview of the most important aspects of my study's results and my Explication experience. In building out the Westside Village Workspace, I was able to use actionable principles as a foundation to create workspaces for the next generation. I discuss my future work and conclude by explaining how my research occupies

a critical niche, specifically the search for reliable principles of design and construction that can

produce workspaces that are maximally conducive to member wellbeing.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

A change in the nature of work is emerging. No longer is the workforce confined to a desk or cubicle at the central office of an employer. The numbers of independent workers, contractors, telecommuters, and start-ups are increasing exponentially. Brick-and-mortar companies are giving employees the option to work from co-working spaces. For all of these workers who are no longer in the traditional work environment, there is a need for a viable, livable, convenient, and effective workspace beyond the home office, a workspace that provides wellbeing in its construction and environment. Although there is literature devoted to co-working spaces, and literature on what constitutes wellbeing, these two have not been merged into a single vision of wellbeing in co-working spaces followed by a specific method of achieving that vision in the planning and construction of a co-working space.

This chapter examines the existing literature on co-working spaces and wellbeing and the need for the convergence of the two disciplines in which principles of wellbeing are built in to the design. The contribution of my research hopes to make the key principles of wellbeing as a framework for the construction of co-working spaces.

The Workplace: The History of Serviced Offices

Although the co-working movement is recent, a number of somewhat similar work arrangements preceded the current efforts. A handful of serviced office organizations were in operation as early as the 1960s, according to Jo Disney (2015). Examples include the

OmniOffices Group, Inc. (OmniOffices), which established the first executive suites concept in 1962. Included in this early serviced office concept were a variety of work arrangements including serviced offices, executive suites, phone and fax centers, and business centers (Kojo & Nenonen, 2017). Another specific example of a forerunner of the serviced office format was the Fegen Suites in the United States, which was founded in 1966 and which provided furnished suites for attorneys. During the 1970s and 1980s more serviced office arrangements were established. For example, in 1980, Richard Nissen, a pioneer in virtual office implementation in the United Kingdom, founded Business Space Ltd. Nissen's serviced office business is still highly successful and has lately branched into virtual services.

One of the world's largest business center providers first emerged in 1989 when Mark Dixon founded Regus, inspired by business travelers and their need for available workspace while away from the home office. His company evolved into Regus PLC, which today is the world's largest business center operator. The company experienced some difficulties and sell-offs in the early 2000s but soon rebounded and acquired HQ Global Workplaces in the United States (Disney, 2015). Today, Regus is traded on the London Stock Exchange and operates over 3,000 locations in 120 countries.

The serviced office model shares a number of characteristics with the more recent co-working models—both provide rental access to office space and amenities with a flexible contract and low level of commitment. The services provided by the shared office model were covered under an all-inclusive fee that included office set up, rent, printing services, shared kitchen facilities, as well as cleaning services and utilities. This kind of contract is called "plug and play." Plug-and-play contracts are generally set up on a month-to-month basis, although some may have a "pay as you go" plan. The short-term nature of these leases reduces the

investment risk for start-up companies and beginning entrepreneurs (Foster, 1989; Harrison, 2002). At the same time, serviced offices were often in convenient, highly coveted locations that might otherwise be too expensive to rent privately.

The various accounts of the history of co-working all credit different businesses as precursors to the current co-working movement, thus demonstrating the "official" history of the co-working movement is still contested. The concept at the Village Workspaces is very similar to a serviced office format, since the bulk of our offices are private and the open space is smaller than the private office space. We are more of a hybrid between the co-working and serviced office formats.

Co-working: The Beginnings of the Co-working Movement and Models of Co-working

The co-working trend began to take off after 2000. In an article published in *Deskmag* magazine, one of the forerunning trade magazines on co-working, Foertsch and Cagnol suggested that the first co-working space was opened in 2005 in San Francisco by Brad Neuberg (Foertsch & Cagnol, 2013; Gandini, 2015; Heikkilä, 2012). Neuberg's establishment was intended to provide an option for freelancing workers.

The home office tended to be isolating and the retail-oriented business centers popular at the time were too impersonal and limited in their service offerings. Retail business centers like Kinkos, for example, generally offered only paid access to office equipment like computers and fax machines and was not designed to function as temporary offices or shared workspaces. Neuberg's space, on the other hand, was run as a non-profit co-op and was intended to be a "home for well-being," according to Foertsh and Cagnol (2013). The co-op consisted of a space offering five to eight desks and free Wifi. Members would also take part in shared lunches.

Closing time was at 5:45 p.m., and members could take meditation breaks and arrange massage services on-site. Neuberg's first space closed after only a year, with another space called the Hat Factory replacing it in 2006.

Other authors identify several organizations in the San Francisco bay area as the first significant co-working ventures (Abate, 2010). Considerable momentum around the idea of shared workspaces and co-working developed around this time, and the trend appears to have been simultaneously emergent in various world cities like London, Berlin and San Francisco.

The year 2005 also saw the opening of the first Hub (now called Impact Hub), which started at London's Angel Station (Foertsch & Cagnol, 2013). Impact Hub has now developed into a network of more than seventy-six co-working spaces on five continents (Hovitz, 2015). According to Forertsch and Cagnol, by 2003 Hub was the largest network of co-working spaces in the world. Scholars like Johns and Gratton, for instance, refer to the co-working movement that emerged around 2005 as the "third wave" of working remotely (2013, p. 1). Co-working spaces are valued because they provide workers who have no physical workspace with a sense of "colocation" as they complete their work tasks.

Around the same time in Berlin, another proto co-working space opened called St. Oberholz, a café that provided free Internet access where guests could spend time working on their personal laptops (Foertsch & Cagnol, 2013). This café in Berlin is the subject of a 2006 book *We Call It Work—The Digital Bohemians or Intelligent Life Beyond Fixed Employments.* The book did not focus specifically on co-working but instead explored the impact of the Internet on various forms of work. However, the book itself is a product of the emerging co-working movement because it describes the context out of which the first co-working space emerged in Germany. Today, a co-working space is still offered at St. Oberholz on the floor above the café.

In his review of the academic literature on co-working spaces, Gandini notes that around 2002 there began an interest in understanding "the rise of the creative class" as discussed by Richard Florida (2002). Gandini is critical of what he calls the "celebratory framework" that surrounds co-working, freelancing, and entrepreneurial endeavors, which he says are nothing more than euphemisms for being underemployed (2015). This skepticism is echoed in other sources as well (Moriset, 2014; Osnowitz, 2010). Around 2002 the term *co-working* came into use by some shared workspace enthusiasts. *Co-working* was used to denote the practice of sharing a space but working individually, as opposed to working together on the same task or project (Fost, 2008; Gandini, 2015).

Another big force for the co-working community in the early years was the co-working Wiki, begun by coworkers in the San Francisco area in 2006. This is a community-operated resource that provides free information on co-working establishments. The Wiki helps users find co-working spaces in cities around the world. It also helps by bringing like-minded people together so they can share ideas. People interested in founding their own co-working space also use the Wiki to find potential partners.

The term *co-working* first became a trend in Google's database in 2007 and has continued to grow. A German artist was inspired by *We Call It Work* and opened a co-working space called Business Class Net in 2007 in Germany. The medium-sized workspace is located inside the artist's former gallery in KreuzbergIt and was Berlin's first official co-working space, eventually becoming a network of co-working spaces.

Around the same time, the first co-working conference, now a yearly event, was held in 2010 in Brussels (Foertsch & Cagnol, 2013). During this time, the media began to use the term *co-working* more frequently, although there is some discrepancy in the accounts of co-working

history because some sources state that the use of the term *co-working* was exclusive to the United States up until 2009 (Cashman, 2012). However, by 2012 there were more than 2,000 different co-working spaces worldwide (Cashman, 2012; Foertsch & Cagnol, 2013).

How Co-working Differs from Serviced Offices

The business models for co-working spaces and the serviced office space are similar. The members generally pay an all-inclusive monthly fee for access to space, the Internet and other amenities. However, co-working spaces are distinctive, because the nature of the work performed by co-workers varies. Differences can also be seen in the significance of social interactions within the spaces and the aesthetic design of the spaces themselves (Waters-Lynch et al., 2016).

The co-working movement differentiated itself from the serviced office industry by prioritizing social interactions among its members as a central feature, describing themselves as a community and not just a workplace (Fost, 2008; Sundsted et al., 2009).

According to the Co-working Wiki, one of the defining characteristics of co-working spaces is to build community through sharing and interaction, providing independent professionals and entrepreneurs the flexibility to work together. The assumption is that this is better than working alone, which had up to that time been the only option for telecommuting or freelancing workers (Co-working Wiki, 2017).

This stress on community as a defining characteristic of co-working is highly important in addressing the isolation that independent freelancers and entrepreneurs feel because of the nature of their work.

Co-working spaces use many collective practices to create a sense of community. For

example, they circulate newsletters, hold collective events and encourage the use of social networking sites. In some cases, the emerging organizations used terms such as "curation of like-minded community," and it was common for the first co-working spaces to put inspirational quotations on display to communicate the mission of the community.

In contrast, serviced offices are more traditional and corporate in their outlook, and the aesthetic of these offices reflect the traditional corporate pattern of industrialized, standardized mass production and mass consumption and the scientific management movement of the early twentieth century (Guillen, 1997).

Co-working spaces, in contrast, have an aesthetic that is more playful and more creative, with a more customized design that mixes work and play. An early description of co-working spaces called them "a Google style office for people that don't work at Google" (Neuberg, 2014).

Co-working spaces are not solely flexible shared office spaces for creative professionals "working alone together" (Spinuzzi, 2012). Studies show the number of alienated knowledge workers is considerable. With one in every five knowledge workers at risk of feeling alienated (Nair & Vohra, 2010), co-working spaces provide a much-needed solution to freelancers as well as start-ups and small companies.

Co-working Models

Brick-and-mortar employers are beginning to adopt co-working-style models so that salaried employees gain the flexibility of dedicated workspaces closer to home. This can improve the attractiveness of a salaried position, as it shortens travel distances for those jobs that would otherwise require a commute to comply with the obligation to be physically present at the office.

These changes in the nature of employment represent important societal shifts, and scholarly attention to the popularity of co-working spaces is growing.

Because of the emergent nature of the co-working sector, there are very few established industry standards. It is hard to find a consensus on key elements of the movement because companies at the forefront of the co-working service industry are known to be highly innovative, adapting their business practices to member needs and priding themselves on innovations that distinguish them from their competition.

The distinctions between co-working spaces and serviced offices are in no way rigid. Many co-working models share some characteristics with serviced offices; other spaces are clearly hybrids between co-working models and serviced offices and co-working spaces. Regus and Servcorp now offer co-working spaces when in the past they offered strictly private offices, and newer co-working companies such as WeWork and NextSpace also offer private offices. Some facilities provide only offices, others are all open spaces, and others provide mixed arrangements. Figure 2.1 illustrates this overlap and highlights why a clear definition of co-working has been so challenging.

Serviced Offices and Coworking
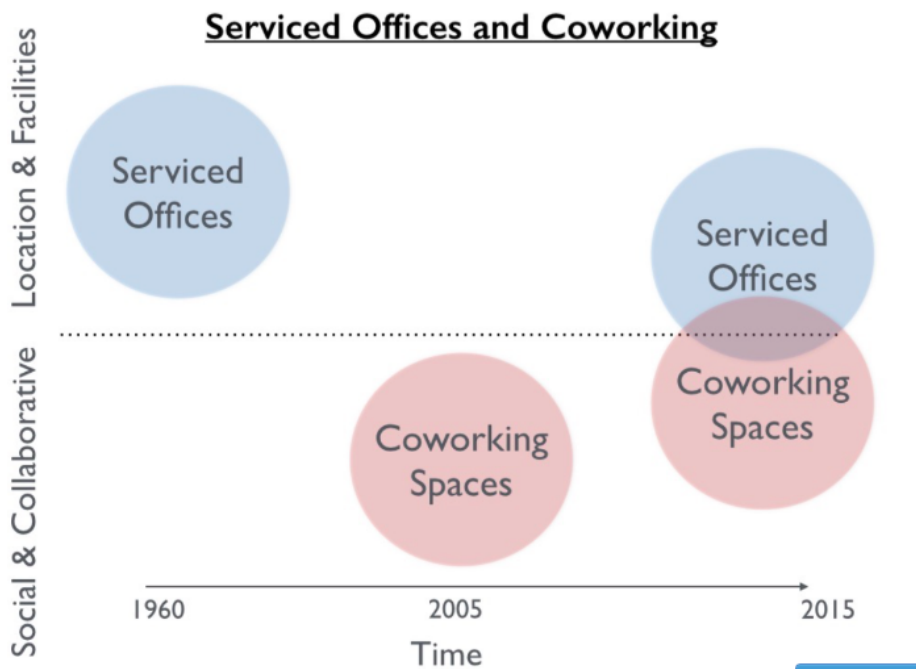
Figure 2.1. Challenges to defining co-working

Notes: Adapted from *Co-working a Transdisciplinary Overview* (Waters-Lynch et al., 2016)

The Village Workspace Model

The Village Workspaces is a derivative of the serviced office model, as it provides a majority of private office space relative to the shared workspace. The Westside location has 2,000 square feet dedicated to shared space out of 14,000 square feet overall (Figure 2.2). The remainder of the space, apart from the corridors, is divided into forty-one offices. The majority of the members at the Village Workspace have their own offices, but private office members are also permitted to use the open spaces and conference rooms.
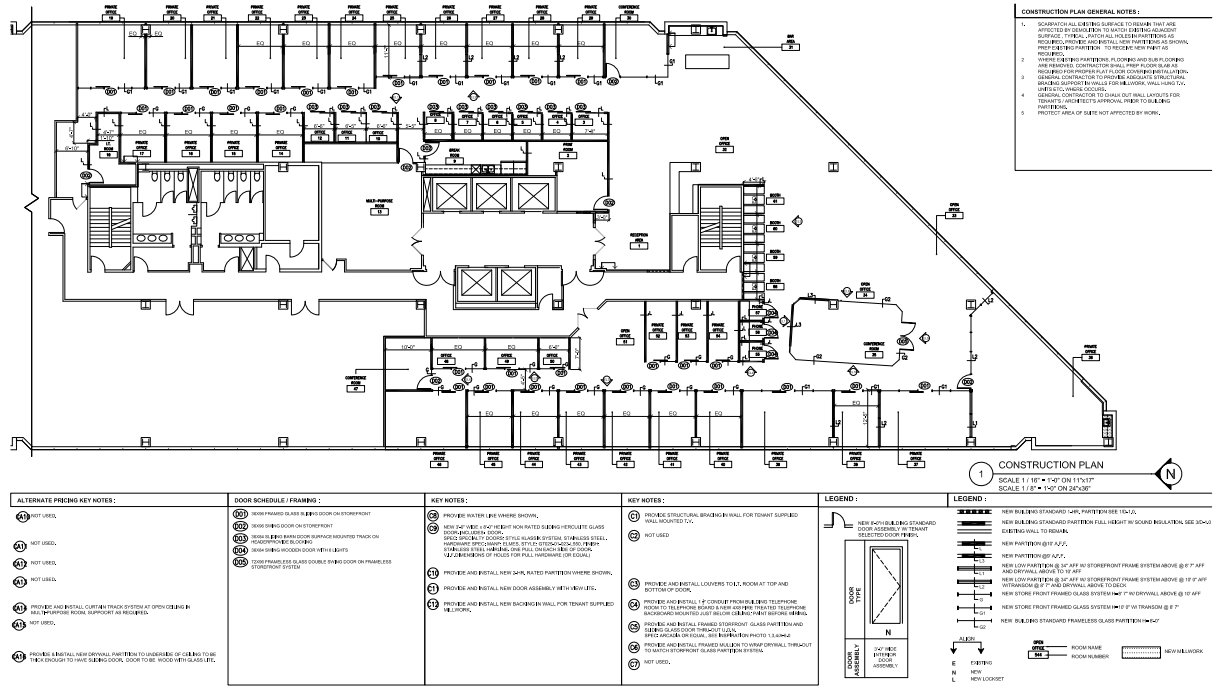
27

Figure 2.2. The Westside Village Floorplan

The Case Against Co-working

Despite the many benefits of co-working there are also drawbacks. Due to the eclectic

mix of individuals that inhabit the co-working areas, organizations have only a limited ability to

influence the larger working environment of a co-working establishment, making it hard to

communicate their own core values and work culture. Maintaining a common team dynamic can

prove to be a struggle when there are other teams around, and the co-working space becomes a

bit of a melting pot of energy. Acclimating to the frequency of turnaround in a co-working space

can be a challenge because workers always have to adjust to new colleagues or office neighbors

(Dishman, 2015). In many cases, the distractions of socializing can take over from working

(Toren, 2015). In addition, the negativity of some members can bring morale down for everyone, particularly if that negativity is expressed in the common areas.

Another potential negative aspect of co-working is a loss of loyalty to the employer's organization. Staff may find themselves drawn to other organizations that share the space. Employees in co-working spaces may form close relationships with the staff of another resident company, rather than with their own. This could be a negative influence if it works against the cohesiveness of the organization and could negatively impact levels of collaboration (Knoll, 2016). There is also the possibility that employees can be lured away to work for other competing companies within the shared space.

Security issues with co-working are also possible because it is hard to keep other members from having access to intellectual property or sensitive company information (Knoll, 2016). Co-working spaces would do well to have a procedure in place to help clients manage highly sensitive paper documents and computer files that need to be secured to assure no unwanted persons gain access.

The original open plan model used by the early founders of co-working spaces relied solely on the membership fees of independent freelancers, a hard business model to sustain. Many co-working spaces originated as a labor of love rather than a thoroughly thought out business plan. In the last five years in Los Angeles alone, three co-working spaces have closed their doors: Writer's Junction, Real Office Centers and Next Space. These co-working spaces may have failed because their owners were unsuccessful at making their model work. Their leases may have come to an end, or they may have lost members to competing co-working spaces.

One of the biggest problems affecting the work environment in many co-working spaces is noise. Some members are inconsiderate and talk loudly on the phone or chat extensively with their neighbors to the point that this behavior disturbs other members (Kim & de Dear, 2013). In a 2013 *Harvard Business Review* article by Sarah Green Carmichael, the author explained how 30% of workers in cubicles and 25% of workers in open offices complained of being dissatisfied because of the level of noise in their workspaces. Balancing the workspace needs of people with different personalities can be extremely challenging. Rather than explore this important issue here, I will discuss the noise factor and the existing research on this in Chapter 7. There is evidence that demonstrates how noise in the open-plan workspaces adversely affects the attention spans of employees, increases their stress levels and diminishes their productivity.

Wellbeing as a Discipline

People are changing how they view their livelihoods and are adopting more healthy behaviors (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Good et al., 2015; Hill et al., 2001). Employees are seeking a positive work/life balance by finding fulfilling employment that contributes to overall quality of life.

A Holistic View of Employee Productivity

The positive psychology movement provides increasing evidence that finding meaning and purpose to life is important to our mental and emotional wellbeing (Baumeister, 1991; Dykman, 1998; Wong & Fry, 1998). Until the 1990s, most businesses only concerned themselves with employee productivity and did not realize the benefit of a more holistic view of employee performance and how it intersects with wellbeing. Today employees are less willing to

sacrifice their own wellbeing for a company's bottom line.

The conventional industrial model of employment emphasized productivity and the bottom line and viewed their employees through the lens of work only, rather than the whole self (Aldrich-Wincer, 2015). Ignoring employee wellbeing can have a negative impact on an organization's bottom line (Boyd, 1997; Danna &Griffin, 1999) because of such issues as absenteeism (Boyd, 1997; Danna & Griffin, 1999; Rahman, Ferdausy, Kara, 2012). The research also suggests the contributions that workers with low levels of wellbeing make to the organization diminish over time (Danna & Griffen, 1999; Price & Hooijberg, 1992).

We can thank the millennial generation for insisting that their work blends more easily with their choices in lifestyle (O'Neill et al., 2015; Sundsted et al., 2009), although at the Village Workspaces our members represent a range of ages, not just millennials. The Village Workspaces appeal to people in different age groups due to its design features and the way we administer the space, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7. We have many self-reliant Generation X members, as well as highly productive representatives of the Baby Boomer generation. Although millennials seem to dominate in the co-working trend, it is not exclusive to the younger generations, nor is the concern for blending work and lifestyle to improve one's overall sense of fulfillment (Appelbaum, Serena, & Shapiro, 2005).

Just as there was a simultaneous emergence of co-working spaces in different global cities around the world in the early twentieth century, there was a number of precursor organizations identified in the literature on co-working. One that is particularly relevant to the Village Workspaces model is the serviced office industry.

The History of Wellbeing

For millennia philosophers have discussed the idea of wellbeing and happiness. The Greeks had several theories for happiness. Aristotle believed that well-being was coterminous with the idea of *Eudaimonia,* which describes a "human flourishing" process where people engage in activities that are in accordance with their true natures, leading to some form of human excellence (Russell, 1972). Later philosophical schools also had varied beliefs as to the nature of happiness and wellbeing. Many philosophers of happiness have chiefly associated inner peace with happiness. The Stoics, the Epicureans and the Sceptics Schools in the ancient world defined happiness as *ataraxia* (Russell, 1972, p. 45), a state of mind and body that was untroubled by the world. Eastern philosophies also stressed the need for inner peace as an essential part of a state of wellbeing, as taught in the *Book of Tao* and Buddhist *Sutras*. Buddhism believes happiness is found within each of us and is attained by meditation and detachment from the world (Wilson, 1967).

Inner peace involves self-knowledge. Based upon a synthesis of western and eastern thinkers (Dalai Lama, 1982), inner peace is a way of fortifying oneself against the world and against one's own negative thoughts and feelings. Happiness is an intrinsic process. Inner peace involves beliefs that promote acceptance and non-striving, which is essential to subjective wellbeing.

In recent decades the scientific community has become interested in the concept of wellbeing, due to the greater importance attached to individual aspirations, and the realization that economic prosperity is no guarantee of happiness. Wellbeing is now recognized as a significant part of human potential, one that can benefit not only individuals but also society as a whole.

Scholarship and Our Understanding of Subjective Wellbeing

The study of subjective wellbeing is relatively new in psychology. Traditionally, psychology focused on mental illness and psychological problems and the effective control of such problems. Positive emotions have received little empirical attention (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Only recently has there been a significant movement in psychology to understand the psychological processes that lead to wellbeing.

One of the pioneers in the study of subjective wellbeing is Warner Wilson. He believed that wellbeing had definite correlates that could be measured and understood and helped to identify factors such as self-esteem, optimism, and sociability as correlates to subjective wellbeing (Wilson, 1967). Wilson defined a happy person as "a young, healthy, well-educated, well-paid, extraverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, high job morale, modest aspirations, of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence" (Wallis, 2009).

In recent decades, the trend has been towards adopting a more holistic approach to wellbeing. It is no longer merely physical pleasure and positive emotions (Maslow, 1969). Researchers now believe that wellbeing is a complex phenomenon.

In the time since Wilson's work, other scholars have examined the factors that lead to happiness or subjective wellbeing with many finding that extraversion, or social ability, is a key trait in happy individuals (Argyle & Lu, 1990; Larsen & Ketallar, 1989; Myers & Diener, 1995; Pavot et al., 2008).

However, more recent research by Vittersø (2001) and DeNeve and Cooper (1998) has found that emotional stability rather than extraversion helps to predict whether a subject is happy or not. Vittersø (2001) explains that "studies in which both extraversion and emotional stability

are included as independent variables reveal that the effect on satisfaction from emotional stability normally outweighs the effect from extraversion" (David et al., 1997; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). In other words, researchers should be careful when interpreting any apparent correlations between wellbeing and extraversion, and they should control for other personality traits like emotional stability.

In 1969 Abraham Maslow published a classic book on psychological wellbeing that examined wellbeing as a process involving the satisfaction of a person's needs. According to Maslow, people are motivated to seek their full potential, and the process of acquiring their full potential will lead them to a state of wellbeing (Maslow, 1969, p. 68.).

An important theorist in our understanding of wellbeing was Norman Bradburn, who challenged the idea that a negative and a positive affective state were necessarily opposite conditions independent of each other. He believed that happiness and a state of wellbeing was a balance between a negative and a positive affective state (Bradburn, 1969). According to him, the best indicator of wellbeing was not happiness but life satisfaction and how individuals evaluate their own lives.

Since Wilson's work, efforts have been to develop clear metrics for determining subjective wellbeing. Many researchers have adopted methodologies from market research in order to determine people's views on wellbeing. The use of Likert scale questionnaires has allowed researchers to understand the nature of wellbeing. The Likert scale allows qualitative data, such as a person's subjective experiences, to be presented in a form that can be effectively measured. A common example of a Likert scale asks a person to respond to a variety of items from 1-7, where 1= Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree.

Ed Diener's research emphasized how people with more active social lives are more likely to evaluate themselves as happy (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2015). Diener's research on wellbeing also shows that biology and genetics are factors in wellbeing, but this must not be overstressed. In the end, a complex assembly of people's actions, social interactions and thought processes are central factors in evaluating wellbeing.

Early research on Subjective Wellbeing was very much influenced by philosophy. However, since Wilson a more scientific and empirical exploration has emerged. Many factors are now known to contribute to wellbeing, helping people to adapt to their situations and achieve their potential in life. The literature has shown that wellbeing and happiness are complex and multidimensional.

Diener carried out a study with Israeli psychologist Daniel Kahneman that showed how it is best to evaluate the separate components of wellbeing rather than speak of happiness in broad terms (Diener, 2013). Many factors contribute to our sense of wellbeing. In Chapter 4 the following areas will be examined in relation to wellbeing in the workplace: health, relationships, flow, taking notice, learning, giving, and environmental design.

A Shift to Positive Psychology

One of the underlying theoretical influences on the literature of wellbeing at work is the general shift from a focus on pathological and negative personality traits in psychology to positive psychology. The last 20 years have seen a new focus on the traits that help make people resilient when faced with challenges and change by increasing their ability to cope with life pressures. If subjective wellbeing relies on external events and life circumstances that may or may not make a person happier, positive psychology is the study of strengths and personality

traits that help people think their way to happiness and to a life where they can flourish. (Seligman, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Positive psychology started to gain more academic attention in 1998 when Martin Seligman became president of the American Psychological Association and made positive psychology the central theme of his term (Srinivasan, 2015). He drew more attention to positive psychology in the mainstream tenets of the discipline and defined it as "the scientific study of positive human functioning and flourishing." In the first sentence of his book *Authentic Happiness*, Seligman explains how, "for the last half century psychology has been consumed with a single topic only—mental illness' (Seligman, 2002). Expanding on the ideas put forward by Maslow, he urged psychologists to continue the earlier aims of psychology to nurture talent and improve life (Compton, 2005). Psychological studies should pay more attention to personal development, while adding to the body of knowledge on positive emotion, positive experiences, positive environments and human strength.

Positive psychology does not deny the importance of looking at how things can go wrong but rather focuses on how to make things right. "The aim is not to erase or supplant work on pathology, distress, and dysfunction. Rather, the aim is to build up what we know about human resilience, strength, and growth to integrate and complement the existing knowledge base" (Gable & Haidt, 2005). My Explication focuses on the strengths and virtues that enable members of the Village Workspace to thrive. The Explication addresses what works as well as what does not work.

The Broaden-and-Build Theory

The in-depth research by scholars like Barbara Frederickson (2001) has turned away from the traditional, pathological view of psychology that focuses mostly on dysfunction and anti-social behaviors to provide a new focus on the mental characteristics and psychological attributes that help us succeed. Frederickson developed the "broaden-and-build theory" showing that positive emotions create a "broadening affect"; they broaden the number of possibilities that we can process, making us more creative, thoughtful and social. The research shows how positive emotions flood our brains with dopamine and serotonin, which are chemicals that not only make us feel good but also help us learn and organize information. These biochemicals help us retain information longer and help make and sustain neural connections so that we can think more creatively and quickly, becoming more skilled at problem solving and inventing new ways of doing things. As Sian Achor notes:

> The *Happiness Advantage* is why cutting-edge software companies have foosball tables in the employee lounge, why Yahoo! has an in-house massage parlor, and why Google engineers are encouraged to bring their dogs to work. These aren't just PR gimmicks. Smart companies cultivate these kinds of working environments, because every time employees experience a small burst of happiness, they get primed for creativity and innovation. (Achor, 2011)

Barbara Fredrickson's work has been hugely influential in my thinking. Negative emotions reduce our actions to little more than fright or flight responses, whereas positive emotions lead to the broadening of our possibilities. This has been a factor in why I created a model for co-working spaces that has wellbeing at the heart of the buildout. I will discuss more about this in Chapter 4.

Integrating Wellbeing into the Workspace

Beginning in the 1990s, several articles appeared in professional trade magazines about wellbeing at work (Coleman, 1997; King, 1995; Neville, 1998). Additional scholarly publications followed (Briner, 1994; Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Smith, Kaminstein, & Makadok, 1995; Warr, 1990). Authors began to publish more and more articles looking at work and physical wellbeing (Cooper, Kircaldy, & Brown, 1994), while researchers were also exploring the concept of wellbeing from the view of psychology (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993) and other perspectives. In an early review of the literature, Danna and Griffen (1999) noted the body of literature on workspaces and wellbeing was disjointed as it spanned a number of disparate fields. They pointed out that the meaning encompassed by the terms *health* and *wellbeing* varied from domain to domain, making health and wellbeing literature somewhat difficult to review in terms of finding evidence in the literature (Danna & Griffen, 1999).

Happiness Precedes Success at Work

The focus of this section is on the workspace wellbeing research that builds on Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory. Recent work by Fredrickson emphasizes the advantages employee happiness and employee wellbeing can have for employers. Researcher and author Shawn Achor finds that positive employees outperform negative employees in many indicators of performance. Employees who are positive generate more sales; they have more energy and lower healthcare costs, as well as more longevity at the company than unsatisfied employees (Goudreau, 2010). The benefits from improved employee outlook and improving happiness levels is evident in different industries and different job descriptions.

Achor notes in *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology*

that Fuel Success and Performance at Work that optimistic sales staff perform 37% better than

their more negative colleagues. He shows how happiness is a precondition of success; it is not

just what we feel after achieving a desired goal. Creating a state of mind that makes us feel good

about ourselves, adopting a positive, optimistic perspective even in the face of adversity, and

going out of our way to encourage others and strengthen our self-esteem, is the winning route

that successful managers and leaders follow. Unfortunately, Achor notes that most companies lag

in the promotion of wellbeing at their organizations, and the economic recession has made it

even more difficult to find companies who see the value in promoting employee happiness

(Goudreau, 2010).

Wellbeing at Work

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) is an "independent think-and-do tank" that

bridges academic and practitioner considerations of employee wellbeing. The NEF has published

reports on employee wellbeing and the drivers that help lead to it. The reports makes links

between findings in neuroscience research, for example, that stress the importance of

reinforcement and rewards to our cognitive and social functioning (Kirkwood et al., 2008).

Indeed, the NEF's Foresight report stresses that mental wellbeing is enhanced when people have

a sense of purpose and feel they contribute to their community.

In continuing research on wellbeing at work, a 2014 report detailed the findings from the

Happiness at Work Survey (a survey developed by NEF). The Happiness at Work Survey found

that subjective wellbeing is affected by both physical and mental health. The authors of the

report noted, for instance, numerous studies that showed a positive association between regular

physical activity and wellbeing. (Biddle & Ekkekakis, 2005; Arent et al., 2000; Biddle, 2000).

The mood of workers improves with regular physical activity as does their life satisfaction and mental state. The researchers also found evidence that healthy eating is associated with improved subjective wellbeing (Blanchflower, Oswald, & Stewart-Brown, 2012). Thus, the best practices the NEF report recommends include: (a) adopting an ethos of regular physical activity at work; and (b) encouraging healthy eating habits in the work lives of employees. In sum, from the 2008 Foresight report, NEF wrote: "The concept of well-being comprises two main elements: feeling good and functioning well." The NEF promotes workplaces that enable employees to be more active and to maintain healthy behaviors both when they are on and off work (Harter & Arora, 2010; Xie & Johns, 1995).

Wellness programs have also become increasingly widespread in many traditional, brick-and-mortar organizations since the 1990s, with a number of large corporations leading the way in implementing programs that encourage healthy choices in eating and exercise and that provide at least some care for the psychological health of employees with counseling and awareness campaigns (Gebhart & Crump, 1990; Glasgow, McCaul, & Fisher, 1993). However, these programs still target narrowly and only within the scope of a particular affliction. They do not really address a complete sense of the whole person at work (Creighton, 2014; Parsons et al., 2002; Vischer, 2007).

However, as O'Neill et al. note, one useful finding to emerge from this research is that structural measures to increase wellness are more effective. In most of the early workplace wellness programs, employees had to opt-in to the fitness class, for example, or employees had to submit to screening for illnesses and chronic conditions, or employees had to have the resolve to schedule sessions with a lifestyle coach on their own time (O'Neill et al., 2015). The research supports the idea that more workplace wellness measures need to be included in office designs so

the process is integrated and workers are gaining wellness as they perform their work. Wellness is not just an afterthought or an extra-curricular activity.

Moving Forward

Although the co-working movement is relatively recent, it is already having a large impact on office design and workplace administration. The Internet is also helping to fuel important changes in office design in making it easier to work remotely. Co-working presents a unique opportunity to incorporate wellbeing into the work environment because members at co-working spaces are in control of their schedules, their engagement with work, and their personal activities. Workspace design can help to further this sense of the holistic self, where people care for their physical health, their work performance and their social life in the same space.

The co-working trend is growing and becoming a ubiquitous part of workplace cultures and is expanding to different employment sectors. In the beginning co-working was almost exclusively carried out by technology workers, entrepreneurs and creative freelancers. We now see how co-working is revolutionizing the work arrangements of even more traditional companies. A broad range of businesses is recognizing the value of shared resources and plug-and-play formats. The Village Workspaces are part of this growing trend.

There is also a growing interest in truly integrating wellbeing into the work environment in new and innovative ways. Now is the time to offer a more holistic style of workspace, with wellbeing at the foundation of the buildout from the ground up. My work builds on the research from these two emerging areas of scholarship by bringing the co-working and wellbeing elements together in a practical and directed way. I am working to find solutions to the factors that need further work, such as office noise, by using better design principles that provide

improved insulation, a clear delineation of space, as well as pleasant sounds to decrease stress (Alvarsson, Wiens, & Nilsson, 2010; Jahncke & Halin, 2012). Wellbeing factors need to be integrated in the buildout so participation is by default, rather than having to opt-in to wellbeing efforts.

Although the concept of wellbeing is often broadly understood as feeling good and functioning well, for example, this research specifically investigates seven wellbeing principles that have been the focus of my life and work—to be healthy, *to flow*, *to be sensitive to the environment*, *to learn*, *to give*, *to take notice* and *to connect*. These principles were used to build a co-working space with members' wellbeing at the core of the buildout and the day-to-day operations. Additional literature on these seven principles is discussed further in chapter 4, and more literature can be found on wellbeing in the workspace in chapter 7.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The method I outline in this chapter includes the philosophical approaches I used to answer my research questions and includes descriptions of my ontological and epistemological perspectives. These clarify and support my use of a heuristic methodology and provide justification for my research strategy. In this chapter I also explain why I use hermeneutics, and I offer a description of the Explication process, an explanation of my research strategy, and a description of the data collection methods.

Research Philosophies

My philosophical values underlie the methodology I employ for this study and the framework within which I conducted this research. My position is that reality is neither fixed nor external. Rather, it is "created by, and moves with, the changing perceptions and beliefs of the viewer" (Duncan, 2004, p. 4). How members feel about their wellbeing in their co-working space is entirely subjective. Each member's perception of reality constitutes his or her reality. Table 3.1 organizes the underpinnings of the methodology of my heuristic inquiry

Table 3.1

Methods and Philosophies Underpinning This Research

Ontology	Epistemology	Theoretical Perspective	Methodology	Data Collection Methods
Constructivist/ Idealist. There are multiple truths.	Subjective Tacit Knowledge is constructed through experience, discourse, reflection and interpretation.	Hermeneutics	Heuristic Inquiry	Heuristic Inquiry Semi-structured Interviews Surveys Conversational interviews Photos
				Observations Immersive experiences
				Narrative descriptions

Ontological Position

My philosophical values are linked to my ontological position, which is generally constructivist. I believe that what one calls "reality" is specific to who that person is and what that person believes. My knowledge has been created by my experiences, discussions, reflections, and interpretations (Baggini & Fosi, 2010; Easterby-Smith et al., 2009).

My ontological position was formed early on in life when I began to practice meditation. At fourteen, meditation gave me internal balance, regardless of the struggles I was having being bullied at school and failing at home, at that time, in my relationship with my mother. Meditation allowed me to see the world with an openness and a loving desire to forgive those who were hard on me. My early experiences and my interpretation of them formed my view of the world. This view was unique to me.

These early wounding experiences and my personal responses to them are the catalysts for my life's work. My deep desire in those early days to create harmonious relationships and optimum health and to find gratifying work urged me forward to assist others to do the same.

My ontological perspective is therefore subjective rather than objective. I do not believe the world exists independently of our minds, even though people and places exist whether we are observing them or not. However, to have meaning there has to be a mind or spirit that subjectively perceives those people and places (Baggini & Fosl, 2010; Easterby-Smith et al., 2009).

Thus, as a constructivist by nature, I believe that members in our co-working spaces will be impacted in varying subjective degrees by the deliberate buildout of the Westside Village Workspace. The space layout and the thinking behind it are designed to help members *to connect*, *to flow, to be healthy*, and *to be sensitive to environmental factors*. These principles combine in a physical way to influence the personal wellbeing of members—to what extent that will happen will depend on each member's own experiences and perspectives.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature and study of knowledge and how it is acquired. My epistemological stance is socially constructed and interpretivist in nature. This project is human-centered, and I have arrived at my beliefs through an understanding of subjective experiences throughout my career in the lifestyle and entertainment fields. This epistemological stance is carried through into my research as well and into a wide variety of immersive experiences, discussions, observations, interviews, and surveys, all of which have guided my epistemological assumptions (Baggini & Fosl, 2010; Easterby-

Smith et al., 2009).

I have drawn explicit knowledge from the literature; however, much of this literature constitutes the tacit experience of the writers, even if that is not *my* direct experience (Polyani, 1966). Ultimately, I also relied heavily on tacit knowledge, since my data gathering practices were based on my subjective views and observations and of those involved in the co-working Village Workspaces.

Tacit knowledge is gained from experience and cannot easily be transferred; in Polanyi's sense, "We know more than we can tell" (2009, p. 4). Tacit knowledge can be defined as skills, ideas and experiences that people have but are not codified and may not necessarily be easily expressed (Chugh, 2015). In contrast, explicit knowledge emphasizes theory and the exchange of ideas. My work in co-working spaces is for the most part gained from tacit knowledge and from my experience being immersed in co-working spaces as a member, developer, and co-owner.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a qualitative research method that arose out of phenomenological philosophy. Originally, hermeneutics was a method that was developed to understand and interpret religious texts. Interpretation is how we make sense of the world and is the core of modern hermeneutics. The process of understanding my life and career involved interpreting meaning from my experiences (Gadamer, 1989) I used interpretation to gain deeper understanding and insights into my management documents, as well as into the interviews and conversations in the Village Workspaces and my reflections on my immersive experiences as a member of other co-working spaces.

Friedrich Schleiemacher, widely regarded as the "father" of sociological hermeneutics, believed that in order for interpreters to understand the work of other authors, they first had to familiarize themselves with the historical and social context in which the authors expressed their thoughts. In order to interpret a text in my management documents, for example, as the interpreter I must consider how each artifact exhibited a particular moment in my life and how it also reflected the zeitgeist at the time.

The Influence of Hermeneutics on My Explication

Considerable similarity exists between explication and hermeneutics. The word *explication* is closely tied to the word "explicit," which essentially means "crystal clear." In Latin, the word *explicare* means "to unfold" or "to unravel." The word was first used in the 1500s and has been used to "describe, illuminate and challenge the received wisdoms of their respective field of knowledge" (Weber, 2004).

Explication can be understood as a process where implicit meanings become more explicit. To achieve this, the researcher must come to understand his or her personal beliefs about and inward responses to a situation. The response is critically analyzed by the researcher and can result in original ideas about an experience or an emerging situation (Kozubska, 2006).

In my management documents, which accompany this Explication, I revisit twenty years of work in teaching, writing, and performing. Through that period, I attained new perspectives. Through reflection, I developed a sense of what worked and what could have been done differently. I found new meaning for my body of work that was not obvious or clear before and thus gained new insights and understanding from the data (Kozubska, 2006).

The explication of these documents brought to light seven core themes that run through all my work. My explication journey began with these themes, which I used as a lens to view the building a co-working space with wellbeing at the core of its construction. Over the last five years of continuous questioning, research, reflection, interpretation, and practical application, only four of these themes ultimately proved essential in the construction stage of building a co-working space.

The hermeneutic process is akin to the iterative nature of the explication process in that there is a continuous questioning of one's perspective, which is open to being questioned by others in turn. As a result, the explication process requires a methodology that considers the emerging nature of knowledge, which is why I chose not only to use hermeneutics but also qualitative research and heuristics.

The collection of management documents constitutes markers that track and highlights the evolution of my career and some of its transformative achievements. They are intended to help the readers of my Explication see the social context in which the research was carried out and in which the text was created.

The process of explication, which I have applied to these career markers, provides for "revelation, analysis, development, clarification, moving from the implicit to explicit, making sense of the experience . . ." (Kozubska, 2006, p. 30). The process enabled me to consider profoundly the terrain that I had traversed and offered me the opportunity to advance the foundation of my journey—my hope is ultimately to make an original contribution to the body of knowledge at the nexus is wellbeing and co-working spaces.

The similarity of the explication process to the hermeneutics process is apparent in that the text or artifact is interpreted and reinterpreted by the researcher in order to draw new

knowledge out of the documents. In this way, hermeneutics can be applied to my research interviews, observations, and experiences, as these are also materials that can be viewed as texts. The interviews can be observed and interpreted for the purpose of contributing to the Explication.

Hermeneutics and explication include an element of intuition that requires gazing internally as opposed to measurement of the external environment (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2012). In hermeneutics, many people can interpret the text in many ways. In contrast, in explication, the text is explicated by the researcher making what is implicit explicit and by reflecting back on circumstances that led up to the situation under analysis. In the process of explicating the management documents I made explicit what was implicit in those documents and drew out the themes that would eventually be used as the principles upon which the new Westside Village workspace would be built.

Similarly, I reflexively show the procedures taken in using this hermeneutic and explication process, transforming my experiences and intuition into accountable data. I have tried to be as transparent as possible by clearly showing the steps taken and why certain choices were made based on life experiences, including my own lived experience in other co-working spaces, my experiences as a co-owner in our first space in Santa Monica, and the experience of constructing a new 14,000 square foot location in West Los Angeles. I have also tried to show why I interviewed the members at the village in Santa Monica and the members of the Westside Village. The learning and pathway to obtaining the data described is explained clearly throughout this Explication and my accountability is transparent.

Methodological Considerations

The philosophies discussed earlier underpin my qualitative research and the heuristic inquiry that guided that research. Heuristics as a form of qualitative research was pioneered by Clark Moustakas (1990) during his career as a humanistic psychologist. Moustakas used the term *heuristic* to describe (per Hiles, 2008):

> the process of an inner search for knowledge, aimed at discovering the nature and meaning of an experience. It is an approach that offers a significant departure from mainstream research in that it explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the researcher to the extent that the lived experience of the researcher becomes the main focus of the research. (p. 418)

Heuristic inquiry (HI) is often autobiographical and draws on the tacit knowledge the researcher has by virtue of personal participation in a set of experienced events. The study's topics and research questions are usually conceived by the researcher based on the researcher's interests and on the experiences that have had a personal influence on the researcher. As Hiles explains in his definition of the term, "What HI does is make this participatory process explicit, and moreover, it makes this the major focus of inquiry" (p. 418).

Hiles proposes that, "There is no more urgent topic to research than the human realm of experience, action and expression, especially the significant and exciting life events and the extraordinary experiences these can entail." My heuristic inquiry was a structured approach and a method of inquiry that is accepted as qualitative research and human science (Giorgi, 1970; 1994). Indeed, it is important to draw attention to the following point made by Donald Polkinghorne (1983):

Human science seeks to know the reality which is particularly our own, the reality of our

experience, actions and expressions. This realm is closest to us, yet it is most resistant to

our attempt to grasp it with understanding. . . . Serious and rigorous re-searching of the

human realm is required. (pp. 280-281)

Polinghorne's pleas for a rigorous "re-searching of the human realm" makes the same

point as Carl Jung: "The future of humankind is held by a single thread, the human psyche"

(Hiles, 2001). My own belief—that using my own inquiry must be included—mirror those of

these insights, and this belief is reflected in my use of HI.

The Choice for a Heuristic Inquiry

Initially, I considered approaching my qualitative work through the process and lens of

action research. Action research, as described by Reason and Bradbury, is

a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the

pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview. It seeks to

bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others in the

pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally

the flourishing of individuals and their communities. (2001)

Action research focuses on taking action to create research and works through a four-stage

sequence of iterative cycles of data gathering: plan, act, observe, and reflect.

Although in certainly ways action research fits my work, ultimately, it was not the right

fit. I understood the stages that I would need to take but I did not consciously go through the

four-stage process. My research was based more on an internal process—a deep heuristic

inquiry.

HI involves self-discipline and self-searching, a process central to my nature and my approach to my life and career. My approach in heuristics and its seven steps—initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, creative synthesis, and validation —was the methodology I have used for many of my creative projects (see Management Documents).

There is something universal about HI because it is a research process that is designed for the exploration and interpretation of experience; it relies on the self as the researcher. HI provided a systemic way of incorporating myself into the inquiry methods using an elevated level of reflexivity and transparency (Hiles, 2001). When I discovered the work of Moustakas (1990), I was immediately able to relate to the phases of HI that construct the heuristic inquiry in much of my creative work. As a qualitative research method, heuristics resonates with inquiry into counseling and psychotherapy and, thus also with my life focus on human behavior.

Unlike action research, heuristics is a methodology that does justice to the depth of engagement of the process and is the path that I took to build the Westside Village Workspaces. Heuristic inquiry engages the researcher's ability to have insight, understanding, and interpretation. There is no pretense of being unbiased or separated from what is being observed. Every aspect of the researcher is used in the knowledge gathering process in the form of tacit understanding. The lived experience of the researcher becomes the focus of the research.

History of Heuristic Inquiry

The term *heuristic*, as well as the concepts of *tacit knowing* and *indwelling*, all stem from the work of Michael Polanyi, a philosopher of science. Polanyi argues that at the root of all claims of scientific knowledge is a reliance on personal knowledge. Moustakas took Polanyi's

ideas and developed them into a heuristic model of research with the publication of *Loneliness* in 1961. He then refined his methodology over the next 30 years. In 1985, he and Bruce Douglass outlined a model of the heuristic process that included three phases: immersion (exploration of a question, problem or theme), acquisition (collection of data), and realization (synthesis). In 1990 Moustakas elaborated on the model and identified a core conceptual framework containing seven basic phases of inquiry. He published the decisive resource for his model in *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications* (1990). The influence of Polanyi is most prominent in Moustakas' core processes of heuristic inquiry, which include:

> the need to identify with the focus of the inquiry; self-dialogue with the phenomenon
>
> being explored; the power of revelation in tacit knowing; and the key processes of
>
> intuition, indwelling and focusing. This is all set within the context on an internal frame
>
> of reference, within which all experience needs to be understood. (Hiles, 2001, p. 392)

Limitations of Heuristic Inquiry

The introspective method of the heuristic inquiry requires the investigator to be both the researcher and the researched. In order to assure validity and a complete inquiry, it is essential to revisit experiences and ensure that the process of the inquiry moves through all of the stages of the heuristic method, from immersion incubation, illumination, and explication to creative synthesis.

The knowledge and outcomes generated by heuristic research will ultimately be context-specific within the Village Workspaces and may not be readily generalizable outside of that context. I continually appraised the significance of each of my chosen wellbeing principles, checking and evaluating how each was being used in the construction stage. The perspectives of

36 members of the Westside Village Workspace and conversations with my partners and staff in the development of the Village are still part of the HI and brought additional perspectives and rigor to the study.

The Seven Phases of Heuristic Research

Moustakas' heuristic approach is a structured sequence that involves seven stages of inquiry, but HI is not a linear process. Each of the stages described below can overlap and connect with other stages. At times, it may be essential to go back to an earlier stage and re-evaluate or garner new information, and then move forward again to subsequent stages.

HI relies on tacit knowledge and indwelling that the research data filters through the researcher's levels of consciousness; thus, the stages vary in length, intensity, and sometimes in order. HI provided a structure in which my Explication could be expressed. The relationship of each of these elements of HI to my research is explained briefly in the following sections (see Figure 3.1). However, a much more detailed account of the heuristic application is weaved into the Explication.
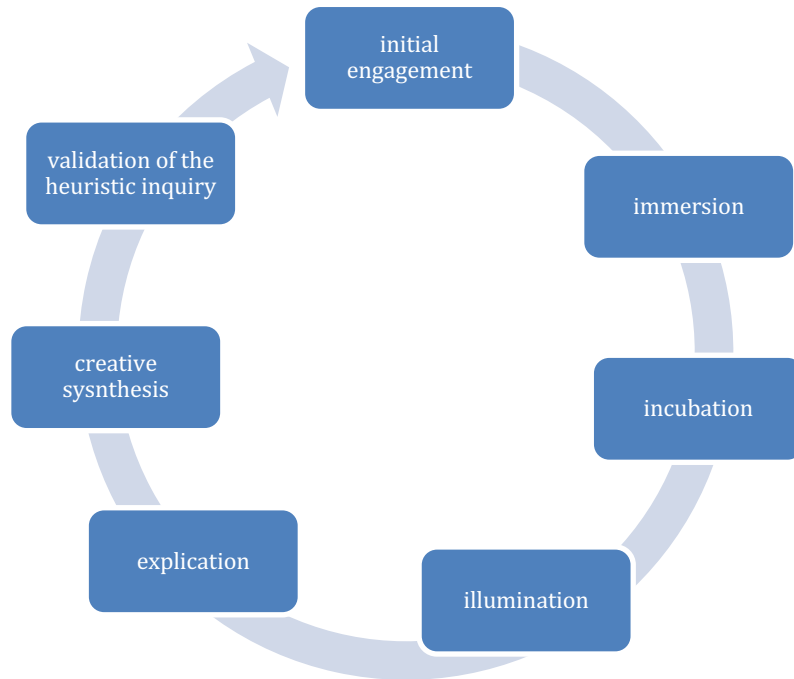
Figure 3.1. The heuristic process is an iterative process.

Initial engagement. This initial stage of the HI begins within the researcher, who develops an intense interest in investigating a question that holds social significance and has personal, convincing implications.

Moustakas refers to this step as a "direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated . . . with autobiographical connections" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 14). The passionate commitment remains until it's question is answered. During this initial engagement, the researcher turns inward for tacit awareness and knowledge, allows intuition to inform the search, and clarifies the context from which the question takes form and significance. The question engages the researcher's whole self, ensuring that the researcher is open to experiences, trusting self-awareness and an internal locus of evaluation, with a willingness to enter into the process rooted in the self (Rogers, 1969).

The initial engagement phase began in 2010 when I joined the Writer's Junction, a co-working space for writers. I was contracted to write four books on happiness in relationships, health, and the home for Harlequin Books. While working in this co-working space, I gained writing proficiency and wrote prolifically alongside the other members of the space. As early as the first day of my membership, I realized that I wanted to be involved in co-working. Coming from the lifestyle field and with a passion for understanding people, I knew I could contribute to the development of workplaces that incorporated wellbeing. The question was how I could bring my decades of life experience in the lifestyle field to create a co-working space that made a difference.

Immersion. After the whole self is engaged, the heuristic process moves towards an intense focus, called immersion. In this stage, Moustakas notes,

> The researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping, and even dream states . . . [and] the immersion process enables the researcher to come to be on intimate terms with the question—to live it and grow in the knowledge and understanding of it. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28)

My immersion experiences for this research included being an active member in four co-working spaces over a five-year period, as described in chapter 5. I also became an owner of an already operating space in Santa Monica in 2013 to learn the business and carry out extensive interviews (chapter 6). The immersion experiences allowed me to view co-working spaces from many angles, which would help with decisions pertaining to the ultimate construction of the new space (chapter 7).

Incubation. Moustakas' third stage of HI is the period of incubation. According to Moustakas, "The period of incubation allows the inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition to continue to clarify and extend understanding on levels outside the immediate awareness" (1990, p. 29). In this stage, the seed has been planted, watered and is left to be nurtured by the subconscious internally. Connections are made internally between the question, research, ideas, and insights.

While immersed in the co-working spaces, I spent much time with my focus withdrawn from my doctorate question and focused on other writing projects. I allowed the experience in each space to wash over me so that innovative ideas and revelations unconsciously emerged. I garnered new insights on how to create a co-working space that addressed issues that the others were facing, such as noise, privacy, poor ergonomics, and unhealthy snacks. Several questions were permeating and incubating while I was immersed in the co-working spaces: Did I connect with other members easily? How much work did I get done? How healthy did I feel in the space? How did the environment and design make me feel?

Illumination. Moustakas describes how at the point of illumination, an awareness becomes known—a modification of an old understanding, a synthesis of fragmented knowledge, or an altogether new discovery of something that has been present for some time yet has been beyond immediate consciousness. Polanyi refers to the illumination stage this way:

> Having made a discovery, I shall never see the world again as before, my eyes have become different, I have made myself into a person seeing and thinking differently. I have crossed the gap, the heuristic gap, which lies between problem and discovery. (1962, p. 151)

I have experienced multiple moments of illumination in the process of building Westside Village. After explicating my management documents, my life themes made themselves abundantly clear, and, in a "eureka'" moment, I decided to use them as an initial foundation for a model of wellbeing in a co-working space—*to flow*, *to connect*, *to be healthy*, *to learn*, *to give*, *to take notice* and *to be sensitive to environmental factors*.

Another moment of illumination presented itself in 2012 when I watched WeWork's first offices being built in Los Angeles. Although co-working was a relatively unknown concept at the time, I knew then that even though my only experience with co-working was with a space dedicated to writers, I had to build a co-working space that was for all types of businesses.

Other significant moments of illumination came when I realized that not all of the seven principles were necessary for the buildout process of a co-working space, and I realized that the final four could be synthesized into a four-factor model (see chapter 7).

Explication. Once the illumination stage has occurred, the researcher progresses towards explication of the themes that have emerged. The purpose of the explication phase is to examine the new discovery fully. This requires a further period of indwelling and focusing in order to deepen, clarify, and refine new discoveries and to gain a more complete understanding of the phenomenon in readiness for the final phase of integration. The indwelling process is conscious and deliberate, yet it is neither linear nor logical in that it follows clues wherever they may appear.

This detailed process involved me in continuous self-exploration and the awareness necessary to understand the results that I gathered from the interviews, that I gained from my immersive experience inside other co-working spaces, and that I learned from the literature on co-working and wellbeing. I delved into the principles and what each one meant in relation to

building a co-working space with built-in wellbeing factors. I was not yet sure how to unravel and reassemble.

Just prior to the building of the Westside Village, my office wall was covered in photographs of co-working spaces that I had inhabited and co-working spaces I had visited—furniture, colors, wallpaper tables, lighting, interview results, charts, and ideas. Over the months, as I organized my findings, refinements and corrections were made to the collage. At this time I experienced the revelation of which of my chosen wellbeing principles would be most useful. Their patterns of warp and woof as a four-factor model began to surface.

Creative synthesis. The creative synthesis process comes when the researcher masters the process of integrating the data with the core themes. For creative synthesis to occur, Moustakas talks about a period of quiet before the creative form is expressed, regardless of whether the final result is a painting, a thesis, a story, or, in my case, a new model for building co-working spaces.

Having finally collected, analyzed, and synthesized all the data, the new co-working space I built in West Los Angeles became the embodiment of the Explication, the physical expression of the ideas and intuitions that were revealed to me during the six stages of heuristic research described above.

I spent nine months at the Westside Village walking through the construction site, watching while the builders demolished 14,000 square feet of old-fashioned office space—the old order dying as we slowly built a unique way of co-working. The culmination of the buildout is my creative synthesis.

The wellbeing principles were expressed through correcting problems that other co-working spaces were experiencing and providing soundproofed offices, more space, sweeping

views for all members, high ceilings, ergonomics, design, active and quiet space, and multiple work locations.

Validation of the HI. A year after opening the Westside Village workspace, it was time for the seventh stage of the heuristic inquiry and to ask whether the synthesis had worked. One year after opening, feedback data was obtained by interviewing the members at Westside Village Workspace to determine the extent of wellbeing they experienced in that co-working space.

I received feedback from the press, other office owners, members, and visitors to the space. Moustakas initially talks of six phases to the heuristic process but then clearly includes a seventh (Moustakas, 1990). In my opinion the seventh stage is vital, as it is not just the creative synthesis that is important and the expression of the researcher's journey, the seventh stage must address how others receive the synthesis from their perspectives as "outsiders." To understand that perspective, a year after opening I repeated the semi-structured interviews and the survey that I had used in the Santa Monica location with members of the new Westside Village location.

Interviews and a Survey

In addition to heuristic sources, my research includes two independent, more formal inputs. The first has been a purposive exploration of the relevant academic literature on co-working and wellbeing as discussed in depth in my literature review. The second was the data and data analysis from two formal qualitative studies, one conducted roughly one year after my acquisition of a partnership interest in the Santa Monica co-working space and the other conducted about two years later and roughly one year after the buildout of our new space in West Los Angeles.

The purpose of the earlier study in the Santa Monica Village Workspace was to confirm and rank the veracity of tentative principles for constructing a co-working space whose core goal was the wellbeing of its members. The data derived from semi-structured interviews and survey from this first study would verify the validity of such principles and provide a model from which plans for the Westside location could be conceived and put into production. The second study, similar in form to the first, involved semi-structured interviews and a survey for members of the new Westside Village buildout to evaluate how well the design principles in fact impacted the wellbeing of the members, how the design could be improved, and how future research on co-working space should be formulated.

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviewing became an important data collection method as it included the perspective of others, a part of HI. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to invite Village members to respond to a series of pre-determined and open-ended questions based on my research question, which was in keeping with the interview approaches employed in collecting qualitative data appropriate for heuristic research. Interviewees are encouraged to speak freely in response to each question.

With my focus on how to build a co-working space with wellbeing built into the construction, the traditional semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method of gathering information allowed me to include the subjective perspective of members (Bannister et al., 1994; Haylor, 2012). I needed that anecdotal evidence to discover how members of the co-working space experienced the space in a nuanced way, and I was able to respond to the verbal and nonverbal information provided by the participants (Given, 2008).

More than a year after acquiring the Santa Monica space, I developed the two-part data collection instrument to determine (a) what the users of this space liked about it, what they did not like, what could be improved and (b) how these users would rank the seven principles in order of meaningfulness to their wellbeing in their co-working spaces. The purpose of these instruments was to provide insights that could guide planning for the buildout of the Westside site. Eighteen Santa Monica members volunteered their participation.

Part 1 of the instrument was based on four open-ended questions that were repeated for each of the seven wellbeing principles—later to be synthesized into four principles. For example, here are the questions asked in the *to connect* category.

1. How important is it for you to connect with other members at the Village?

2. What do you do already to connect with other members at the Village?

3. How can you connect more with others at the Village?

4. How can we help you to connect more with other members at the Village?

Here are some responses to question 4.

Response from Member #1: "We need more social meet ups."

Response from Member #2: "It would be helpful if you put logos on the doors so we know who else is in the space."

Many comments were constructive, such as: bigger share of space area, a greater number of events, a happy hour for networking, logos prominent on the front door, and an online app. The same questions were asked for each of the other six principles. These structured interviews took place in their workspaces. In Santa Monica, I wanted to know what members felt should be prioritized in the buildout of the new Westside location.

In the Westside interviews in 2017, I asked how we could improve the space and which wellbeing elements the members appreciated based on their experience. The series of questions were similar in each set of interviews and were designed to elicit information on all seven of the wellbeing principles: how *to flow*, *to be healthy*, *to connect*, *to take notice*, *to learn*, *to give*, and *to be sensitive to environmental factors*.

The Simple Survey and Methodology of Collated Ranking

Part 2 of my interviews in both workspaces involved a survey, where each member ranked the seven principles that were the basis for the buildout and construction budget of the Westside Village Workspace. A ranking was used to prioritize how the space was designed. The analysis of interview and survey data determined which principles should be incorporated into construction planning and to determine if there were any redundancies in our working model. In other words, this phase of research would substantially answer Research Question #1.

The survey organized data based upon a 7-point Likert scale (1= most important; 7=least important) The inverse of each rank was calculated as a weight mapped as shown below. The highest rank in each member's list has a weight of 1.

Table 3.2

Approximate Weights for All Ranks

Rank	Approximate Weight (1/Rank)
1	1
2	0.5
3	0.33
4	0.25
5	0.2
6	0.17
7	0.14

For each principle, a sum of the weights was calculated. The percentage of importance of the principle for all participants equals the sum of weights for each principle times 100 divided by the sum of all principles. These percentages were then tabulated to establish the order of importance. I present a more detailed report of the findings and questions for both sets of interviews in chapters 6 and 7, along with a discussion of ethical considerations, limitations, rigor, and results.

Conversational Interviewing

With my desire to stay consistent with heuristic exploration, I used a conversational interviewing approach with the Writer's Junction members, in addition to Oliver Barry and Lewis Maler, my partners, and my staff member, Benjamin Riviera. As a research interviewer, I wanted to generate data by talking about their experiences in the development of the Village in a "guided conversation" where they felt free to discuss their views. I did not prepare for these interviews in the way that I had with the semi-structured interviews. Instead, I relied on a spontaneous generation of questions and conversation around the core themes of my research topic as suggested by Moustakas (1990). These participants were free to say what they thought was relevant to my area of research based on their experiences in the development of the Village workspaces. I used a few relevant fragments of these conversations later on in the Explication.

Images

Observation in the moment can be fleeting, and, therefore, throughout this Explication I included photos as part of the heuristic process. The photographs provided me with additional data as I reflected on them and on the environment of the buildout. Photographic images allow for reflection on what I found in other co-working spaces, and I gained more knowledge of the investigated phenomenon, rather than attempting to rely on recollection.

Included in this Explication are photos of Cross Campus, the Writer's Junction, WeWork, and the Henry Wood House. Also included are photos of the Village Workspace in Santa Monica before and after we took it over, and of the Westside Village before, during, and upon completion of the construction. Additional images show members using the space. These are included in the Explication and in the Appendix.

Triangulation

The interviews, observations, narrative descriptions surveys, conversations and immersive experiences formed a "web of interdependence" (Senge, 2014) and each has proved to be an invaluable learning opportunity. I have essentially used a holistic strategy called triangulation that focuses on the way the parts of the system interrelate.

The idea underpinning triangulation is that a better understanding of phenomena is gained when approached through a combination of research methods whose foci intersect (Denzin, 1989). Such practices have allowed me to see the "big picture" and to provide a model for wellbeing in co-working that considers multiple perspectives, which, in their totality, positively affected the outcome of the building of the Village Workspace.

By using triangulation as a strategy, I increased my level of knowledge, strengthened my findings, captured different dimensions of the research problem, and enriched my interpretations. Triangulation added rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to the qualitative inquiry into wellbeing in co-working spaces (Flick, 2002). It allowed me to identify, explore, and understand different dimensions of the co-working spaces in order to strengthen my findings and enrich my interpretations.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined my philosophical perspective as well as my ontological and epistemological assumptions. I provided evidence for the value of using a heuristic methodology to discover principles that would constitute a conceptual basis for the physical planning of a co-working space, an outcome that I advance as my original contribution to knowledge.

Using heuristics allowed for the research data to be gathered through an intensive and immersive process. I am not just the researcher in the heuristic framework, as I interpreted my own experience in order to find meaning and make new discoveries. The purpose was to understand the project as an unfolding, iterative, and ongoing practice, in which new dimensions may emerge as the project progresses over time.

I used a mix of data collection methods including my immersion as a member, owner and developer in co-working spaces, daily observations, photos, interviews, surveys, narrative writing, and conversations. My literature search and management documents all informed my research. Traditional semi-structured interviews and surveys were used to gather information on Village members' experiences both in the Santa Monica and Westside Village locations. This breadth of methods added rigor to the study. Table 3.1 presents my data collection methods.

Table 3.3

Data Collection Methods

Qualitative Data Collection	Examples of Use
Heuristic Immersive Experiences	The overall Explication, with considerable focus on the lived experience inside of other co-working spaces and the building of Westside Village.
Semi-Structured Interviews	Members in Santa Monica Village and Westside Village.
Survey	Members in Santa Monica Village and Westside Village.
Photos	Construction model before, during and after buildout of the Westside Village. Santa Monica before and after ownership. Other co-working spaces.
Participant Observations	Narrative experiences inside other co-working spaces. Observations of how members are using the Village Workspaces.
Conversational Interviews	Conversations with members at the Writers Junction, with my partners Lewis and Oliver, and staff member Benjamin Riviera.

Chapter 4

The Genesis of My Seven Principles

Discovering the Need for Happiness at Work

This chapter examines how I discovered the seven essential principles that are the core of my research and the practical applications for building wellbeing into co-working spaces. These principles were the basis for my planning of the Westside Village co-working space in Los Angeles. I discovered these seven core themes, the underpinning of my work, through the journey of my personal life and career as set forth in the management documents and through my research on workspace design and wellbeing. What is exciting is that these principles have never been put together for the purposes of building a co-working space with wellbeing substantially integrated into the design from the beginning. This chapter opens with a discussion of the significance of wellbeing in the workplace and the influence of Barbara Frederickson on the concept of happiness and success and on my work (Fredrickson, 2000; Vacharkulksemsuk & Fredrickson, 2013).

In December 2011, I was hired by LG Electronics to be their Happiness Ambassador. LG erected a giant billboard in Times Square in New York City where people could text and tweet their good news for everyone to see. The billboard also profiled people who were making a difference and posted the good news of the day. As spokesperson for the project, I appeared on thirty morning shows across the United States to promote the billboard and talk about the positive value of gratitude and good news (Keller, 2011).

The LG project was based on the widely confirmed theory that positive messages and cues in our social context can lift our mood (Barsade, 2002; Bheullar, 2012; Neumann & Strack,

2000). The simplicity of this appealed to me. I was excited about bringing my experience in the lifestyle field to this project and to partner with such a significant company. As part of this effort I was invited to give a talk at the British American Business Council's Christmas event alongside Mark Burnett, the President of MGM Television. I gave a succinct and uplifting talk about the importance of gratitude, and my conversations after the talk with many audience members showed that they liked what I had to say. My talk reminded them about being grateful at work, as well as at home, and I suggested ways in which to do that.

Shortly thereafter, I was asked to start a series for *Good Day Chicago* called "How to Get Happier at Work." In my first segment, I addressed the benefit of walking meetings and treadmill desks and the research behind moving throughout the day. This led to invitations to give keynote speeches, entitled "Master Your Happiness to Create Astonishing Success," for organizations such as Gano Excel, Unruly Media, and the Capital Group, where I talked about how happiness precedes success.

These experiences convinced me that it was time to move into unchartered territory and see if I could apply my views on wellbeing to the business world. During this period of investigation into the literature, moments of illumination were plenty. I realized just how much the working lives of employees were so inextricably intertwined with their personal lives and how their mental wellbeing at work had a deep impact on happiness at home (Jensen & Knudsen, 2017; Allen, Hurst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). Navigating the daily shift between home and work has long been an area of interest for psychologists and HR professionals and now had become a focus for me. Allen et al. (2000), for instance, studied how work impacts family life by examining indicators like job dissatisfaction and levels of depression among employees. More recently, other researchers have examined the conflict between work and family life in terms of

the changing nature of today's work climate (Hämmig, 2014; Offer, 2014). I began to realize how little I really knew about wellbeing in the workplace. I was excited to learn more.

Subjective Wellbeing: A Reliable Marker for Workplace Wellbeing

My desire to focus on workspace wellbeing in 2012 was well timed, because in the following years more and more research began to appear on wellbeing and work. Wellbeing was traditionally equated to income earned. The governing principle behind this is the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country, which tallies the worth of all goods and services generated within a country and is often used as a definitive indicator of social advancement (Michaelson, 2014). An increase in the GDP per capita is usually a sign the country is doing better, whereas little to no growth in the GDP is taken as a signpost the country is doing poorly, especially if that is coupled with high rates of unemployment and other social indicators like declining levels of education and health.

But new evidence has begun to show that the GDP is actually not a good indicator for wellbeing in the holistic sense and that many other workplace factors should be examined (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2011; Michaelson, 2014; Tov & Au, 2013). Although the robustness of subjective wellbeing measures has become well established in recent years through a wealth of evidence, research has shown that over recent decades GDP growth in the United States has not been linked with any growth in subjective wellbeing (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2011; Michaelson, 2014). As a consequence, we have seen a growing realization in many disciplines that subjective wellbeing is a more reliable marker than wealth in showing how well a society is doing (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2011; MacKerron, 2011; Michaelson, 2014).

This research was essential to my attempts to integrate the lifestyle field and the workplace. This social transformation, together with the important turn in psychology that focused attention on the drivers of positive mental health, has contributed to our understanding of subjective and holistic wellbeing. Simultaneously, with new forms of evidence, we are now also seeing policymakers around the world exploring the uses of wellbeing indicators to inform their decision-making on policy measures (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2012). A good example of this is the United Kingdom's Measuring National Wellbeing Program, which includes a core focus on subjective wellbeing measurement with data being collected from approximately 150,000 people across the United Kingdom each year (Office of National Statistics, 2017).

Happiness Fuels Success

Perhaps one of my biggest influences as I was moving into the field of wellbeing at work was Barbara Fredrickson's work. I immersed myself in her research alongside others who inspired and motivated me, including Tal Ben-Shahar, Shawn Achor, Ed Diener, Sonja Lyubomirsky and David Myers.

The most illuminating and exciting moment in my research came as I was developing a keynote address that I called "Master Your Happiness to Create Astonishing Success." I discovered that most people believe happiness only comes after one has achieved a certain measure of success and that happiness is the endpoint in the entire process of working hard. But Fredrickson's research in subjective wellbeing and positive psychology has shown this is not the case. We seem to have the formula backwards and that in fact happiness fuels success. When we are positive, our brains become more occupied, imaginative, stimulated, active, strong and productive at work. More proof of this comes from recent research in psychology and

neuroscience (Argyle, 2013; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; Kringelbach & Berridge, 2009). I began to see that happiness was a smart investment for companies, because happiness increases the productivity of employees. Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory is one of the foundational approaches to positive psychology, where positive emotions are viewed as "essential elements of optimal functioning and therefore an essential topic within the science of wellbeing" (Siegel, 2015). As discussed in chapter 2, positive emotions discussed in Frederickson's research have the potential to make the following impact in terms of workplace motivation:

- broaden people's attention and thinking

- undo lingering negative emotional arousal

- fuel psychological resilience

- build consequential personal resources

- trigger upward spirals towards greater future wellbeing

Survey research has shown that businesses with a concern for employee happiness are often more successful than their competitors (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Those businesses that rank among the best places to work tend to be highly successful companies. A study at the University of Warwick found that happiness led to a 12 percent spike in productivity, while unhappy workers proved 10 percent less productive. According to the University of Warwick's research team, "We find that human happiness has large and positive causal effects on productivity. Positive emotions appear to invigorate human beings" (Oswald, Proto, & Sgroi, 2015). A positive mindset is not just beneficial to the self but makes others feel better and helps contribute to the wellbeing of family members, coworkers and friends in a positive way. Positive

mindsets can help people achieve *eudemonia* or the "state of flourishing" that was sought by the Greek philosophers. In figure 4.1 below I am presenting a keynote "Master Your Happiness to Create Astonishing Success" at the Gano Excel Conference in Los Angeles. The research that happiness precedes success is the foundation of my work in co-working and wellbeing.

Figure 4.1 "Master Your Happiness" talk for Gano Excel. A core theme in the talk is that happiness comes first, then success. My research applies this tenet to wellbeing in co-working spaces.

Discovering the Seven Principles of Building Wellbeing into Co-working Spaces

Creating a co-working space with wellbeing as the focus of the buildout is how I am making a difference and adding to the body of knowledge on wellbeing in the workplace. I believed that if I could combine my life experiences and understanding of the themes that I had written about extensively—relationships, health, design, *feng shui*, and finding flow—and integrate these with the existing research on wellbeing. I could bring this new knowledge to

wellbeing in the workplace and make a unique contribution to the wellbeing field and to health and happiness in the workplace.

In explicating my management documents, I started to unravel the themes that had governed my life work and wondered what would happen if I turned these themes into principles on which to build a co-working space. I originally identified seven themes to transform into principles: *to connect*, *to be healthy*, *to flow*, *to learn*, *to give*, *to take notice* and *to be sensitive to environmental factors*. These themes proved to be important in my teaching, writing and personal life experiences. The details of how I arrived at each of these principles are explained in the following sections. As I continued with the research process, I eventually narrowed the seven principles to four core wellbeing principles that were critical to the buildout of the co-working space, with two of the three principles more applicable for the operations and one subsumed within the four core principles.

To be Healthy

In my first manuscript, *Strip Naked and Strike Gold*, I described coming to the realization that there is a strong relationship between health and happiness. I had chronic shoulder and back pain when I was younger. Later, I realized the pain might well have been psychosomatic because of the isolation I felt as a child and my struggles with my mother and at school. My pain subsided when I began practicing Transcendental Meditation (TM) twice a day at the age of fourteen (Nidich et al., 2009). Research on psychosomatic symptoms shows that some physical illnesses are a result of mental factors that originate from the stress and strain of everyday life (Strine et al., 2008). TM helped me to deal with the negative thoughts that were impacting my health. This, together with frequent visits to a therapist, hypnotherapist, body workers and

adherence to the Alexander Technique helped me develop a positive frame of mind, and this enabled me to feel better physically and mentally (Gray, 1990). The happier that I became, the more my body healed.

Research shows that negative thinking hastens cell decay, ages the body and makes us feel physically unwell. By contrast, positive thinking helps cells grow and hasten their renewal, making us feel better and stronger. According to psychologist Barbara Fredrickson, "At the very basic biological level, then, positivity could be life-giving" (2009). This view has been confirmed by other research on psychosomatics, which has shown strong associations between a positive state of mind and improvements in health (Cohen & Pressman, 2014).

During the late 1990s, I was working in London with large groups and private clients through my coaching business, NLP International, teaching neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and hypnotherapy. During that work I became aware of the powerful influence my clients' state of mind had on their physical health. Part 2 of my book *How Happy is Your Health: 50 Great Tips to Help You Live a Long, Happy and Healthy Life* is called "Healthy Self" (Figure 4.2) and shows how having a happy and optimistic mindset can help reduce physical stress. The book also offers practical advice on how we can achieve a positive frame of mind through focusing on the positive, having self-belief and challenging expectations in our lives. The "Healthy Self" section also warns that unexpressed anger can be very detrimental to one's health, as other researchers have shown (e.g., Aslina, Bore, Morrison, & Hendricks, 2013; Ganci, 2015).

Figure. 4.2 My "Happiness" series books being sold at the airport. Written at the Writer's Junction co-working space, these titles express principles of wellbeing later used to inform building the co-working space.

Other research has found evidence of a strong link between happiness and physical health. Ed Diener and Robert Biswas–Diener (2011) noted, "The evidence that happy people are more likely to be physically healthier and live longer is becoming compelling: it's so strong that working on one's happiness is a worthwhile health strategy" (Diener & Biswas–Diener, 2011). According to these writers, "Among the evidence that happiness is beneficial to health is the fact that people who are happy become sick less frequently than unhappy people" (2011). Happiness is also preventative against illnesses and helps people stay healthy. A person who is happy and not depressed has a stronger immune system and therefore is less likely to get sick, and those

who are happy are much more likely to adopt health promoting activities such as eating well (Myers, 1993).

A project that focused on healthy eating by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption showed similar results and an increase in subjective wellbeing (Blanchflower, Oswald, & Stewart-Brown, 2012). Making time to go outside on a nice day also delivers a huge advantage; one study found that spending 20 minutes outside in good weather not only boosted positive mood but also broadened thinking and improved working memory (Keller et al., 2005).

Many companies are establishing a variety of programs in recognition of the importance of physical activity for their employees. Chevron has an innovative program for helping employees be more active by offering onsite fitness centers, training on how to avoid illness and injury and massage therapy (Health Fitness Revolution, 2015). Google is also at the forefront of employee wellness programs (Birkus, 2015) and features locally sourced and seasonal items at all of its workplace cafes. Employees even tend onsite gardens and beehives (Gentile, 2014). There is indeed emerging and ongoing research about the importance of daily activity to health and wellbeing. My life-long focus on health and the current research is why health is included as one of my principles of building a co-working space.

To Be Sensitive to Environmental Influence

The design and the environment inside the workplace can go a long way in supporting wellbeing at work. The temperature, noise, ergonomics, lighting, quality of air, views, plants and other aspects have an influence on wellbeing (Warr, 2003). In my book *How Happy is Your Home? 50 Great Tips to Bring More Health, Wealth and Happiness into Your Home*, I reviewed

what I considered the most important tips in *feng shui* that could be used to layout any house or space.

Feng shui (pronounced feng shway) means "wind and water," the two natural elements that move and flow on earth and are the basis for our survival—the air we breathe and the water we drink. The goal of *feng shui* is to help maximize the beneficial movement and flow of "chi" (meaning life force or energy) through a space. As one writer puts it,

> The energy of your environment has the ability to lift or drain your spirits throughout the day. . . You don't want the chi to move too fast and create anxiety or to move too slow and cause you to remain stagnant. You want it to enter easily in through your front door and move smoothly, like a calm breeze or gently flowing water (Keller, 2011).

This work, along with my work with His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, on the environmental Harmony Project and the four films that I co-wrote and produced for Al Gore's *Live Earth* on the environment, were highly influential in laying out the holistic and harmonious environmental design of the Westside Village Workspace. This included bringing trees inside the building, using natural materials and ensuring there are views throughout the space, so that members feel they are part of the city and can see the ocean.

Much research has been done on the design of workspaces, which I cover in more detail in chapter 7, but I will touch on a few examples here to underscore the impact of environment. A five-year study by Kirjonen and Hänninen found that improvement in working conditions are directly related to wellbeing at work (1984). Companies are beginning to recognize the quality of the work environment has a big impact on employee performance and job satisfaction.

Many negative correlations have been identified between poor physical environments at work and wellbeing. An early study by Sundstrom et al. (1980), later reviewed by McCoy and

Evans (2005), shows that environmental deficiencies at work leads to lower employee satisfaction. Safe and comfortable physical surroundings are positively associated with wellbeing. Environmental design is therefore an essential principle for the building of a co-working space.

To Connect

As a child, I had an over-riding feeling of being lonely and misunderstood. I was unable to connect with my mother, who was drinking heavily at the time. This affected my mental health, happiness and relationships. It wasn't until I was about 14 years old that I started to develop close relationships with other students at school; my relationship with my mother didn't improve until I left home and she cut down on her drinking. These early experiences and my desire to heal meant that I actively focused on learning about how to develop optimum relationships, which has become an immersive life-long interest for me.

Feeling isolated acted as a catalyst for my interest in how to create long-lasting, healthy attachments with family, friends and co-workers.

Psychologists have discovered that social isolation is a major cause of unhappiness (Katwachi & Berkman, 2001; Warr, 2007). But not just any kind of relationship will do—we need intimate relationships. We need to feel others care for us and we need to feel close to them in an emotional sense. Researchers have found the most distinguishing characteristic of the happiest ten percent of the population is the quality and strength of their social relationships (Cohen & Pressman, 2014). As Diener and Biswas-Diener explain, "In fact, the links between happiness and social contact are so strong that many psychologists think that humans are genetically wired to need one another" (2011). We are social beings and we need to fully

participate with others in order to feel fulfilled and have meaning in our lives. (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Many of my management documents have the key theme of creating optimum relationships. My commitment to and understanding of creating connections and deep bonds is evidenced by my professional work. I wrote two books on relationships—*How Happy is Your Marriage? 50 Great Tips to Make Your Relationships Last Forever* and *How Happy is Your Love Life? 50 Great Tips to Help You Attract and Keep Your Perfect Partner*—as well as articles for the *Huffington Post*, and my work as an actress required the ability to connect.

In her book *The How of Happiness*, Sonja Lyubomirsky points out that happy people are exceptionally good at their relationships, including their friendships, their relationships with family and their intimate relationships. She notes that the "causal relationships between social relationships and happiness is clearly bidirectional. This means that romantic partners and friends make people happy, but it also means that happy people are more likely to acquire lovers and friends" (Lyubomirsky, 2008, p. 138).

People with strong social support live longer (Boyle & Holben, 2012; Lyubomirsky, 2008; Oguz, Merad, & Snape, 2013). An analysis of two communities that stand out because of their longevity rates are the Sardinians in Italy and the Okinawans in Japan and both had some important characteristics in common. At the top of the list of similarities were "put family first" and "keep socially-engaged" (Boyle & Holben, 2012, p. 140). Research suggests that social networks at home and work promote a sense of belonging and wellbeing that helps to increase longevity as well (Riordan, 2013; Riordan & Griffeth, 1995).

The correlation between happiness and relationships is clear: We like each other, we need each other. Philosophers from Aristotle to John Stuart Mill have stated that as social beings we

are defined by our social relationships (Russell, 2003). Happiness and good relationships work hand in hand and feed off each other in what researchers call "The upward spiral" (Korb, 2015). Ed Diener and his son Robert say: "Like food and air we need social relationships to thrive. When we thrive and are happy, we tend to build social bonds" (2011, p. 66).

Making time to enhance relationships at work is integral to job satisfaction. DRL, an online retailer, was voted by *The Sunday Times* as fourth on its "Best Companies to Work for" list in 2012 and fifth on the list in 2013. The company encourages social relationships by paying 50 percent of the cost of activities, ranging from scuba diving to cookery classes, for its employees, as long as five staff members take part in the activity together (*The Sunday Times*, 2013). Many people spend most of their time at work or at least they spend more time at work than perhaps anywhere else except home (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). In addition, work relationships are one of the six "key workplace factors" in Robertson Cooper's ASSET, a stress evaluation tool (Robertson & Cooper, 2011). The authors argue the key workplace factors are linked with a sense of purpose and positive emotions. Evidence of the association between positive social interaction at work and wellbeing shows a strong connection, consistent with evidence in the broader wellbeing literature (Stoll, Michaelson, & Seaford, 2012).

To connect is a key theme for happiness and one of my seven principles of wellbeing in co-working spaces. It became one of the essential principles in building the new Westside Village Workspace and initially seemed as if it would be the most important principle to the members. However, though my research interviews and surveys, members ranked the seven principles quite differently than I expected, which will be detailed later.

To Flow

Flow is a state of engagement achieved when people are completely absorbed in an activity and find their work fulfilling, according to psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Work is fulfilling when it engages us in a state that Csikszentmihalyi calls "flow" (1988). In a state of flow there is: (a) no sense of time, and (b) the person is unaware of his or her surroundings. A person in a flow state is not conscious of the time and not aware of being in a state of complete engagement; the person is genuinely and completely absorbed in the activity and in the present moment. One of the primary themes in my management documents is how I have created flow experiences on stage, on sets and through writing. All these endeavors have provided me with a joyous engagement in my work.

In order to better understand the dynamics of flow, Csikzentmihalyi studied artists immersed in their painting and sculpting and was interested in their mental state as they became absorbed in their work, to the point where they were unaware of anything else. Another prominent psychologist who has written extensively on happiness is David Myers, who states "To experience flow we need to find challenge and meaning in our work, and to seek experiences that fully engage our talents" (Myers, 1993). Csikszentmihalyi argues that the good life, a happy life, is characterized by flow, by "complete absorption in what one does."

I consciously considered the combination of design elements that might help members to achieve flow in their work, including thinking about ceiling height, the size and the way the offices are laid out, the ergonomics, the noise issues, the views, the sense of space and the multi-location experience for different types of work.

As Csikzentmihalyi noted in his book, *Good Business: Leadership, Flow, and the Making of Meaning,* managers have three options to motivate employees in the long term. The first is to

make the objective conditions of the workplace as attractive as possible. The second is to find ways to imbue the job with meaning and value. The third is by selecting and rewarding individuals who find satisfaction in their work and in so doing steer the morale of the organization as a whole in a positive direction. In an ideal case, all three of these options will be taken (p. 87).

This level of engagement is the rewarding feeling we get from the physical act of doing work and being mentally engaged in the tasks we are performing.

One reality of the new knowledge economy is that entrepreneurs, employees and freelancers are often overwhelmed, hyper-connected and always expected to multi-task. Nagy explains how more than half of respondents said their employers do nothing to help workers manage this feeling of being overloaded and overwhelmed (2016). Nagy recommends five themes for focus that are similar to mine: (1) provide a great variety of work settings; (2) give people the choice over where, how, and when they work; (3) give employees control over their work environment; (4) create legible and clutter-free work environments; and (5) provide appropriate space for recharging (Nagy et al., 2006). Holistic mobility programs can be worked into office design, so workers have a selection of what work area fits both the kind of attention needed and the kind of activity they are carrying out. Hence, in our buildout we have a variety of conference room sizes, breakout areas with different chair configurations, and carefully delineated noisy and quiet areas.

To Learn

When I look back on my management documents and my life it is clear I am a person that loves to learn. I have trained to be an actress, a hypnotist and studied neuro-linguistic

programming. I also trained to be an astrologer and studied *feng shui*—my love of learning is lifelong.

Research has shown that when employees learn a new skill they feel a sense of achievement and control over their work (Bagdi & Vacca, 2005; Goswami, 2008). This research is significant and highlights reasons why so many companies such as AT&T, Bank of America and Best Buy help employees pay for college (Stone, 2017). Continuing to learn through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction, leading to a more active life (Hammond, 2004). This theme was important to explore in building the co-working spaces. However, initially I was not convinced of its importance in the design of co-working spaces and in hindsight I wouldn't have included it. But I was keen to see if the principle *to learn* had a place in the eventual design plan. My further research with members of co-working spaces would shed light on this.

To Give

An overall theme in my life and work has been to give to others in order to make a difference. "Be kind" is the last thing I say to my son as I drop him off at school every day. This is what inspired me to have *giving* as one of my principles in building a co-working space.

A long line of empirical research, including a study of over 2,000 people conducted in California, has shown that acts of altruism—giving to friends and strangers alike—decreases stress and strongly contributes to enhanced mental health (Oman et al., 1999; Post, 2005). Volunteer work and helping others highlights people's abilities and provides a feeling of control over one's life (Frederickson et al., 2003).

Companies value their public image and community work as socially responsible enterprises. The general public rewards socially responsible companies with loyalty and employees expect the organizations they work for to give back to the community. I thought *giving* would be an important principle when building the new Village Workspace. However, I wasn't clear how this would be part of the construction of the space, although my experiences in other spaces and information from interviews would shed light on this aspect.

To Take Notice

Taking notice includes some of the simple things in life, such as being aware of the art on the wall, the views from a window, or being aware of how you are sitting. It could also mean taking time to meditate, taking a break to chat or listening to music.

Transcendental Meditation was instrumental in helping me stop the negative thinking processes that were impacting my wellbeing. Bringing myself into the present, taking notice and learning how to quiet my mind had a huge impact on my personal capacity to feel joy and to stay in the moment. Studies show that TM can have positive physiological effects that help to reduce levels of psychological stress and increase happiness (Nidich, et al., 2009; Wallace, 1990). This state, called "mindfulness," has also been shown to predict positive mental states, self-regulated behavior and self-knowledge (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

The importance of being present is the primary message in my one-woman show, "I'd Rather Be Weird Than Dead." When I am performing live, I cannot be anywhere else except where I am. I included *being present* as a principle for wellbeing in the co-working space because I wanted to build a workspace that spoke to being in the moment. Co-working members would benefit from being aware of their physical presence in the space. They could take a

moment to look at the art displayed in the workplace, to contemplate the views of the city and ocean, or take five minutes to play a bit of ping pong. Taking notice would improve their sense of wellbeing and consequently their happiness and their work lives.

Being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances wellbeing (Diener & Sleigman, 2002). Many companies are now integrating entertainment facilities into their work environment so employees can more deeply relax during breaks. For example, the YouTube office in San Bruno, California, has an indoor slide and a putting green (*Daily Mail*, 2013). Amazon allows pets at work.

I initially thought taking notice and living in the present moment was an important principle; however, it proved to be one that would change in its significance towards the end of my research.

Conclusion: Bringing the Principles Together

Initially, in this chapter I show how I chose seven themes that were prevalent in my life: *to connect*, *to be healthy*, *to learn*, *to give*, *to flow*, *to take notice* and *to be sensitive to the environment* would become the principles that I planned as part of the structure of a new co-working space. These principles became a framework that I employed not just to evaluate the four other co-working spaces that I spent time in, but also to structure interviews of members about their wellbeing in our co-working space in Santa Monica.

Even though I began with seven principles, over time the research and what I experienced proved that only four principles were needed in the framework that I used in the construction stage of the buildout of the Westside Village workspace. These chosen principles will be revealed in chapter 7, and they helped me to build the workspace in an efficient and cost-

effective way, while maintaining my focus on the valued principles of wellbeing that are outlined in this chapter.

For so many years, I could not comprehend how all of these seeming distinct interests would come together. However, I have always trusted the intricate cobweb of life and believed a merging of these disparate elements would at some point reveal itself. It was only in discovering the Writer's Junction, the first co-working space I worked in, and in seeing WeWork offices being built, that I began to see how I could draw together many of these interconnected interests. This helped me to arrive at a comprehensive and coherent practical framework that finally makes sense and allows these pursuits to converge on building co-working spaces that enhance wellbeing at work.

In the next chapter I discuss my five years of immersive research experience in co-working spaces and point out that this type of research has never been done before in a co-working environment. Also in the following chapters I discuss the process and outcomes of semi-structured interviews that I undertook with members of the Santa Monica location.

Chapter 5

Initiating the Heuristic Journey: Five Years of Lived Experience inside Co-working Spaces

Introduction

This chapter summarizes my heuristic exploration of the four co-working spaces I worked in between 2010 and 2016: The Writer's Junction, Cross Campus, WeWork, all three in Los Angeles, and the Henry Wood House in London. I used the seven principles of wellbeing to evaluate my involvement in the spaces and estimate from my immersive research what aspects of each of the workspaces I would bring into the buildout of the Westside Village Workspace.

This heuristic approach provided me with an internal reference to understand co-working spaces with an increasing depth by being in them. The periods spent in each space allowed me to gain insights into how each operated (Moustakas, 1990) and gave me the opportunity to recall and evaluate observations, impressions and epiphanies in my quest to build my own co-working space. In addition, I was able to merge my philosophy of wellbeing with my approach to co-working by having worked in different co-working sites to conceive of the most effective design for wellbeing in a co-working space. My storyline is based on the time I spent in each space and the insights that resulted from my research (Couser, 1997; Goodall, 2001).

Engagement, Immersion and Incubation

My engagement with co-working began when I joined the Writer's Junction in 2010, a co-working space specifically for writers, which became the springboard for my profound interest in designing a space that would represent the intersection of co-working and wellbeing. I

continued to write books on wellbeing and continued to work on other projects at the Writer's

Junction for five years, while my interest in co-working grew.

As I immersed myself in each space, I was very conscious of what worked and what

didn't through the framework of my seven principles of wellbeing—*to flow*, *to be healthy*, *to*

connect, *to learn*, *to take notice*, *to give*, and *to be sensitive to environmental factors*. I moved

between being the conscious researcher and withdrawing my attention to focus on my own

writing and letting the experience in each space wash over me without judgment. As time passed

in each workspace, it became easier to note my views about the individual worksites and gather

more details about how each co-working space was conceptualized. Later, I compared my

encounters in each space.

The first-person inquiry uses self as an instrument to approach my co-working

experiences as "eyewitness accounts" of the redeeming and not-so-redeeming qualities of each

space (Cauley, 2008, p. 442). I used a simple chart to lay out the strengths and weaknesses of

each location. I analyzed the results and provided information relating to which space inspired

what principle the most.

During this phase of the research, I moved backward and forward between what

Moustakas describes as the immersion and incubation stages. After being immersed as the

researcher addressing the question, "How can I create a model of co-working to enhance

wellbeing at work?" I would withdraw my focus, continue with my work and allow each space to

wash over me. The photos included in this chapter illustrate the content and provide a multi-

media experience and deeper understanding of the workspaces.

The Writer's Junction, Santa Monica, L.A. June 2010-2015

The Writer's Junction is a co-working space for writers in Santa Monica, California (Figure 5.1). The 4,000-square foot space is laid out in seven rooms with a variety of configurations. I was a member for five years.

Figure 5.1. Two different room layouts at the Writer's Junction in Santa Monica, California.

In 2010 I signed a four-book deal for the "How Happy is ..." series with Harlequin's nonfiction department. I needed a quiet place to work, and the Writer's Junction co-working space had just opened about a mile from our house. Until this time, I had been working from a coffee shop. The office model for Writer's Junction was a simple and innovative concept, an office space specifically designed for writers. It had only been open for a few months, and it was my first experience with a co-working space. On my first day at the site, I made the following observations in my notebook:

Warm, slightly grungy, relaxed. The sign on the building says: "The Writer's Junction–

Where Writers Write." I immediately feel at home. In here we will all be familiar with

the struggle to find words. The ability *to flow*, without looking up; and then the writing blocks—the endless days staring at computers, wanting to cry, scream with frustration and showing up anyway.

I eventually engaged the Writer's Junction on a research level, although this was not the initial reason I became a member. The other writers there worked in a range of genres: film, television, fiction, poetry, academia, nonfiction, technical writing, and new media writing. We were working on different projects but working side by side. I immersed myself in the space and the experience while writing the four books. I took stock of my feelings and observed the environment and the people. I allowed the experience to wash over me so that I could consider to what extent the space met my specific needs. Writing four books consecutively on a tight schedule was challenging, but the Writer's Junction made writing a joy. The space gave me community, and I was excited to go to work in the morning.

The Writer's Junction had seven rooms set up in assorted configurations. Seating was available to everyone on a first come, first served basis. The space sought to help writers by offering them a place where they could meet like-minded people and could be guaranteed peace and quiet. In the interest of producing an environment that was conducive to writing, all rooms at the Writer's Junction were quiet rooms—apart from the kitchen, lobby and a common room.

Even in those early days, I had a strong belief the co-working model would be the future of work. I dared to imagine what it would be like to reproduce a similar copacetic workspace and was keen to understand the office model. My intuition told me that co-working would become more popular over time, and I was compelled to gain more knowledge about this work environment. I would need to experience different co-working arrangements to fully immerse myself in so that I could understand what users prefer in a co-working space. I would note my

responses and come to insights that would inform my future work as a co-owner of co-working space. I later recognized how the Writer's Junction was not ideally designed. Experiencing the space over an extended period of time as an insider allowed me to understand the dynamics of the space. Several times I reflected on my experiences in the Writer's Junction and had a series of illuminations; these are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Impressions of Writer's Junction—Strengths and Weaknesses

Principle Rank	Strengths	Weakness
1. To Flow	Space was conducive for writing. Desks were placed in a variety of configurations. Rooms available for working were varied, giving a lot of different options throughout the day.	People talked loudly or tapped loudly on their computer, making concentration difficult. Chairs were uncomfortable so I needed to get up often.
2. To Connect	Long-term, deep relationships were established. Communication and connections with other members was easy. People were like-minded.	Social events such as Happy Hours were needed.
3. Environmental Influence	Rooms well configured. Décor was a warm collegiate style.	Lighting poor. Cheap furniture. Run down.
4. To Give	Collaboration to share ideas and assist each other with work was easy.	

	Connection with agents, producers and publishers often resulted.	
5. To Take Notice	Common room and kitchen were areas to take breaks and connect with others.	Décor and outside view were lacking.
	Quotations placed on walls for inspiration.	
	Chair massage service provided weekly.	
6. To Learn	Classes in fiction and script writing were offered.	
7. To Be Healthy		Ergonomics of the furniture was not considered.
		Air circulation was poor.

Reflections

Although the Writer's Junction had some problems, including the lack of ergonomic furniture, the lack of design and cheap fixtures, it nevertheless fostered a true community and sense of belonging. Through the Writer's Junction in Los Angeles, I developed close relationships that have continued to this day. Cory, a screenwriter who wrote *Witch Hunter*, *Priest* and *Sinbad,* has joined me at the Westside Village Workspace. Josh has a production company that rents offices at the Westside Village. After meeting Roberto at the Writer's Junction, we decided to collaborate and wrote a script called *Poles Apart* based on the four short films that I had already co-written and co-produced for Al Gore's *Live Earth*. We all have become close friends, and each of these relationships began with the co-working experience at the Writer's Junction.

In hindsight, the ability to form long-term relationships was one of the greatest consequences of working at the Writer's Junction, and one that I wanted to emulate in our new Westside location. As Christine Riordan noted in a *Harvard Business Review* article on friendships at work, "Employees report that when they have friends at work, their job is more fun, enjoyable, worthwhile, and satisfying" (2013). She cites a Gallup study that discovered that employee satisfaction is increased by fifty percent when employees report they have close work friendships. People are seven times more likely to become fully engaged in their work if they have a best friend at work as well. Riordan and Christine Griffeth (1995) conducted a study published in the *Journal of Business Psychology* where even just the chance to build friendships was seen to increase employee satisfaction.

The layout of the Writer's Junction allowed the necessary quiet and privacy, yet there were also social areas that allowed members to connect. For myself, the clearly separate rooms made it conducive for a flow experience, as it was clear what was expected of the members. The Writer's Junction showed me that having both active and quiet spaces was important because each writer had his or her own preferences and needs for optimal working environment. Because a wide range of ages and writers at different stages in their careers worked at the site, the less experienced writers could ask for support from the more experienced, which created a common sense of purpose. The writers felt they belonged to a community, which alleviated what is ordinarily a very isolating experience. I wanted to replicate and build on this principle of connectedness that was so well fulfilled at the Writer's Junction.

Reaction of Members When the Writer's Junction Closed

In June 2015, the owners of the Writer's Junction sold the space to another company due to lack of sufficient profits and their waning interest in administering the space. Another co-working space, Cross Campus, had moved in across the street and eventually bought the Writer's Junction.

After the news broke about the closure of the Writer's Junction, some members met for lunch to discuss this turn of events. This is where my objective research began, and I took notes during the conversation, encouraging the group to share informally how they felt about having to leave the Writer's Junction. Brendan, a TV writer, said, "I'm going to really miss this community. I just don't know where I am going to write. I'm scared to write in a space alone again. I love that we are all in this solitary profession, but we do it together."

Kate, who had just sold her film script to Tobey Maguire's company, agreed: "I've made so many friends. I love how we all want each other to succeed. I don't know where I'm going to find this silent library feel that we have in the space while also being around others from the community."

John added, "I feel that I'm around people who understand what I go through. I can share my problems and successes, whether I'm stuck at one point in my work or I am struggling with my agent, I know you guys understand. Also, I've had much help from other writers here, I'm not sure where I can get such immediate feedback."

"And what about all our events?" Susan said. "I loved the happy hours and this place is so close to my kid's school. I also love the diversity of working in different size and style rooms. As well as areas that you could talk and areas that you couldn't."

Even though Writer's Junction had closed, co-working spaces were beginning to emerge on a wider scale. An obviously need existed for this kind of space, but it was also clear the business model had to change in order to survive in the expensive, fast-paced and highly creative market in Los Angeles. My immersive experience at the Writer's Junction showed me how to create social connections and flow and also shined light on the fact that ergonomics would need to be front and center, as too many members suffered from the uncomfortable chairs.

Cross Campus, Santa Monica, L.A. June 2015-October 2015

Cross Campus is a co-working space located in Santa Monica, California (Figure 5.2) and consists of approximately 10,000 square feet in an open plan with a handful of offices. The environment is particularly noisy. I spent four months there as a working member.

Figure 5.2. Cross Campus

When Cross Campus bought the Writer's Junction in 2015, many of us moved across the street to Cross Campus. I remained there for four months. Like many of my co-working colleagues I was disappointed in the closure but I was also looking forward to the opportunity to be immersed in a new co-working space. My husband and I had already acquired the Working Village in Santa Monica, so I obviously could have worked there instead of trying Cross Campus. I chose Cross Campus over the Working Village both to gain experience of another space and because the latter's layout was not very conducive for writing due to its small layout and business focus, which I will discuss further in the next chapter.

I worked for four months at Cross Campus, which was the perfect opportunity to gain more tacit knowledge and add to my research on co-working spaces. My Cross Campus experience would help us improve the Santa Monica location and help with research for the buildout of our next venture, the Westside Village. Once again, I found myself moving between the role of researcher and member. During the time that I was in this space, I was working on the first version of my literature review for this Explication. I alternated between watching how other members used the space and turning inwards to seek a deeper vision of how I was experiencing the space in light of my wellbeing principles. At other times, I suspended my observations and thoughts about the research and focused on the writing work in which I was engaged.

On my first day at Cross Campus, I wrote the following:

The space is huge, the music is pumping, people engaged in conversation everywhere. My breathing is shallow and my jaw tightens. How am I going to write in here? I scan the open space for familiar faces, but to no avail. Long tables and noise. I walk to the back of the space, take one look at the task chairs and know I'm not going to last long in one of

those. I feel out of place, the lack of intimacy, the overly high ceilings. I know I'll find it easy to meet people, I always do, but nothing deep. I hate small talk. I reach into my bag for my computer and my earphones and start to type.

Cross Campus was founded in 2012 by Ronen Olshansky, Dan Dato and Michael Kianmahd. They raised $8.1 million in funding and currently have four locations in Los Angeles. Their first location in Santa Monica was the one where I spent time. Cross Campus' main focus as a co-working space was as a tech hub and an event venue. Their aim was to help entrepreneurs and start-ups succeed. The founders planned to transform the former Writer's Junction space into business offices. Writer's Junction members were invited to work in the large open space across the street while the Writer's Junction space was renovated and redesigned.

I immersed myself in the work culture of Cross Campus much like I did at the Writer's Junction. I engaged with Cross Campus members and observed and experienced the daily use of the space.

Cross Campus was spacious and the bustle and energy of the open space excited me. However, I was concerned that the busy, open environment would be too noisy and distracting for writers. The music played in the open space had a heavy beat, and there were always many people talking. Many of the former members of Writer's Junction struggled with the noise level and the lack of privacy and left after a few days. My impressions of the Cross Campus co-working experience are listed in Table 5.2 according to each of the seven principles.

Table 5.2

Impressions of Cross Campus—Strengths and Weaknesses

Principle Rank	Strength	Weakness
1. To Connect	Members given plenty of opportunities to socialize. Members who are new are introduced on a small stage at lunch times. Lunches are organized weekly to encourage member interaction.	Introductions at lunch disruptive to work flow of coworkers.
2. To Learn	Environment for learning is provided with multiple events focused on business and tech.	Events are distracting in open space while members are working.
3. To be Healthy	Vending machines provide healthy choices with organic and gluten-free options. Standing desks are available.	Task chairs were uncomfortable.
4.To Take Notice	Break areas are provided to allow members to socialize.	Privacy is lacking and there is little quiet and relaxed space.
5. To Give	Space promotes sharing, with free events for members.	
6. To Flow	Noisy; however, had a general buzz, so focused work was still possible.	Atmosphere was club-like and invasive with loud beat music. Quiet areas were not designated.
7.Environmental Influence	Architectural features are impressive. Ceilings are high to give an open and spacious sense of environment.	No clear brand direction or design. Atmosphere lacked warmth. No quiet areas that are designated needed for quiet

| Windows are large with an abundance of natural light. | work and meetings. |
| | Soft furnishings needed more thought, as did comfort and work process. |

Reflections

My four-month immersion in Cross Campus was very different from my experience at the Writer's Junction. Both had a similar sense of camaraderie but the level of connection was much less intimate at Cross Campus. The environment was stimulating and encouraged learning, sharing and socializing. The open space layout was often loud and busy. Even though this was jarring at first, I was surprised the environment was not as disruptive to my work in the short term as I had anticipated. Although some people were annoyed by the noise and activity, I found a desk that was removed from most of the activity and the more social areas. Cross Campus was modeled on what the owners thought were the needs of entrepreneurs and engineers in the tech industry, which made the space less than ideal for freelancers or entrepreneurs who needed to do quiet work.

Cross Campus in its initial form was informative for my research, although I believe the owners have now made significant changes to their co-working model as they attempt to broaden their appeal, changes that are reflected in this quote from their website: "Our workspace amenities are unmatched in the market. Meditation rooms, premium beverages on tap, outdoor workspaces and meeting rooms of all sizes empower you to do your best work."

What struck me at the time I was working at Cross Campus was that it lacked some of what I found were the most beneficial aspects of the Writer's Junction and, in particular, the choice of active versus quiet spaces. Someone who works in the tech industry might have preferred the layout of Cross Campus to that of the Writer's Junction. However, in my

experience it is beneficial to have choices as to where to work. In a rather clear illuminating moment I knew that this open space model was not one that I wanted to emulate.

I did appreciate the focus of Cross Campus on the health of their members by providing optional standing desks and healthy offerings in the vending machine. Perhaps the facility's greatest strength was a stream of events for members and guests and a platform for members to share their ideas and learn about building a business. This fulfilled the *to learn* principle, which I wanted to emulate in the operations of our new space. The events were free to members and so inherently met the *to give* principle as well.

The Office Group–Henry Wood House, London August-September 2015

The Henry Wood House is a co-working space for businesses and is located on Riding House Street in W1 London (Figure 5.3) and offers approximately 70,000 square feet over seven floors. The layout provides a variety of separate working spaces, including offices, a library, a café and a gym.
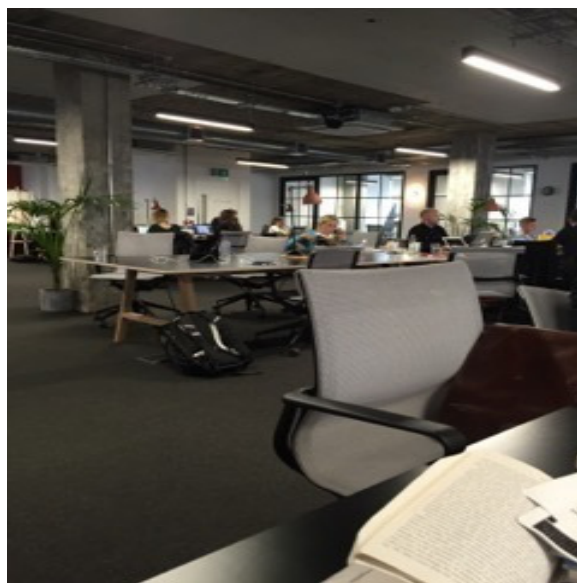
Figure 5.3 The co-working floor at Henry Wood House

I spent one month in 2016 in The Office Group's Henry Wood House building. Listed in January 2015 in Lifehacker's Top 10 Co-working Spaces in the United Kingdom, the site was also shortlisted in the Office Interiors category at the New London Awards. The Office Group was founded by co-CEOs Olly Olsen and Charlie Green in 2003. In 2010, Lloyd Dorfman, the founder of Travelex, bought the company from Bridges Ventures, combining it with Esselco and becoming chairman of the combined group. The group currently has 27 spaces in the United Kingdom and was recently acquired by Blackstone for 500 million pounds (Tovey, 2017).

The Henry Wood House is a seven-floor building located on Riding House Street, W1 and is a former British Broadcasting Corporation building. Each floor has about 10,000 square feet and all have a similar layout. Experiencing a shared workspace in London allowed me to add an international component to my research and compare a London location with the Los Angeles venues. At the Henry Wood House location, I spent the majority of my time in the co-working area and some of the time in the café and conference rooms. Members did not interact as freely in this space as in either the Writer's Junction or Cross Campus sites.

On my first day working on the co-working floor of Henry Wood House, I wrote:

It's raining again, grey outside. The chairs are comfortable, the desks wide, plugs in the middle of the table, a key card that I invariably will forget. It's serious, heavy. There is talk, but it's not bothering me; there's music. The energy is calm. There's little interaction between people, but I'm here to work, I like this place.

Table 5.3 summarizes my impressions of Henry Wood House based on the seven principles.

Table 5.3

Impressions of Henry Wood House—Strengths and Weaknesses

Principle Rank	**Strengths**	**Weakness**

1.Environmental Influence	Design was traditional and thoughtful, with a retro feel.	
	Floors clearly delineated for different working styles i.e. co-working, offices, library and conference rooms.	
	Bathrooms and a kitchen on each floor.	
2. To Flow	Layout conducive for focused work in co-working area.	Noise in the co-working space often distracting.
	Music was non-invasive.	
3. Be Healthy	Café on the ground floor had healthy alternatives.	
	Gym onsite offered fitness classes.	
	Ergonomic chairs	
4. To Connect	People friendly only if I initiated conversation.	Members rather reserved.
5. To Take Notice	Artwork in the hallways was interesting.	
	Views of Great Portland Street from co-working floor were pleasant	
6. To Give	Happy Hours.	Members kept to themselves.
7. To Learn		Speaking events or educational activities while I was in the space lacking.

Reflections

Even though my experience was limited to a month in the Henry Wood House, it struck

me as a more serious environment than the co-working spaces in Los Angeles. It is unclear if this

tone leads members to be more prolific, but the Henry Wood House was a very productive environment.

I sensed an earnestness at the Henry Wood House that was akin to the heaviness in the air I felt at the Utopia Village in Primrose Hill, a shared space in London where I worked between 2003 and 2005.   I chose not to include the experience of working in Utopia Village in my Explication, as it would have received the lowest score on every indicator of the seven principles I used to evaluate co-working spaces and would have therefore been of little use in this research.

Despite the somber atmosphere at the Henry Wood House, it had characteristics I wanted to emulate. The space was sophisticated, and the members represented a broad age range. Plus the founders had taken into consideration ergonomics, health, music and the flow of the space.

In July 2017, I revisited the Henry Wood House to use the conference room and found it was much noisier and more crowded than I remembered. This would not have been a comfortable place for me to work now; members in the co-working space were not as considerate of each other as when I had worked there before. However, the business was flourishing and co-working spaces were now in higher demand. As stated, it had many of the environmental factors that I admired and wanted to emulate. The delineation of spaces was again especially influential and the principle—to health—was well represented here, with a healthy café, a gym and the ergonomic chairs. The Henry Wood House was the closest model to the one that I wanted to emulate.

WeWork, Santa Monica, L.A. October 2015-January 2016

WeWork is a co-working space for business located in Santa Monica, California and covers approximately 20,000 square feet on two floors. The membership is open to all types of

businesses. The layout is mainly offices and designated desks, with a café area for co-working (Figure 5.4). I was a working member for four months.

Figure 5. 4. The shared room, with dedicated desks at WeWork.

WeWork provides a shared workspace and other services for entrepreneurs, freelancers, start-ups and small businesses. One of the company's brand taglines states that, "workspace is their craft." They provide a vast virtual network for members as well with extra activities like annual retreats.

In 2010, Adam Neumann, Rebekah Neumann and Miguel McKelvey founded WeWork in New York's SoHo district. They have since raised more than 1.7 billion in private capital and have quickly expanded to 90 locations in 12 countries. According to its website, the company now has more than 100,000 members and more than 2,000 employees. It has expanded impressively fast.

I worked at WeWork's Santa Monica location on 7th Street from October 2015 to January 2016. The site had two floors mostly partitioned into offices, with a limited amount of communal

café space. I immersed myself in the experience while observing my surroundings and

interacting with others and further honed my ideas about workplace design and wellbeing.

On my first day in WeWork, I wrote:

I love the decor, but just can't seem to work. I'm in a room with 8 other people, my back

to the door. For $450 per month, they won't let me turn it around. I feel stuck and it is

only Day One. A group is talking who are in the same business, unaware that we aren't. I

decide to work in the café. Hmm, I used to work in a café for free.

Over the weeks that I worked there, several ideas crystallized. These are presented in

Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

Impressions of WeWork—Strengths and Weaknesses

Principle Rank	Strength	Weakness
1.Environmental Influence	Design was cool, funky and modern.	Corridors narrow in the interest of maximizing income with offices.
		Offices all thin glass, no privacy, also noisy.
2. To Give		
3. To Connect	WeWork App	Attendance at events, e.g. Christmas party, was low.
		Sense of community was limited.
		Connections felt superficial.
		Members pitching each other.
4. To Be Healthy	Ergonomic task chairs.	Food and drink on offer unhealthy.

5. To Take Notice	Interesting art on the walls.	
6. To Learn		Face-to-face forums to learn from other companies were not provided.
7. To Flow		Desks not positioned well for focused work, and inability to move them.
		Sound insulation between offices was lacking so very noisy.
		Designated desk area had no rules so people talked loudly.
		Completion of work difficult due to noise and distractions.

Reflections

My time at WeWork was a mixed experience. At WeWork there was no real sense of community, apart from the connections established by their useful app. Initially the aesthetics of WeWork was a real source of inspiration, but it was hard to work once immersed in the space. Many of the wellbeing factors that I found essential for a co-working space, such as noise control, space and light, were not considered. WeWork was the most disappointing of all the co-working spaces I experienced and yet was the fastest growing, now valued at 500 billion, with $4.4 billion in investment coming from SoftBank of Japan. In spite of these concerns, however, WeWork has been highly influential in terms of design, and the principles that were most clearly and effectively represented were the environmental factors and *to take notice*.

Conclusion

I have reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of how these co-working spaces—The Writer's Junction, Cross Campus and WeWork in Los Angeles and the Henry Wood House in London—contributed to their members' wellbeing. I recognize that the four spaces were based on differing underlying models. In retrospect, I understand the importance of my extensive involvement in a co-working space through participation as a member as well as through observation as a researcher. Without this involvement it would have been difficult to identify the strengths and understand the weaknesses of each of these models and to be able to draw insights from each.

Over five years of almost daily immersion in co-working spaces, living as a researcher, observer and member, I was confronted with some of the challenges of co-working spaces, such as noise, privacy, poor ergonomics, unhealthy snacks, poor quality lighting, lack of views and inconsiderate space divisions. However, each co-working space also offered value and served as a model in different ways. At the Writer's Junction I built strong friendships, and the division of quiet rooms allowed me to work prolifically. Cross Campus offered a significant number of learning events. The Henry Wood House provided a model for its ergonomic focus on health, with its gym and healthy cafe. WeWork served as a model of environmental design.

These co-working spaces have been instrumental in identifying key elements of a user-centered workspace. My purpose now was to take co-working one step beyond a traditional co-working space to form a wellbeing-centered model that would incorporate the most highly valued features.

The years immersed in these co-working spaces provided time for observation and insight, which were integral to answering my research questions, but more information was

needed. However valuable was my immersion as a workspace member, the experience lacked

full definition because viewing co-working spaces as a commercial venture also demanded

inputs from the perspective of being an owner. Ownership of a co-working space—the Village

Workspace in Santa Monica, acquired by me and my husband, Oliver Barry, in 2013—provided

the input needed to round out the experiential dimension of my research. There was a crossover

period during which I was researching inside the other spaces and also becoming an owner of the

Village Workspace in Santa Monica at the same time. (See the Timelines of collection of data in

Chapter 1 Figure 1.1) This is examined in Chapter 6.

Moving Forward

In 2013 while I was still researching in other co-working spaces, my husband Oliver and

I acquired our own co-working space when we bought half of a small, struggling operation in

Santa Monica called The Working Village. The goal was to start learning the business of co-

working by being owners of a small space. I used the experience that I gained immersed in the

above spaces as laid out in this chapter together with knowledge that I eventually gained as an

owner and from interviews and a survey that I administrated in the Santa Monica location, to

design our second space, Westside Village in Los Angeles, which was completed in April 2016.

Chapter 6 shows how I made the move into the co-working industry, demonstrates some of the

changes we implemented in the Working Village and discusses the semi-structured interviews

and survey that I conducted with members in our co-working space in Santa Monica.

The research I conducted by interviewing members gave me a perspective apart from my

personal experiences working in co-working spaces. The data from the interviews and surveys

would prove to be invaluable in helping me to answer my first research question—to identify and

confirm which of the seven principles of wellbeing I would eventually use as an integral part of

the construction. The data would come to provide a clearer picture of what was needed to build a

new co-working space.

Chapter 6

Conducting Research in the Santa Monica Village Workspace

Introduction

As laid out in Chapter 5, the tacit knowledge that I gained by being immersed in four co-working spaces for five years was invaluable. In order to acquire a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the key wellbeing principles needed in constructing the new 14,000-foot Westside location, I needed a better sense of the levels of wellbeing the current members experienced at our existing site in Santa Monica.

Prior to sharing the qualitative research detailing the interviews and the survey conducted with members of the Village Workspace in Santa Monica, I would like to describe some of the changes we made to that space (originally called the Working Village) when my husband Oliver Barry (Oli for short) and I took over in 2013. This location is where the initial set of research interviews took place. Thus, the following section provides background on the Santa Monica location and concludes with the interview results.

Assessing the Village Workspace in Santa Monica

The Village Workspace in Santa Monica is a 3,500-square foot location that was owned by the original property developer, Lewis Maler, who met my husband when he was a temporary member there in 2012. Lewis had turned his own personal office into a co-working space—only the second in Los Angeles—after seeing the only other LA space, at the time called Blank Spaces. Lewis said he was inspired by how social Blank Spaces functioned, with people mostly working in the open common area. He noted that, "the two inventions that make working in an

open area viable are computers and earphones." What Lew meant is that the ability to store files on a computer meant that we no longer needed filing cabinets, while earphones meant that we can mitigate noise in an open space, making it feasible for many people to work in one area.

Lew also pointed out how the co-working industry has evolved from mostly just freelancers and independent creative workers to an alternative that companies are also embracing:

When I turned my office into a co-working space I initially thought the open space would be the driving force as co-working spaces were initially mostly freelancers and start-ups, people with limited funds. The offices in the Working Village were divided up, but at the time had no ceilings, so we had considerable noise issues, which we fixed. There are now many more established companies using co-working spaces than there were at the beginning of the movement because of the appeal of no commitments to lease a space long-term, no need to do capital improvements or buy furniture or equipment. That's why co-working is a good viable alternative.

The co-working format is becoming more and more common and is giving more and more control to users over the kinds of work environments they choose. Companies are beginning to adapt their work environments to model the co-working concept and design. Oli told me how he was drawn to co-working himself because of the distractions when working at home. I asked him why he initially was drawn to become a member of the Working Village. In response he said, "I hated working from home, nobody should be working from home! It's too distracting. You need to be around the energy of people working. And it was the location, the sea air, the open space with the mix of offices and the buzzy environment."

Even though my husband and I had been seeking a much larger space than the Working Village to start our co-working business—and really wanted one that we could build from scratch—we chose to partner with Lewis on his existing space, and thus the Working Village became our entry into learning firsthand about being owners of a co-working business. We came to realize that it was wise to have started out on a smaller scale in order to gain more knowledge of the industry and to understand what was possible. Oli became the CEO and would manage the space day-to-day, while I made several design changes to the layout and continued to conduct research in other co-working spaces.

The Working Village was operating at only 40% capacity at the time we became involved and thus our first goal was to increase profitability. Benjamin Riviera, a staff member at the time, said to me in a conversational interview:

> When you and Oli took over we had $10,000 increase per month in revenue by addressing issues that the members voiced and redesigning. We closed for two weeks and when everyone came back, the atmosphere was different. There were no loud or random people sitting in an open space. The booths were not there. The members were being more productive, spending more time in their offices getting work done. People started networking. It was more defined as a place to work.

The second goal was to learn from the experience and codify our knowledge about success factors in order to build a larger shared workspace where we could put our new vision into action (see chapter 7).

We met both goals over time, learning lessons along the way. We changed the name from the Working Village to the Village Workspace and began looking for a larger space in which to

expand and refine our ideas. We came to view the Village Workspace in Santa Monica as our

test model.

Oliver and I started our journey with the Working Village by addressing issues such as

limited natural light, strip lighting, uncomfortable chairs and too much open space (Figure 6.1).

We built more separate offices, even though there was limited space, updated the furniture, and

changed the name to the Village Workspace. In my interview with Oliver he noted this about

why we added offices, which can be seen below (Figure 6.2).

> I don't want to sit in a big open space. I fundamentally believe that people really do want
>
> to shut the door behind them, and they want to get on with their day's work. But they
>
> want to open the door and be part of something else.

Nine months after we assumed the partnership in the Working Village, the membership went to a

full occupancy—with a waiting list! Through trial and error we were learning about the co-

working business. This hands-on immersive process plus the semi-structured interviews with our

members proved invaluable.

Figure 6.1. The Working Village open area before we made changes.

Figure 6.2 The Santa Monica Village after it was redesigned. The offices added on the right (top) and the new entrance with neon light wallpaper and furniture (bottom).

Member Interviews at the Village Workspace in Santa Monica

In 2015, more than a year after acquiring the Santa Monica space, I developed a traditional two-part data collection instrument to determine (a) what the users of this space liked and did not like and what they thought could be improved, and (b) how these users would rank the seven principles in order of meaningfulness to their wellbeing. The purpose of these instruments was to provide insights that could guide planning for the buildout of the Westside Village Workspace in Los Angeles. Eighteen Santa Monica members volunteered to participate in the interviews.

Part 1 of the instrument consisted of semi-structured interviews based on five open-ended questions that were repeated for each of the seven wellbeing principles.

Part 2 was a simple paper and pencil survey, but the findings gleaned from the Santa Monica survey were critically helpful. The ranking of the seven principles became the basis for the design and construction budget of the Westside Village workspace. As a contribution to practice, the analysis of interview and survey data would determine which principles should be incorporated into the construction stage planning for co-working spaces and whether there were any redundancies in our working model. In other words, this phase of research would substantially answer Research Question #1. The survey was constructed as a 7-point ranking scale, with 1 indicating the principle that was the most important to the member and 7 indicating the principle of least importance.

Sampling Method and Research Criteria

Given the scope of the present research, I used convenience sampling in selecting interview subjects, where the interviewees were selected based on their willingness to

participate when I approached them and explained the nature of the research (Wengraf, 2001). Group interviews proved to be more practical for scheduling purposes, and the small-group approach elicited discussion among members, creating a dynamic that could produce more varied and in-depth responses than a one-on-one interview. This small group interview technique allowed the members to reflect on each other's responses and to agree or disagree with the opinions of others (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Wengraff, 2001).

To recruit interviewees, I knocked on office doors and asked if there were members who were willing to participate. I requested details on their availability and explained to participants that the study topic was co-working and wellbeing. I made clear that participation entailed a thirty-minute interview and a five-minute survey for the purpose of the following:

- To help discover what they would like to have changed in the current Village Workspace in Santa Monica.
- To provide information that would be used in building the new space in West Los Angeles and any future spaces.
- To help in the completion of my doctorate research on co-working and wellbeing.

The study participants were all members of the Village Workspace in Santa Monica and came from a variety of industries, including high tech, digital media, public relations, media, sales and other creative industries.

The interviewees were between the ages of 25 and 55; two-thirds of the participants were men, which reflected the gender distribution at the time of this research. Most of the interviewees who agreed to participate worked for a company, while a few were freelancers. I interviewed a total of 18 members at the Santa Monica Village Workspace location.

The criteria for participating in the study were as follows:

- The participant worked as an individual or part of a company housed in the Village Workspace in Santa Monica.

- The participant was English-speaking.

- The participant was available to participate in the research during working hours.

The interview questions were largely open-ended in order to allow the interview subjects to speak and answer freely, raise concerns, and to initiate topics that may not have occurred to the interviewer.

The Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview questions were based on the researcher's seven principles of wellbeing as developed and explained in chapter 4—*to connect*, *to be healthy*, *to take notice*, *to learn*, *to give*, *to flow* and *to be sensitive to the environmental factors*. The interview participants were asked about their experiences of the seven principles for wellbeing in the Village Workspace in Santa Monica.

Interviewees were asked a series of thirty-five questions—five questions for each principle—with plenty of time allotted for the interviewees to answer and discuss. The responses to each of the last questions on each principle are included in the following pages.

Participants were free to respond to the interview questions as they wished and to provide any information they believed was necessary or pertinent. Allowing for the opinion and views of the interview respondents is one advantage of the open-ended technique (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). The questions were framed to encourage the interviewees to reflect on the question and then to expand on their responses (Creswell, 2002). Participants were also

encouraged to listen to the comments of other members in their group, so they could respond further or agree or disagree with their colleagues.

The interviews were conducted at the time and place that was most convenient for the interviewee, usually either in the large conference room or in the member's personal office. Interviewees were made to feel as comfortable as possible in the hopes that they would provide as much data as possible. Yet, the clearly defined time limit of 30-40 minutes acknowledged the fact that respondents were giving up work time to participate in this unpaid interview.

As I conducted the interviews, I remained open, listened actively and guided and responded to enhance the flow of the dialogue. I created an environment for the members to respond comfortably and accurately. The data was recorded in the form of notes taken at the time, and the sessions were tape recorded to facilitate later analysis, although some recordings were lost due to the recorder breaking. The notes were typed up in a format that was suitable for further analysis. After acquiring a new recording device, three of the interview sessions recorded with the new device were transcribed and analyzed for core themes and then drawn up into a spider chart (Figure 6.5).

The questionnaire addressed wellbeing in the co-working space by asking five open-ended questions for each of my seven principles. Here are the five questions asked about *to connect*:

1. How important is it for you to make friends at the Village and get on with colleagues?

2. What do you already do to connect with other members at the Village?

3. How else do you think you can connect more with others in the space?

4. How does working in a co-working space allow you to connect more than in a traditional office?

5. What more can we do to help you to connect more with others in the space?

These questions provided important information for my first set of interviews in the Village Workspace in Santa Monica. The first question explored the validity of using connection as a principle, while the following questions allowed participants to reflect on how they are already engaged in each principle, what they could do more themselves, and how we could help.

Ensuring Ethical Research

Prospective participants were of course free to decline participation in the study, and those who did not have the time or inclination to participate declined my invitation.

Interviewees were assured at the beginning of each interview session that their responses would remain confidential and that specific comments would not be attributed to them by name. The interviews were recorded in the interest of recall and accuracy, and I also took copious notes and later analyzed them for common themes (Wengraff, 2001). While every effort was taken to ensure accuracy of note taking, I cannot assure the interviewees were entirely truthful or forthcoming in their responses. Nevertheless, the interviewees seemed earnest and willing to participate in the study, and I am confident that each member offered his or her views openly.

At the end of each group interview session, I administered a simple paper and pencil survey that asked members to rank the seven principles in order of importance. The survey used a 7-point ranking scale, with 1 indicating the principle most important to the member and 7 indicating the principle of least importance. I am transparent in my interpretations of the results. In reporting the survey outcomes, no members have been named.

Researcher Bias

An advantage of being a researcher within my own organization meant that I had a level of understanding that an outside researcher would lack (Nielsen & Repstad, 1993). But since I was a co-owner of the Village Workspace, I was concerned about having an undue influence on the participants and wondered if perhaps they would hold back to please me. The possibility also existed that I would not probe the participants because I assumed I knew what the response would be (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). In spite of these concerns I knew it was critical to interview members of the Village if I were to go beyond my own immersive experiences with co-working spaces. My perspective was only partial and I needed evidence to expand and even challenge my own views (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2001).

Getting other points of view on what constitutes wellbeing at the Santa Monica Village was essential, so the purpose of the interviews was to understand those viewpoints, not just to validate my own views and ideas. Even though I was an owner of the Village, I hoped that my presence would not change the nature of the conversation because I was a natural part of the daily activities and the participants were used to seeing me (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014).

Limitations

Another initial concern was that my sample size was too small and that perhaps I needed to interview more members and obtain more feedback. I was limited by the constraints of time and money, but I quickly became aware that clear patterns emerged very early in the interviews, suggesting that additional interviews would have been redundant. Another potential problem was that my own impressions might have biased the data and influenced the outcome of the interviews. However, I had no choice but to assume that the participants responded honestly and

to the best of their individual abilities, especially as they were aware the data was going to be used to their benefit to improve the current space.

The interviews were limited to a maximum of 40 minutes to avoid taking advantage of the members, who were, after all, paying for the use of their spaces. Also, for the same reason, the sample relied only on members who actively volunteered for the project.

Interview Outcomes

As I listened to the recordings and read through my notes, I quickly became aware that the feedback I was receiving was essentially the same across all of the groups I had interviewed. A summary of the prominent points that participants emphasized is provided below. The comments are not given verbatim but instead represent a synthesis of several similar responses. The group nature of the interviews also allowed for discussion and commentary after a particular respondent gave his or her response. The members' names are not singled out in the data because once a comment was made other members added to the discussion.

Listed below are sample responses participants provided to the last question in each of the seven series of questions. In the cases where I found overlap in responses, I put the answers in the principle category where I thought they most belonged. The data is presented this way so the reader only has to read a particular comment once. The data I collected from the interviews, as well as my experience working in other spaces, have shown considerable overlap between the principles.

Responses to Interview Questions About the Village Workspace in Santa Monica

What more can we do to help you connect better with others in the space?

- Provide a space where members can socialize and bond.

- Put logos on the office doors so it is easier to introduce ourselves.

- Have more Happy Hours and social activities.

- Arrange more planned lunches together.

- Provide a directory of people, so we know who is in the space.

- Set up a Facebook group or LinkedIn.

- Find ways to get people out of their offices and to chat more.

- Hang pictures up of who people are and what they do.

- Have holiday gatherings.

- Do potlucks once a week or every other week.

What more can we do to help you be healthier and more active in the space?

- Designate a Village bicycle.

- Provide standing desks.

- Add more windows.

- Give local gym discounts.

- Add Wi-Fi on the patio so we can go outside.

- Have a vending machine.

- Provide more healthy snacks.

- Give lunchtime yoga classes.

- Arrange team lunches.

- Set up a smoothie bar.

What more can we do to help you to take notice and remain present in the space?

- Add a foosball table or ping-pong.

- Decorate the walls with inspirational quotations.

- Give more formal introductions to new companies in the space.

- Arrange a group meditation.

What more can we do to help you to gain more knowledge and learn new things at work?

- Provide more magazines in the front, i.e., *Science* magazine.

- Place logos on the office doors to identify what others do.

- Organize lunches where we can learn from other companies.

- Invite experts and inspirational speakers to give talks.

What more can we do to help you increase the way that you give in the space?

- Provide more opportunities where there is time to speak to more people.

- Give free beer in the kitchen.

- Keep bathrooms and kitchen clean.

- Share desserts.

- Trade services with a discount.

- Do a food drive.

- Adopt a family who needs assistance.

- Give to a pet shelter.

- Donate things or volunteer time, not just donations of money.

- Chip in for toys at a hospital.

- Collect for some causes that people are passionate about.

What more can we do to help you flow more in your work in the space?

- Provide Wi-Fi on the back patio.

- Design more open and shared spaces to work.

- Add music.

- Allow for more daylight to enter.

- Encourage members to go for walks.

- Change policy if members are busy, to close the door.

- Put screens around the space where you can plug in.

What can we do to make the environment better for you in the space?

- Supply warmer lights at the back.

- Provide a water feature.

- Place more indoor plants around the space.

- Change the carpet on the floor.

- Change lighting.

- Play music, as it can be noisy sometimes.

- Allow for more natural light.

- Adjust the temperature as it is too cold.

- Provide more communal space.

- Change conference room table.

- Install a chalkboard to display a thought for the day.

The Survey at the Village Workspace in Santa Monica

Two main data collection methods were used in carrying out the research with members at the Village Workspace: semi-structured interviews and a survey. After each interview session, each participant was given five minutes to rank order the seven principles he or she felt were the most important for wellbeing in a co-working space.

A rating of 1 indicated the principle was the most important to a member. A rating of 7 indicated the member was least concerned about that principle. Even though all the principles are important for wellbeing, the ranking from the surveys gave me an understanding of which principles to prioritize in the design of the new space. The results of the survey were collated so the results could be easily interpreted (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1

Rank Order Importance of Seven Principles

Rank	Principle	Importance
	To flow	21.70%
	To be healthy	21.10%
	To connect	13.40%
	To be environmentally sensitive	12.50%
	To take notice	12.50%
	To learn	11.00%
	To give	7.70%

Methodology for Collated Ranking

The inverse of each rank was calculated as a weight so that it maps as shown below. The most important principle in each member's list has a weight of 1.

Rank	Approximate Weight
1	1
2	0.5
3	0.33
4	0.25
5	0.20
6	0.67
7	0.14

For each of the seven principles, a sum of the weights was calculated. This sum was converted to a percentage by multiplying it by 100 and dividing by the total of weights of all concepts.

Interpretation of Interview and Survey Results

The researcher conducted the interviews, and the participants then filled out a survey. The data was then analyzed and the comments of what the members would like to see changed were noted. A number of requests asked for the same kinds of changes, including a bigger shared space area, more events, more ways to connect, logos on the doors, and an online app. One prominent point was that members struggled with the lack of natural light in the workspace.

The results of the survey indicated that respondents placed the highest value (21.7%) on *to flow* for their co-working space. Therefore, it was important to find ways to help members achieve flow and remain intensely absorbed in the moment and in their work tasks. Many ways were suggested in which members felt we could help promote more flow, including adding ambient music and implementing an optional closed-door policy.

The second priority in the design of a workspace was a focus on the health of the members, with the collated ranking at 21.1%. The interview participants indicated this was a shared responsibility. Members had to take responsibility for their own health, but the addition of features such as standing desks, local gym discounts and a healthy vending machine would

make it easier for members to remember the importance of their healthy choices. In response to these requests, the Village offered a meditation class and added more healthy snack options.

Third in the ranking results concerned relationships with other members—*to connect* (13.4%). Our members liked being surrounded by other companies in the same space, but they also valued having private offices. A concern was expressed that the current communal space was somewhat limited and there was a need for an extra area dedicated to socializing. Also, members expressed a desire to have company-identifying logos on the doors. There was a need for more Happy Hours and shared lunches and a suggestion that social media such as Facebook or LinkedIn be somehow integrated into the workspace experience.

To be environmentally sensitive and *to take notice* were a tie and both were ranked fourth, with 12.5%. Many of the participants asked for changes to improve the environment: plants in the space and more natural light to improve the working environment. Members were interested in a water feature and, as mentioned, more communal space. Some participants suggested making the lighting warmer at the back of the space and adding a new conference table.

To take notice also received a 12.5% collated ranking. Taking notice means staying present in the space, to be aware of the surroundings and how the members feel in the moment, both physically and mentally. A few members asked for a meditation class at lunchtime; many other members felt it was important to take five minutes to connect with others. Suggestions were made to add inspirational quotations on the walls to bring them into the present moment.

To learn was ranked number six at 11%. The participant members wanted more experts and speakers to give talks. They suggested scheduled lunches for each company to showcase

what they do and the skills their employees acquire while working for them. There were also requests for educational magazines in the greeting area.

Last on the list of importance was *to give* with 7.7%. This was expressed as a desire to trade services with other members at discounts, to hold food drives, to have free beer available, to adopt a family in need of assistance or to collect for a cause.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews and survey discussed in this chapter was to add new perspectives from actual co-working members to maximize the wellbeing of future users of the new larger space of 14,000 square feet. Attending to seven wellbeing principles is a big investment. Yet there is significant promise in terms of the return on investment. A happier shared workspace would encourage people to join, be more productive and remain as members for as long as possible (Fredrickson, 2004).

Even if facing significant financial constraints in building and operating the Westside Village location, honoring my first principle by helping members flow in their work process and remain engaged in their tasks was obviously of the highest priority. The second priority would be to focus on the health of members and third their relationships with each other. The tie between *to be sensitive to environmental factors* and *to take notice* would come next, with *to learn* and *to give* bringing up the rear.

Member input from the interviews and surveys fleshed out the ideas developed from my previous experiences as a member of other co-working facilities as discussed in chapter 5. Member input also helped me to answer Research Question 1: Could we identify and confirm principles of wellbeing that could be physically embodied as an integral part of the construction

in a buildout of a co-working space? This and other findings are addressed in more detail in chapter 7.

General Findings

As I continued to immerse myself in the data, I found it helpful to develop a visual representation of what I had learned in the form of a knowledge map (Hale, 2014). This map embodied each of the seven principles. Figure 6.3 is an initial representation of the component structures of the principles that emerged from my research. Of course, the components are not as discrete as the map suggests. For example, open space can really cut across two principles, flow and environmental influence. The purpose of the map was to help me answer my research questions and to act as an initial blueprint for the Westside Village buildout.

Figure 6.3. The seven principles of wellbeing used in the buildout of the Westside Village Workspace.

The structure in Figure 6.3 is a static representation, but the structure itself was anything but static and has been subject to constant change as my experiences in co-working spaces continued to inform the evolution of my ideas. Through a further period of indwelling and focusing, I deepened and refined new discoveries to gain a more complete understanding of the principles that would create a co-working space with optimal wellbeing.

I spent several months alternately immersed in this map while we began the demolition phase of the buildout of the Westside Village workspace while intermittently letting the map dwell inside of me as I engaged in other activities.

During this stretch, multiple shifts occurred in my perception of the map as I began to acquire clarity on themes and relationships between certain ideas that had not been apparent earlier. My ongoing exploration facilitated a fresh perspective. Moustakas refers to this as a moment of "illumination . . . [that] facilitates the understanding and explication of essential qualities and themes" (1990, p. 50).

In practice, I realized that the actual implementation of the basic principles would need to be linked to each other as a matter of practical necessity, and thus the knowledge map would eventually need to change if it were to serve as a blueprint for the construction stage the of Westside Village.

As a researcher, I had explicated the major components of this map in readiness for the final phase of integration and creative synthesis as laid out in the following chapter.

Chapter 7

Building Wellbeing Principles into the Westside Village Workspace

Introduction

The principles used to build the new space in West Los Angeles were based on my work over the last 20 years in the personal development and entertainment fields—five years of lived experiences as a proactive participant in four co-working spaces and the explication of those experiences using the seven principles in each space as a framework (chapter 5). In addition, I drew on my experience as an owner of an established co-working space in Santa Monica and a series of semi-structured interviews and a survey with a sample of the members of that space (chapter 6). In this chapter I show how all this data was creatively synthesized to decide which elements would be incorporated in the new space and how they would be prioritized. This led to the creation of a model for applying wellbeing in the construction of the 14,000-square foot Westside Village co-working space in West Los Angeles. This journey has been presented visually in Figure 2 of chapter 1.

In the first part of this chapter I will address my two research questions:

Research Question #1. Could I identify and confirm principles of wellbeing that could find physical embodiment as an integral part of the construction in a buildout of a co-working space?

Research Question #2. How would such principles apply in practice?

In the second part of the chapter I present a discussion of interviews and a survey conducted in the new space to see what was working in the new space and what could be improved.

I spent months mulling over the knowledge map presented at the end of the previous chapter, while letting my ideas incubate as I engaged in other activities of work and leisure. During this time I noted many shifts occurring in my understanding of the map, and I began to note relationships between ideas that had not been apparent previously (Moustakas, 1990, p. 95). I patiently waited for a moment of illumination that would show me how these principles would interact and work in practice in constructing a new co-working space. Finally, one day I noted a completely fresh perspective.

Finding 1: Identifying and Confirming Principles

of Wellbeing for the Construction Phase

My first clear realization was that some of the original seven principles were more relevant to the buildout of the new co-working space than others. From my immersive experiences, the literature and the research conducted at the Santa Monica location, I ultimately decided that even though all seven principles were relevant in a co-working space not all of them were relevant for the buildout stage. These were the ones that happened to be the highest ranking in the Santa Monica surveys. These four principles are: (1) *to flow*, (2) *to be healthy*, (3) *to connect* and (4) *to be sensitive to the environmental influence*. I now understood that the *to take notice* principle could fold into the environmental influence and that the last two principles, *to give* and *to learn*, were more applicable to the day-to-day operations of the space than to the buildout. Thus, my thoughts on the buildout of the Westside Village Workspace focused on the first four principles—*to flow, to be healthy*, *to connect* and *to be sensitive to the environmental influence*. This phase of research would substantially answer Research Question #1, as I had

identified the principles and confirmed which were the most relevant to wellbeing and could be physically embodied as an integral part of the construction of a co-working space.

Finding 2: The Interconnections of Principles

of Wellbeing into the Physical Design

My second significant realization happened immediately after the first. I had initially envisioned the wellbeing principles as seven neat and separate categories, as shown in Figure 6.3 in chapter 7; however, it became increasingly clear that there was actually much cross-over between the wellbeing principles and the physical factors that embodied those principles. Thus, to combine the seven wellbeing principles with the construction of a co-working space, I would need to consider how the principles actually would interact in practice.

For example, while at the Henry Wood House location, I realized that a single physical feature—an ergonomic chair—was actually a nexus for a number of the principles. It synthesized one's ability *to flow* and be absorbed in work with considerations of health because it avoids the problems common with non-ergonomic equipment. Therefore:

ergonomics = flow + health

At Cross Campus, the windows were a central part of the design. Looking out on the world allowed a moment of contemplation, which also contributed to achieving a state of flow. Appreciating the available views is also a part of the environmental influence, while the windows themselves allowed me to get sunlight on my face as well. Thus the three principles interlink:

view = flow + sensitive to environmental factors + health

In the same way, I recognized that negative factors such as noise could prevent one from becoming absorbed in one's work and achieving a state of flow. Noise could also increase stress levels and affect one's health and be a source of conflict between coworkers:

noise = lack of flow + unhealthy stress + conflict in relationships

This realization marked a significant moment in my long journey towards building our own co-working space from scratch. But I had yet a third significant realization.

Finding 3: A Four-Factor Model Emerges

for the Construction Stage

My research on wellbeing culminated not only in the development of a practical plan for the construction stage of the Westside Village project but also in the answer to my second research question, namely, how the principles would interact in practice. I had to devise a way to address a number of design factors that would improve work processes and address physical and psychological wellbeing in the workplace. With this in mind, I knew that I needed to integrate my four final chosen principles into construction plans suitable for cost-efficient implementation. If the goal of wellbeing of members was to be served in the buildout of the co-working space, four problems needed a solution, all within a budget. This required:

- Problem A: building a mix of private offices and open space to mitigate the noise and privacy factor

- Problem B: crafting a multi-location work experience to give members multiple ways of working throughout the day

- Problem C: generating ample space, light, and views wherever members were working

- Problem D: designing an environment that was warm, healthy, and inspirational

Figure 7.1. illustrates the new working model that evolved from the knowledge map of the principles for using in building out the Westside Village co-working space.
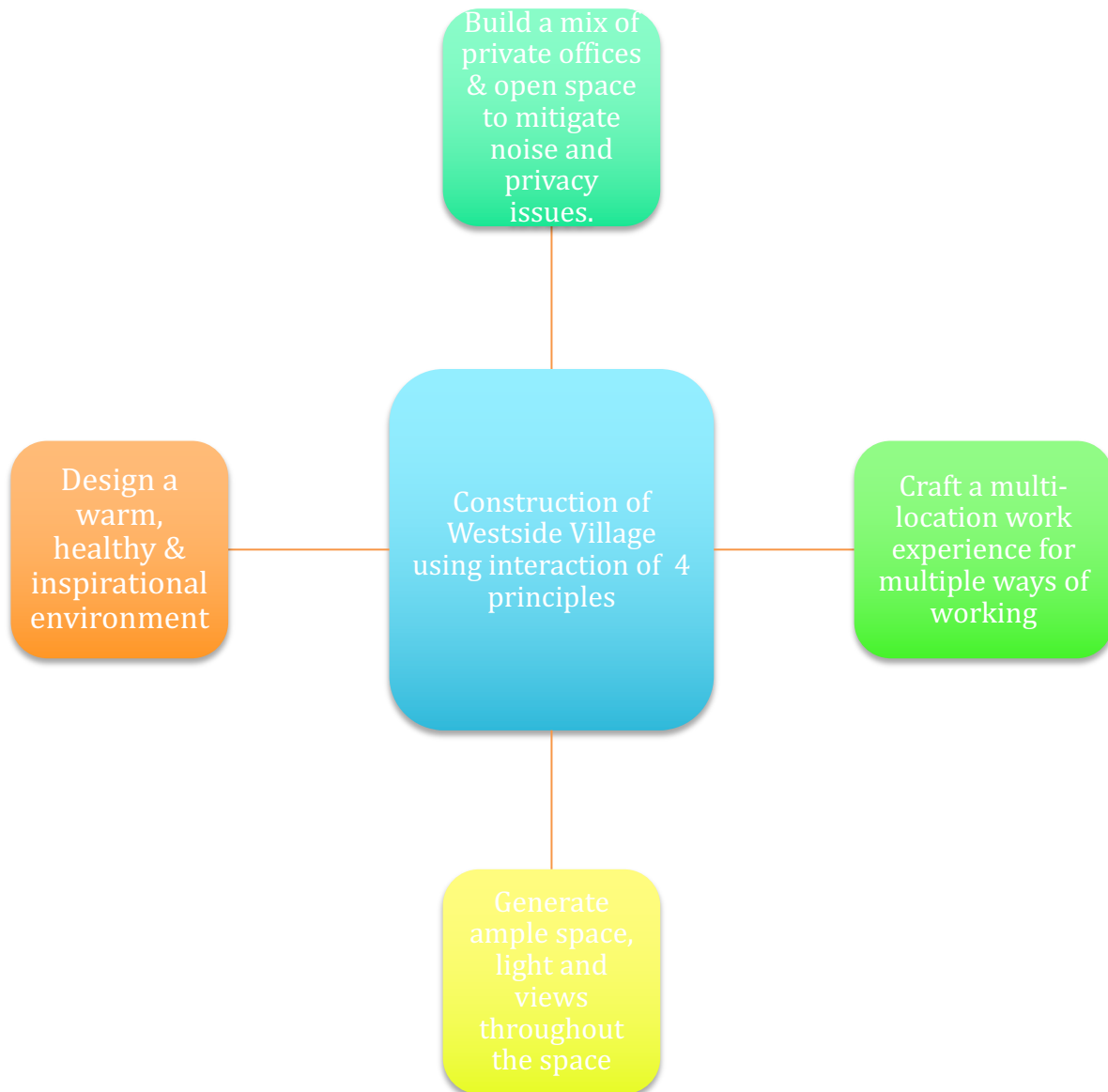
Figure 7.1. The new working model for designing the Westside Village workspace

Synthesizing the Wellbeing Model in Co-working Spaces

The Santa Monica Village interviews coupled with my immersion experiences in co-working space show the increased sense of empowerment and positive attitude that will emerge when workers can exercise control over their space. These same inputs, however, revealed that isolating just a single negative factor would be difficult. As Lee and Brand (2005) suggest, "Perhaps if considered in isolation, each ambient feature of the physical environment may not have predictable effects on performance, but repeated distraction from a collection of such features may be negatively associated with performance." (pp. 323-333.) Thus, it is important to consider different dimensions of the co-working experience and how they interrelate instead of attempting to focus on a single principle separately and in isolation.

Synthesis for Problem A: Build a Mix of Private Offices and Open Space to Mitigate the Noise and Privacy Factor

For many years, companies have preferred open office designs because they were less expensive and more flexible. They tried to put a positive spin on the notion of an open office by stressing team building, a flow of information, fewer formal meetings, and the sense of camaraderie that comes with sharing a space (Miller, 2015; Pearce & Hinds, 2018). However, open-plans have high noise levels (Kim & de Dear, 2013) and high levels of distraction (Jahncke et al., 2012). Additionally, research findings show that open-plan offices are generally associated with greater employee stress and poorer co-worker relations (Paul, 2012).

In addition to existing research showing that open office designs are distracting, my own experiences in such spaces confirmed the challenge of concentrating in such spaces. The literature contains many studies showing that office chatter—"the irrelevant speech effect"—was

one of the biggest distractions for workers (Lewis, Lemieux, & Sykes, 2003). Finding a solution to this problem was of critical importance.

The key was to build the space to consist mostly of offices rather than open space. The Westside space has 42 offices of varying sizes and only 2,000 square feet of open space. Figure 7.2 shows a corridor with offices to each side (above) and some of the open space (below).

Figure 7.2. Offices along a corridor with glass windows and the open space.

Despite the popularity of open plan office designs for a company or an employer (Brennan, Chugh, & Kline, 2002), and the significant reduction in costs a more open-plan layout would have meant, my research outweighed these cost considerations. I also witnessed a great

preference for private space (Sundstrom et al., 1980) while being immersed in the co-working

spaces of our competitors and from my experience running a co-working space.

Susan Cain, author of the best seller, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that*

Can't Stop Talking states that, "One-third to half the population are introverts." (Cain, 2012,

p.21). Open spaces mean that introverts must often adopt extroverted behaviors to survive in

corporate culture. Introverts, like myself, often need to withdraw in order to work effectively.

Yet with 70% of U.S. workspaces still using open-plan designs (Beckerman, 2015), quiet, private

spaces are often lacking in today's work environment.

Creativity also suffers in open-plan designs because it is difficult to concentrate and to

become absorbed in one's work in such workspaces (Beckerman, 2015). Open office designs

have few tangible benefits from the worker's perspective (Brennan, Chugh, & Kline, 2002; Kim

& de Dear, 2013).

In the private offices of the new construction we lowered the ceilings to help with sound

insulation and used soundproof, storefront glass. Each office was carpeted and the walls were

soundproofed. Soundproof booths were created in the open space to encourage members to be

considerate of others when they make a call. Acoustics were tested and structural adjustments

were made as necessary. Although playing music can be controversial, (Paul, 2012) our use of

ambient music in the open areas minimized the impact of noise, reduced workspace stress and

led to increased productivity (Alvarsson, et al., 2010; Haake, 2006; Hallam, 2012; Jahncke &

Halin 2012, 2012; Lesiuk, 2005).

Figure 7.3 shows a traditionally designed office prior to construction, with the open space

in the middle and offices around the perimeter. Figure 7.4 shows the space after construction.

Figure 7.3. A traditionally designed office, with the open space in the middle and offices around the perimeter.

Figure 7.4. Space after construction; offices on the outside and a conference room with light pouring in.

Synthesis for Problem B: Craft a Multi-Location Work Experience for Multiple Ways of Working Through the Day

The solution to noise distraction has as much to do with the management of space as it does with behavior, acoustics and design. As a consequence of my research, I wanted to increase control over where members could work, allowing them to change locations as they wished throughout the day. I achieved this by designing active spaces where meetings and conversations could take place and quiet spaces, where members could work quietly, with minimal distractions from noise. This provided a balance of active versus quiet space in the design throughout the new workspace. Members had the option to use common spaces and move around depending on the type of work they were doing or on their inclination to change scenery.

The sub-spaces were classified as follows:

Active space: Active spaces are the reception area, bar, café area, and kitchen where members can connect with each other (Dishman, 2015; Sias & Chahill, 1998) and are designed for serendipitous and social interactions (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5. Active café area with bar and offices behind.

Quiet space: These are the breakout areas, which are separate spaces for informal meetings (Figure 7.6), the open co-working space (Figure 7.7), the multi-purpose room and phone booths (Figure 7.8), and the private offices and conference areas (Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.6. Star Wars active break out area.

Figure 7.7. Members working quietly in the open space.

Figure 7.8. Phone booths for making calls.

The spaces that are intended for informal collaboration and the spaces that provide quiet are easily distinguishable (Lee & Brand, 2005), as is the active space where noise is expected—the reception, bar, café area, and kitchen. A clear visual delineation exists between where members can have noisy meetings or phone calls or where they do quiet work.

Users like the ability to choose which space they want to use depending on the kind of work they are engaged in. They might be collaborating as a team, working independently, or just relaxing (Lee & Brand, 2005; Thoring & Mueller, 2015).

The goal at the Westside Village was to allow members to choose to spend time in their private offices, in the more active café area (Figure 7.5), or in the open area (Figure7.7). They could have a quiet but more relaxed place to work or take a meeting in the Star Wars library area (Figure 7.6). Members could also use any of the three conference rooms or the multi-purpose room for larger meetings. We also built a sound studio for podcasts. Liegel (2014, p.163) noted that changing location helps members to rhythmically separate tasks but also to find inspiration from the surrounding décor and activity. In the Santa Monica interviews, our members expressed an increased sense of empowerment and a positive attitude toward their work when they could exercise control over their space.

Synthesis for Problem C: Generate Ample Apace, Light, and Views Regardless of Where Members Are Working

To prioritize wellbeing in co-working spaces, it was important to incorporate natural elements into the workplace, notably natural light (Weil, 2011; Zee, 2014) and plants (Browning, Ryan, Clancy, 2014; Bringslimark et al., 2007; Human Spaces, 2014; Raanaas et al., 2011). The

lack of windows at the Santa Monica location was a limiting feature according to member interviews. With our human need to connect with nature on a physical, mental, and social level (Frumkin, 2001; Berman et al., 2008), we incorporated natural materials, natural light, views, and other signs of the natural world (Jensen, 2018).

Although the offices with an exclusive ocean view were premium offices, we wanted all members to share in the surroundings. Studies of natural light in the workplace have shown that employees who have windows sleep better and have more vitality than those who have no natural light exposure at work (Boubekri et al., 2014). We need to connect with nature for our physical and mental wellbeing (Colarelli et al., 2016).

We took measures to assure that views could be shared by both those who had private office memberships and those who had only open space memberships. This allowed all members to benefit from the views and from the healthy natural light. Figure 7.9 below shows how members who work in the open spaces as well as the offices can enjoy the view.

At Westside Village we provided open areas, exposed 15-foot ceilings, and extra wide walkways to allow members plenty of personal space (Meyers-Levy, 2007). The three conference rooms were placed strategically, with one located near each cluster of private offices. This facilitated the use of space among the different offices and avoided crowding.

Figure 7.9. Views, light, space, flowers, and trees.

Synthesis for Problem D: Design an Environment That Is Warm, Healthy and Inspiring

In addressing Problem D, I addressed several features, paying particular attention to the ergonomics of the furniture. I wanted to promote changing postures and an ease of movement within the space (Mak & Thomas, 2005) and to apply ergonomic principles with regard to sitting and standing options (Kay, 2013; O'Neill, 2014; Dunstand et al., 2012; MacEwen et al., 2015). A variety of workstations were selected with height adjustable options—counter height desks, bar height possibilities, couches, and standing desks (Ognibene et al., 2016; Viahos, 2011). Increasing amounts of research is showing the detrimental health effects of sitting for extended periods of time (Dunstan, Howard, Healy, & Owen, 2012; Pronk, Katz, Lowry, & Payfer, 2011). We provided ergonomic chairs in both the co-working area and the offices.

Colors were selected for their warmth and calming effect with a pop of yellow and some red stripes for an energizing, upbeat feel (Kwallek, Woodson, Lewis, & Sales, 1997). For visual appeal, I selected an eclectic mix of furniture, objects, lighting, wallpaper and art. The lounge furniture had mostly firm seats and back cushions, with wide armrests to facilitate safe postures.

Games such as a ping-pong table and other brain stimulating games were strategically placed for members who might be inspired to take advantage of these forms of relaxation. Healthy refreshments were available at the bar.

In sum, our goal was to build the wellbeing principles into the physical design and construction of the Westside space. We pursued this goal by creating a framework for co-working spaces that is people-centered rather than space-centered and that could be built into a space during its construction in a warm, healthy, and inspiring way.

Figures 7.10 through 7.12 illustrate the process and its benefits.

Figure 7.10. Reception before construction.

Figure 7.11. Reception after construction.

Figure 7.12. Bar and a conference room after construction.

Building the Westside Village workspace was extremely challenging and highly

rewarding. It was the synthesis of an extraordinary amount of research and investment. It was

very satisfying to watch how over the period of nine months the workspace began to fill up and

to observe how the members used the space as we had designed it. In the construction of future

spaces, we would build more phone booths, add more one-person offices and have no offices

with built-in desks facing a wall. The Westside Village received a stream of positive feedback

and press, including the article called "Companies We Love: Village Workspaces" by Ivanka

Trump and *Locale* magazine's "Village Workspaces: A New Standard for Co-workspaces."

By this point I had covered six of the seven stages in my heuristic research. It was time

for the seventh.

Follow-up Interviews a Year After Opening Westside Village Workspace

A Priority of Principles

A year after the opening of the Westside Village workspace, it was time for the final

stage of my research—the validation of the heuristic inquiry. Had the synthesis of the principles

of wellbeing as incorporated into the construction of a co-working space actually worked? I

obtained feedback to validate the degree of wellbeing in the new space by repeating the

interviews and survey that had been carried out in the Santa Monica location. I conducted the

interviews and survey in our new location in West Los Angeles to see which principles members

prioritized in the new space.

Instead of assuming that the principles of wellbeing had been truly implemented in the

construction, I tested to see what was working in the new space and what could be improved. I

used the same seven principles as used in the first set of interviews, even though I had already

narrowed the principles down to four that were most critical for the construction. I was also

interested in how we could improve our operation, so all seven principles needed to be part of

this interview. We had indeed found many solutions to the issues raised in the Santa Monica

location, such as more space to socialize and handling noise level issues; however, more work

was needed on the operational side of the business, which is our current focus, such as adding more events and a membership app.

Eighteen Westside Village members were interviewed in April and May of 2017, a year after the co-working space opened. The one-year mark gave members a sufficient period of time to form an opinion of the space. I wanted to understand what they liked and disliked about the way the space was built and being operated and perhaps make further modifications based on that feedback. The approach to sampling and the research criteria were similar to those I had used in the Santa Monica location (see chapter 6).

At the time the interviews were conducted at the Westside Village location, 41 of 42 offices were occupied, and we had a membership of 28 co-workers in the common space. However, I did not want to assume that this success was necessarily due to my work incorporating wellbeing as an integral part of the model. I needed to see if the seven principles genuinely resonated with the members and whether the principles were part of why they chose to work at the Village. Therefore, the interviews were meant to test whether my hypotheses were true. I also wanted to be sure I was not neglecting any critiques or complaints about the design and administration of the space or that I was basing my findings solely on my own position (Coghlan, 2008; Coghlan & Rashford, 1990). Thus, in a quest to inquire intelligently and make conscious decisions about possible changes, gathering more data was obviously called for.

The eighteen members were interviewed in one of the Village's conference rooms in groups of two to six. The members interviewed had been in the space for at least three months—some for as long as a year. The interviewees were an equal mix of male and female participants between the ages of 24 and 60 and were drawn from members who rented private offices as well as those who worked only in the co-working space. The interviewees represented a cross-section

of different industries including the technology, non-profit, legal and media industries. I was aware that the interviewees were volunteering time during their workday and that members had to return to their work. In consideration of their time, the interviews had to be succinct and focused.

Interview Questions

The interview questions that I designed for the Westside Village location were comparable to those used in Santa Monica in 2015. I was interested in learning what aspects of the Westside Village were functioning effectively and what changes the members might want us to implement for their optimum wellbeing. Therefore, the categories listed below focused on questions such as "What do you want?" and "What do you appreciate already?" Because I had sufficient information from Santa Monica as to why people liked co-working, this question was not included. I made an effort to remain as neutral as possible in order to get reliable results.

Following is an example of the questions in the health category:

1. How important is it for you to be healthy at work?

2. What do you do already to remain healthy at the Village?

3. How can you be healthier at the Village?

4. What can we do more of to help you to be healthier at the Village?

Interview Outcomes: Positive Feedback and Highly Engaged Members

One of the patterns to emerge from the interviews with Village Workspace members was that many of the responses given by member participants could be assigned to more than one category or principle. When this occurred, I assigned responses in the most relevant category.

The crossover is significant in that my seven principles do not necessarily coincide with the way members conceptualize their own wellbeing in the workplace. For example, the members may not have consciously thought about the idea of flow in those exact terms even though the experience of being highly engaged in their work was common.

Overall, the feedback received from members at the Westside Village location was even more positive than the generally positive feedback received at the Santa Monica location. In spite of this extremely positive information, I needed to pay close attention to any suggestions for improvement.

Based on the interview feedback, the principles were successfully applied. However, *to learn* and *to connect* needed more attention, which meant that the work environment would need to provide more spaces for creative activity—collaboration, inspiration, thinking, sharing and exploration. In addition, there was the need to address the core values of co-working—openness, communication, collaboration, accessibility and sustainability—in order to generate a "serendipity machine" where R&D activities, including idea generation, could be carried out (Fuzi et al., 2014).

The group interview structure led to conversations about the impact of each of the seven principles in the workspace. The interviewees discussed what they believed was working and what they wanted to see improved. Table 7.1 exhibits a selection of comments from these member interviews.

Table 7.1 *Participants' Responses to Interview Questions About the Westside Village*

Comments from Member Interviews, Westside Village, April 2017

	Where Can We Do More	What Members Appreciate
To Connect	Create a Slack group. Schedule more happy hours. Arrange more social events. Publish a monthly newsletter. Add a TV as a bulletin board. Broadcast birthdays on a TV.	Respect among members. Community members are generally high achieving professionals. Friendly community. Bar is positive social area. Multiple areas to connect. Free cooked breakfasts. Happy hours.
To Be Healthy	Gym membership. Yoga classes. More fruit. Outings together. 10-minute lunchtime. Meditation sessions.	Ambiance. Lighting. Views. Standing desks. Clean bar. Selection of snacks. Ergonomic chairs. Large desks. Trees and flowers. Variety of seating.
To Take Notice	Keep the ping-pong table out all the time.	Soothing aesthetics. Space fosters good energy. Large windows and views. Glass offices. Great colors and decor Seeing others working provides motivation. Space is focused and relaxed. Art, photos, paintings, street art. Working in different locations.
To Learn	Offer industry specific classes (i.e., marketing, SEO, coding workshops). Provide interesting and useful lecture series. Provide some magazines on economics. Feature one person a week online. Create a time for companies	A variety of companies with distinctive interests. Getting valuable learning experiences from other members.

	to speak about their brands.	
To Give	More Happy hours. Master classes. Give $1 to philanthropy campaigns.	Village Workspaces already gives so much Easy to connect with people. People give advice and help. Members help each other to make connections. Easy to bring friends in to the office.
To Flow	Better acoustics in the conference rooms.	Chilled music in the space. Space already facilitates being in the flow. Ability to work in multiple locations around the space. Co-working is quiet so you can work undisturbed. Calm and focused space. Staff very professional and giving. Comfortable chairs. Division of space.
Environmental Influence	Another phone booth.	Space looks good and feels great. Artwork on the walls. Great amount of space for each person. Relaxed environment. Star Wars break-out room. Balance of open space and offices. Focused working environment. Mix of natural light and softer lighting. Views. Cool décor Mixed material—The natural elements, concrete wall and fuzzy wallpaper Multiple areas to work in and ability to move around.

Interpretation of Interview Results

      To Flow. The interviewees in the Westside Village agreed that the space was conducive to being highly absorbed in their work. The only negative factor mentioned that inhibited flow was the acoustics in the conference rooms, which were promptly fixed.

      To Connect. Members indicated that more attention to the connection principle was needed, although it was among one of the principles most successfully achieved. Members loved the sense of community that was generated in the space. Even though the space is 14,000 square feet, it is designed to create intimacy and connection. As a result of the feedback, monthly happy hours have been established and a monthly newsletter is being published. Further work is now needed to provide more learning opportunities by inviting more speakers, to add a bulletin board to share news and to create an online presence for members to connect.

      To Be Sensitive to Environmental Factors. Members described the environment as "hip and sophisticated" and made comments such as "I'm very proud to have my office here" and "You have made hip, classy." Members liked the balance between open space and offices and the breakout areas where members could work. The research participants emphasized their appreciation of the amount of space available for each person.

Other leaders in the co-working industry have also visited the Village Workspaces and commented on the layout and feel of the space. For example, Charlie Green, CEO of The Office Group in London, (of which Henry Wood House is one of their locations) He texted the following comments to me, as a follow up after visiting the Westside Village.

Figure 7.13 Text about environmental sensitivity of the Westside Village co-working space.

To Be Healthy. The feedback on the health attributes of the space includes mention of

the amount of natural light available, the quality of the internal lighting and the healthy food

options. Members also mentioned they appreciated the views of the city and the ocean.

According to one Westside Village member, "That view has changed my mood from bad to good

many times. The glass and light keep me centered." The members also offered positive

comments about the ergonomics of the office furniture. In partnership with the gym on the first

floor of the building, Westside Village members can attend fitness and yoga classes and enjoy

ready-made organic food for a reasonable price.

To Take Notice. Members liked the social aspect of the space. They appreciated the

ability to take a moment away from their work to chat with someone at the bar or read one of the

books or magazines strategically placed in the space or take a few moments to rest in the Star

Wars area. One member said, "I love the cool decor. It doesn't make you feel that you are at the

office. You can be present and then go back to your job. The space gives you balance and

beauty." Influencing other people's experience of being present is hard, and yet it seemed that the combination of elements have contributed to the members' overall experience. Our members were particularly complimentary about the design features that allowed them to take a moment away from their work to enjoy the view and aesthetics of the space.

To Learn. The members valued being surrounded by a variety of companies, as it gives them the opportunity to learn about other businesses. Members were vocal about wanting a forum in which they could learn what other companies were doing in the space, perhaps by profiling one company a week via a lunch-and-learn lecture series. Suggestions were also made to have industry specific classes offered in areas such as marketing, coding, social media and SEO.

To Give. As in the case of the Santa Monica interviews and surveys, "giving" was not of primary importance to the interview respondents in the Westside Village. Although I consider *to give* in the charitable or philanthropic sense, most of the respondents viewed this as the opportunity to think about how much we give to each other in the space as coworkers, and how the administrators/owners provide so much to them already. Some interviewees did want a donation system set up for an important cause. Others mentioned that they would appreciate access to vacant offices in order to make a call.

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Follow-up Survey

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In the interest of generating comparable data between both locations, I repeated the survey that was carried out with the Santa Monica members. The survey was constructed as a 7-point ranking scale, with 1 indicating the principle most important to a member and 7 indicating the principle of least importance. The results are presented in Table 7.2.

The initial reason to carry out the interview research in the Santa Monica location was to know where it was best to spend our limited funds in the projected the Westside Village. However, this time I was curious to see if the Westside Village members prioritized the same principles as the members in the Santa Monica location. Maybe there would be further insight gained from comparing and contrasting the data from the two locations.

The data gathered via the interviews and rankings were used to assess what further improvements were necessary in the Westside Village. This data plays a central role in the expansion of the Village Workspaces philosophy to have member's wellbeing at the center of the design.

Information gathered from the interviews and rankings was subjective in nature, providing useful albeit anecdotal evidence that expresses the opinions of Westside Village members about themselves and the quality of the work environment. The results thus are highly subjective and based on my interpretation of the information. I acknowledge that the research results may not be representative of all the members at the Westside Village or the Santa Monica locations.

Once again, the survey findings revealed a similar rank order as previously for the four principles of greatest value: *to flow*, *to be healthy*, *to connect* and *to be sensitive to the environment* (Table 7.2). This tended to support our belief in the soundness of the top four principles and their likely generalizability to other co-working spaces.

Table 7.2

Comparative Survey Rankings of Santa Monica Versus Westside

Rank	Principle	Importance to Santa Monica Members (n=18)	Importance to Westside Members (n=18)
1	To flow	21.70%	26.20%
2	To be healthy	21.10%	21.10%
3	To connect	13.40%	18.30%
4	To be environmentally sensitive	12.50%	16.10%
5	To take notice	12.50%	10.80%
6	To learn	11.00%	8.80%
7	To give	7.70%	7.60%

An Additional, and Surprising 4th Finding

At the beginning of this project I assumed that the highest valued principle would be *to connect*, but members' desire to be completely engaged with work took precedence in both the Santa Monica and Westside locations, as noted in Table 7.2 above.

How members flow in their work is obviously a key factor for them. However, flow is still an understudied area of work performance and employee wellbeing. Using the design functions to help create a space that is optimized to achieve flow is important, but there is little research on the actual physical factors in a workspace that really help to foster flow.

The results stemming from my own immersive experiences in the spaces and the surveys I conducted made it clear that *to flow* is one of the characteristics that members in both the Santa Monica and Westside co-working spaces appreciated about the space and its design. Finding a formula to achieve flow in workspaces and to clearly define the criteria would be a worthy next

step for further research and something that I am very keen to investigate in my public workshops.

Conclusion

Just as *to flow* received the top spot in the surveys in both locations, the Santa Monica and Westside Village interviews were similar in that *to flow* took the top spot and *to learn* and *to give* scored the lowest.

It was gratifying that the majority of the member feedback received about the Westside location was positive. I received minimal complaints, and members appeared to be happy with their surroundings. Many felt they were productive in terms of the work they accomplished in the space. The interviews revealed a few suggestions for improvement, although the majority of the suggestions were operational and straightforward fixes. My goal was to make the suggested changes as soon as possible, as long as they were feasible.

In the first set of interviews in Santa Monica a few suggestions were beyond our capacity to change because the Santa Monica members wanted to have more communal space or more windows. These kinds of structural changes were impossible without access to outside walls and a limited space to work with. The suggested improvements for the Westside Village space, on the other hand, pertained to elements we could control.

This chapter examined the research methods I used over the last seven years to answer not only my research questions but also to show how I built a 14,000-square foot co-working space with the principles of wellbeing as the framework. The emerging research shows the advantage of attending to such issues as noise, privacy, ergonomics, snacks, lighting, views, space division and variety. This can be accomplished by building a mix of private offices and

open space to address the noise and privacy factor, crafting a multi-location work experience for multiple ways of working throughout the day, generating ample space, light and views, regardless of where members are working and designing an environment that is warm, healthy and inspiring.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The desire to feel positive about blending work and home life is a shared attribute among the new cadres of workers who are motivated to bring their true, holistic selves to work. Believing in the transformative power of bring positive emotions to the everyday of work, my goal is to advance a sense of wellbeing in co-working spaces by pushing the boundaries of the work environment to maximize and achieve just that transformation.

The stagnant design of the traditional workplace has become an increasing problem because of poor lighting, noise, poor lighting, open plans, and few if any choices as to one's physical setting. These ineffective construction and design elements affect creativity, health and productivity. The concept of building a holistic human-centered space, with wellbeing at its core, directly addresses these problems. This research paper has presented a new model for the construction of co-working space based on research conducted while building a commercial co-working space in Los Angeles.

To date, little empirical research on the co-working movement has been completed because as this industry is just emerging. A new generation of workers is moving into the workplace, and employment is becoming more project and tea based. Fewer opportunities for the traditional full-time job are available, jobs that require a physical commute and a 40-hour a week commitment to spend work time in the same office or factory. Contract workers, freelancers, and entrepreneurs need flexible workspaces that help them address their needs in this fast-changing job economy. At the same time small and mid-size companies want plug-and-play facilities to benefit from being in close proximity to other companies.

There is also a dearth of research on wellbeing in the workplace. Since the 1990s, the attention that has been given to employee wellbeing has mainly been devoted to motivating employees to eat better or to exercise more outside the office. Little attention has been given to the potential of the workspace itself as a source of health and inspiration.

What makes the project presented in this dissertation unique is the journey taken to combine my approach to wellbeing within the co-working field. Through taking action and immersing myself in this new industry over the last seven years, I have worked to place the wellbeing of workers at the core of a workspace buildout. I have done this by considering the emotional state and physical comfort of co-workers so that, among other things, they are more easily inspired to be creative and become absorbed in their work.

Additional positive attributes at the Village Workspaces discussed in this study include members "taking in" the view, socializing with other members, or taking a refreshing break to prepare a snack in the kitchen. Our members can also choose from a variety of work settings to stay comfortable and focused. A great effort was made to mitigate noise and to designate quiet areas so that members could avoid distractions and remain absorbed in their work.

My original contribution adds to the research and scholarship on the intersection between co-working and wellbeing, as well as showing how to apply these ideas in an actual workspace. The result was the construction of a co-working space based on wellbeing principles that were integrated in the physical framework of the workspace design. To date, most wellbeing efforts in workspaces and co-working spaces consist of extracurricular activities or add-ins to the office space design, often only in retrospect or as an afterthought. This research and its application to wellbeing in co-working spaces demonstrates that design planning at the construction stage is essential to move beyond the co-working wellbeing efforts that currently exist.

Project Outcomes

The project has taken more than seven years to complete. At the beginning of this research project, I focus on all seven wellbeing principles: *to connect, to be healthy, to flow, to take notice, to learn, to give,* and *to be sensitive to the environmental factors.*

Over time I narrowed down my focus and streamlined the principles. Through my research, I realized that the design of the space could do little to facilitate the principles *to give* and *to learn*, that these principles are action-oriented and depend on how people use the space every day. This meant that five principles remained. I only realized this as a direct result of taking action and allowing ideas to incubate while I planned how I would carry out the buildout. Including all seven principles was, however, necessary at the outset because it was through the heuristic processes, particularly immersion and illumination, that it became clear that *to learn* and *to give* were not central to the physical construction of a co-working space.

I narrowed the five principles of them down one more time as it became obvious that *to take notice* and *the environmental factors* could be merged. Therefore, the final Explication of my research posits that four principles of wellbeing should be applied in the construction of co-working spaces. These are (1) flow, (2) connection, (3) health, and (4) sensitivity to environmental factors.

Even though I failed to prove that all seven principles were useful in a buildout, my findings substantially answered research question #1: I had identified and confirmed four principles of wellbeing that could be physically integrated into the construction of a co-working space.

In addressing the first research question, I carried out field research for five years in four co-working spaces, three in Los Angeles and one in London. From these experiences, I defined not only what was most appealing and useful about the spaces but also what co-working members liked most about the Village Workspaces and what features they considered to be most important. I also learned what services were feasible to provide members. In this process, I was an active part of the co-working movement as a member, and, since 2013, as an owner of a location in Santa Monica and most recently in West Los Angeles.

I realized that the specific four principles of *flow, to connect, to be healthy* and *to be sensitive to the environmental influence* interacted in a way that I had not imagined at the beginning of the project. Separating the seven principles as I had originally thought was too simplistic because of much apparent crossover between the wellbeing principles and the physical factors that embodied these principles.

My research on wellbeing and my literature research culminated in first the development of a practical plan for the construction stage of the Westside Village project and, second, the answer to research question #2, namely, how the principles interact in practice.

I have shown how I addressed design factors that would improve work processes and approach physical and psychological wellbeing in the co-working spaces. With this in mind, I integrated the four final principles into construction plans in the Westside Village suitable for cost-efficient implementation.

For the goal of wellbeing of members to be served in the buildout of the co-working space, four challenges needed to be addressed. I had to solve all of these within a budget: (1) build a mix of private offices and open space to mitigate the noise and privacy factor; (2) craft a multi-location work experience to give members multiple ways of working throughout the day;

(3) generate ample space, light, and views, wherever members were seated; and (4) design an environment to be warm, healthy, and inspirational.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to thirty-six interviews of members of the Village Workspaces. Perhaps a larger sample would have yielded more substantial or different data. However, the nature of my research is exploratory and very minimal data is available on co-working with which to compare my findings. The focus of my study was specifically on the Village Workspace and my chosen wellbeing factors. My immersive years in other spaces, interviews, surveys, observations, photos, conversations, press articles, and literature all have been included to show multiple perspectives and a mixture of methods.

Finding a Formula for Flow

An area for future research and further development is the notion of flow. Originally, I assumed that the highest valued principle would be *to connect*, because the sense of community is such a crucial factor, but the desire of members in both the Santa Monica and Westside locations to be completely engaged with work took precedence. *To flow*, I discovered, is created by considering a multitude of personal factors—the design, the layout, the noise levels, the comfort of one's chair, the light.

The results stemming from my immersive experiences in the spaces and the surveys I conducted made it clear that finding a formula to achieve flow in workspaces would be a worthy next step for further research, and something that I could investigate in my public workshops.

Intended Audience

Members of the Village Workspaces prefer a holistic style of workspace, and so I designed the Westside location with wellbeing principles built into the framework of the space. The model of co-working and office design that I developed can inform other managers of co-working space about how to prioritize the demonstrated need *to flow*, *to connect*, *to be healthy*, and *to be sensitive to the environmental factors* in their own workspaces. Companies that choose to apply the approach I developed will be fulfilling the wellbeing needs of their employees, increasing their enjoyment of their co-working space experience, and, inevitably, enhancing employee productivity.

Co-working Around the World

Initially freelancers were the original users of the few co-working spaces that existed. Today, however, the percentage of freelancers is declining in favor of a growing number of employers and their employees. Around the world co-working is blossoming. Asia has shown the way in blending workspaces that can meet the requirements of diverse members. This is where the largest co-working spaces in the world are created with a high percentage of private offices for companies, with both state of the art spaces in eight story buildings and others in the tiny backyards of one-person apartments where eight members sit and work. The average space in Asia has 205 members (Cashman, 2012). Africa is also currently experiencing a dynamic increase in the co-working industry and it will continue to grow. Just within a decade, there are over 250 co-working spaces with 80% of these spaces coming into existence in the last 3 years. According to a research done by Co-working Africa, the co-working business is expected to see a boom. (Aransiola, 2017).

The preference for flexible working spaces is as strong in Europe as it is in the United States. The average age of members is similar—34 in Europe, and 33 in the United States. On both continents, two out of three coworkers are men.

My Future Work

My future work will include speaking to organizations and consulting for companies internationally to assist them in attracting and retaining top talent. I will also appeal to the need to make workspaces more holistic as work and life combine. Oliver and I will now be raising money to expand the Village Workspaces in the United States initially.

Concluding Thoughts

The quantification of wellbeing as a perceived experience is a relative notion. In a factory of 100 years ago, could production worker A self-observe a greater sense of wellbeing than production worker B if A's station was 100 feet closer to the bathroom, nearby to the facility egress, or situated under a skylight? The point is that human needs may maintain relative constancy, but the environment does not; it changes all the time, and the conditions that may have produced a sense of wellbeing 100 years ago are not the same as the conditions that produce this same sense today. The sense of what made a worker feel safe 100 years ago would be grounds for a series of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) complaints today.

While wellbeing is a constant ideal, the principles that workspaces contribute to this ideal requires ongoing discovery and reinvention. What is unusual about the time in which we live is that the horizon for employment has extended to the point where the demand for the critical echelon of workers has exceeded the supply. The result has been that the metrics of wellbeing have shifted in favor of workers' permanent preference for seeking employment that satisfies their strongest sense of wellbeing.

My research, which recognizes these trends, occupies a critical niche, namely, the search for reliable principles of design and construction that produce workspaces that are maximize worker wellbeing and that are recognized as such by those who would seek to employ them.

Appendix A

The Westside Village Transformation Photo Book – Included separately.

Appendix B

The Public Workshop
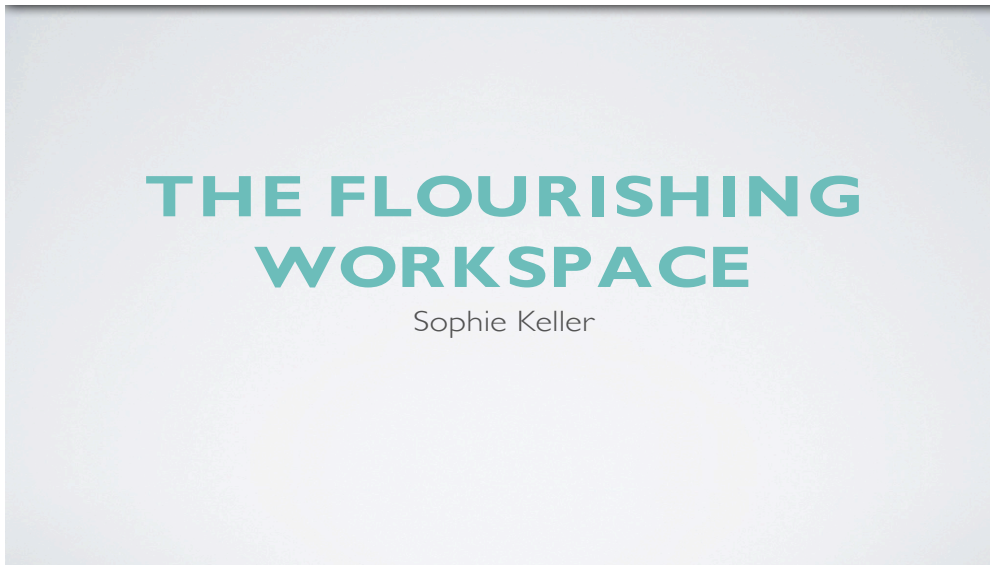
The Flourishing Workspace is a public workshop that has been delivered at UCLA and California State University and to workspace developers in Southern California. It has also been presented CEOs and teachers in Los Angeles. In the following passages, I discuss the aims of the workshop, the experience, some feedback received and how I will be developing the workshop further as a result of participant comments.

The aims of the workshop

1.To share my doctorate research on co-working spaces and wellbeing through visual evidence.

2.To gather research for my future work on flow in the workspace by asking participants the essential five conditions they need in their office in order to produce their best work.

3. Gather feedback from participants in order to develop the workshop into a keynote for the future. To comprehend how the talk affected the participants thinking. What they liked, what they didn't and what they think are the important aspects to incorporate into a future keynote.

The Experience

What was interesting about this experience compared to my other keynotes is that it was the first time that I did not prepare for a talk. I was confident in my material and the experience was stress-free. I shared the doctorate journey with slides and used the images, photos and graphs that already exist in the Explication. The talk was very well received.

The audience was keen to talk about their own workspaces and to ask advice on what they should do to make changes.

One university professor mentioned that she had little ability to control her space and have changes approved, which was a long process. We discussed how, even little changes on a small budget of anything up to $1000, can have a significant impact, such as getting an ergonomic chair, some paint and a few plants.

I demonstrated how if you understand what you need *to flow* in your space you can prioritize what is important in any transformation. An example I shared was that in the Santa Monica Village my priority was on the ergonomics and with a twenty-thousand dollar budget, I chose to spend seventeen thousand on ergonomic chairs, and three thousand on paint, wallpaper, street art and some casual chairs.

I also shared the transformation of the Westside Village and how the research impacted my choices. Participants were asked to fill out feedback forms and then I reflected on my own experiences the following few days and how I would develop the talk as a result of the feedback.

Feedback Questionnaire and Feedback - Direct quotes from participant feedback forms

Questions in Feedback Form	Participant Feedback
What effect has the Flourishing Workspace talk had on your thoughts about your own workspace? [SEP]	Touched on elements I have been thinking about for a while.
	Made me appreciate where I work.
	Need to convince owners to get more comfortable chairs and standing desks.
	Recognition of ergonomics as a contribution to discomfort and affecting workflow.
	Opened my mind to live/work balance.
	Going to be more concerned about different elements in my space.
	Will be more mindful of the small details in my workspace for employees and staff.
	Realized the aspects of a comfortable and functioning work environment.
	Confirms some of the choices that I had made, but didn't know that I had made.
2.What impact will the workshop have on how you create your work environment in the future or the kind of workspace you will choose to work in?	Gave me the inspiration to incorporate successful changes and updates.
	Inspired me to change my office space to add

some elements to improve my flow.

Realized that an office that creates flow is really important in retail for the customers as well as for the employees.

I want to be in a workspace that is open, community oriented, respectful and kind.

Want to find ways to adapt to existing conditions, even if I have little control – small changes in the environment to improve learning conditions, e.g., flexible seating.

Will impact the work environment that our company provides for the staff.

Want the ability to move around the workspace to seek different environments and places to work.

Inspired me to improve my home office.

Village Workspaces is my model for a perfect space.

Realized my current environment makes me happy, comfortable and productive.

3. What part of the talk did you like the most?

How to be happy first in order to be at your most productive

Comparison of the different co-working spaces that Sophie spent years in.

Timing connection of how co-working started during the recession.

Compelling personal narrative for happiness at work.

Definition of flow and the knowledge map.

Before and after picture of the Village transformation.

The approach to breaking down facets of workspaces, flow, connect, health and how flow is number 1 in Sophie's research.

Sophie's journey and what inspired Sophie to do the doctorate and how she built on her experiences.

The description of how Village Workspaces was designed and why.

4. What part did you like the least?

The contrast of colors in a few of the slides that were yellow was hard to read.

Would have liked even more academics.

Could have had a definition of Happiness … eudemonia.

5. When Sophie creates a keynote what do you think she should include?

Background on who Sophie Keller is. Her personal success, what motivated here to do what she enjoys in her workday.

Audience participation and reflection throughout.

Keep the discussion about how flow affects happiness.

Include ideas for people for their offices to help with flow.

Loved the evolution of the Village Workspace in pictures.

Include why you are passionate and want to help people. Your inspirations.

Why Village Workspace over offers.

What makes the Village Workspace happy and productive?

5 ways in which I am going to develop the Flourishing Workspace workshop further

1. Ensure all logistics were working early on in the day, rather than relying on others.

2. Fearlessly add more academic material into the talk. Perhaps pick three new words to teach my audience… flow, heuristics, eudemonia.

3. Have the audience participate throughout the workshop, so that the workshop is a dialogue

from start to finish.

4. Ask for volunteers who would like to discuss their space and what changes I would make, so we can do live case studies. Find out their top 5 conditions for flow in order to help them.

5. Include case studies of varying budgets with pictures, so I can give concrete examples and actionable tips that audience members can take away.

6. Share more about how why this is such an important subject for me.

7. Change the color of the slides

Appendix C

Selection of Press for the Village Workspace

Village Workspaces Happiest Members Award – Coworker.com

What's the Co-Working Trend All About? | Better | NBC News
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xx91WeRjVN4

Uber for Yoga App Brings Instructors to You http://www.foxnews.com/health/2016/10/20/uber-
    for-yoga-app-brings-instructors-to.html

Announcing the Next Evolution of Co-Working: Village Workspaces West LA
    http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160126005586/en/Announcing-Evolution-
    Co-Working-Village-Workspaces-West-LA

Village Workspace: A New Standard for Co-workspaces http://localemagazine.com/village-
    workspaces-a-new-standard-for-co-workspaces/

4 Things You Can Do for a Happier Workday http://www.allure.com/story/how-to-be-happier-
    at-work

Companies We Love: Village Workspaces

The cool new co-working space puts happiness first.

(f) (y) (p) (✉)

Well-being expert Sophie Keller wants employers to put happiness first. "Research has really proved that the happier you are the more successful you'll be," she explains. "Happy people perform 202% better than those who aren't; they have better bottom line results." In addition doing her doctorate on creating happiness in workspaces (and why doing so is essential to companies' success), she's co-founder of the cool new co-working space Village Workspaces. "Offices like ours —which put happiness and well-being first—are the future of work," she says. She and her husband, Oli Barry, along with their partner, Lew Maler, have opened two spaces in LA, which hold over 60 offices between them. Companies from Vox Media to 360Heros to CrowdfundX have moved in, and Sophie and her partners are looking to expand across the US—and beyond—soon. Sophie filled us in on the connection between happiness and success, how Village Workspaces puts its members' well-being first and how other companies can do the same for their team.

Happy employees perform better than unhappy ones

They're more productive and loyal, their health is better, they're more creative and they have better relationships. When you're happy, there's an opening that happens in your mind—you're open to learning, you've got a better memory, you think more quickly, you solve problems more easily and you create better social connections. Essentially, happiness allows you to maximize your potential, that if we have better relationships, more money, a perfect body—whatever it is—we're going to be happier. But every time we reach one of those goals, we push happiness away because we want more and more and more. No single thing is ever going to make you happy. The key is to reverse the formula and find out how to be happy first, because happiness will bring these to you—you'll lose weight, you'll have better relationships and you'll do work that you love.

space

87% of employees worldwide are not engaged at work. That's why creating these workspaces makes a difference. People can get on with whatever they're doing in a beautiful environment that makes them happy. Even if you don't enjoy always what you're doing, we have a workspace where you'll enjoy doing it, regardless.

It's all in the details

The design is absolutely gorgeous—very warm, inviting and mature. Our members are proud to be here and to bring clients here. I've written a book on feng shui, and we applied those principles to the layout, in addition to providing ergonomic desks and chairs. We have an organic vending machine and offer fresh-pressed juices, as well as quality coffee, beer and wine. These details, along with many others, come together to make people happy to arrive at work every day.

Use music that keeps people in the flow

We're mindful of the music that we use to ensure people stay in the flow, even when they're working in open areas. We have quite a few writers in our space, and they like to have music without a beat, whereas other workers may prefer something more energizing. Ask yourself: what music will people people in the flow of whatever it is they're doing? We tend to play mellow music, like Buddha Bar mixes and French cafe playlists.

Hire people with room to grow

Our team is autonomous. They they have a say in what they're doing and they can shape their jobs and acquire new skills. We put people in roles that are slightly beyond what they can do so that they feel they're growing into something and never get bored. We make sure that they're developing new skills and we're clear on what they want to get out of their roles. They're acknowledged; everyone has the say. We offer a flexible blend of work and life.

Foster meaningful social and business connections

We create an environment that allows all the companies in our workspaces to cross-pollinate. We

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host events where people can learn skills to build their businesses, while developing social relationships here as well as their businesses. the businesses work together. Most recently, we had a crowdfunding workshop and a sound immersion event, and we have a table tennis evening coming up. We're social creatures. Being able to blend that aspect of ourselves while doing our work is key to building workplace happiness.

Images courtesy of Village Workspaces

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