Mindfulness is increasingly being applied in companies as a means to increase, among others, employee wellbeing and energy, and in the same time to diminish stress. This paper argues that there seems to be scientific evidence showing that certain mindfulness techniques may diminish stress and increase energy, yet it seems that there is a period in the beginning of the mindfulness practice where the techniques have the opposite effects. These findings seem to be contradictory to past findings, which indicated that only two thirds of people practicing mindfulness techniques have positive effects from that practice. It may be that everybody can have positive effects from the practice of the mentioned techniques, just that some need to practice for a longer period before obtaining these positive effects. Further scientific studies seem to be needed in order to clarify the full spectrum of effects and consequences of practicing different mindfulness techniques, and just as important, if these effects are valid for everybody.
Introduction

Especially in the West spirituality, and thus mindfulness, it has in the recent years been applied as a tool to improve employee wellbeing, increase energy – and thus hopefully also performance – as well as in the hope that it may reduce stress. (Magaard, 2009; Lorenzen, 2010)

Mindfulness seems to be a small part of the general spirituality concept, which is also taken to include as different areas as for example Christianity, NLP, Wisdom, Ethical behaviour, Meditation, etc. (Magaard, 2009)

This paper uses the term mindfulness in the context given by for example Lorenzen (2010), as a set of techniques including for example Hatha Yoga and meditation.

The problem with these techniques, as the authors see it, is that it so far has been relatively difficult to control the actual effects.

In the experiment conducted in connection with this paper the participants, consisting of a larger group of people with different levels of experience with meditation, were measured based on the ElectroPhotonic Imaging (EPI) technique before and after meditations, which were performed in unison in connection with a meditation camp that lasted seven days.

The findings were that in the beginning of the experiment people were having less energy and were more stressed after the meditation than before the meditation, yet that towards the end of the camp at least a part of the participants began showing an increase in the energy level and a reduction in the stress level as a consequence of the meditation practice.

Based on these findings it seems to be reasonable to include that the practice of certain mindfulness techniques may provide the desired effects, yet that a certain experience in practicing them are required in order to have those effects.

The study

A total of 12 meditations (106 people) were monitored and the stress and energy levels of the participants were measured based on the ElectroPhotonic Imaging technique before and after each meditation.

It was left to each camp participant to decide whether s/he wished to participate in the study, yet the participation had to be decided before each meditation, as special places, close to the EPI device, were provided. This was done in order to reduce any external influence as much as possible.

Some people chose to be measured several times; some of the camp participants did not wish to participate in the experiment.

The meditations differed, both in length and in theme.

It was decided to base the study on the first meditation of the day, thus there are 6 meditations included, as administrative issues prevented the measurement on the first day, as the camp started in the evening.

Stress

The first five days the stress level was higher after the meditation than before it, which seems to indicate, that meditation causes stress, not that it is the cure for it. However, on the last day there was a change, so suddenly the stress level was lower after the meditation than before it. Had the experiment continued for more days it would have been possible to evaluate if this phenomena would continue, and perhaps even amplify.

An interesting finding is that the stress level was higher than average on the last day, which was also the day where the effects regarding diminishing stress from meditation was the largest. Perhaps there needed to be a certain level of stress before the practice of mindfulness can diminish it.

The findings are shown in figure 1.

Energy

The energy level was very stable before the meditation, yet it always decreased during the meditation, except for the last day, where it showed a significant increase compared to the level from the previous day, yet also an increase compared with all the previous days.

Like with the stress level, it would have been interesting to see the results if the experiment had continued for more days. This was unfortunately not possible this time.

These findings are shown in figure 2.

Stress & Energy

Finally does the overall change in both stress and energy show that – possibly – the fifth day was some kind of break through for the participants – it is possible that they needed a certain level of experience before this could happen – after which the positive effects seems to have appeared from their meditation practice.

These findings are shown in figure 3.

Discussion of these findings

These findings indicate a certain progress in the effects, which the participants have experienced from the meditation practice, as it seems that in the beginning of the practice people were, paradoxically enough, more stressed and had less energy after a practice which was supposed to diminish the stress and increase the energy level.

However, during the last days of the camp this tendency seems to have – if not changed, then at least – modified a bit, as people now began,
generally speaking, showing effects of diminished stress and increased energy after the meditation. This seems to indicate that everybody may have positive effects from the practice of meditation, which is contradicting the conclusion reached by Prof. Dr. Korotkov. Korotkov (2013) writes that 66% of the test subjects showed a “statistically significant increase in GDV finger images” as a result of meditation, however, 17% showed “no change in GDV finger images” and 17% showed a “statistically significant decrease in GDV finger images”. May it be that Prof. Dr. Korotkov’s findings of no or even a negative effect due to the practice of meditation would modify if the test subjects would continue practicing for a longer time?

Conclusion
It seems that the practice of certain mindfulness techniques (meditation) may be a tool for increasing energy and diminishing stress. However, it seems that the effects are accumulative, and that a certain experience with meditation is necessary in order to obtain positive effects. In the first period of time the effects may actually – probably – be the exact opposite, namely an increase in stress and a decrease in energy.

Further studies are required in order to clarify which are the long term effects of meditation on the stress and energy levels of the person, and if this is a universally applicable technique in order to reduce stress and to increase energy.

References
Appendices

Appendix A

Figure 1
Stress level before and after the meditation

![Stress level graph]

Figure 2
Energy level before and after the meditation

![Energy level graph]
Figure 3
The % change in the stress and energy level during the meditation. A negative change in stress indicates that the person was more relaxed afterwards. A positive change in energy indicates that the person had more energy afterwards.