



# RESILIENCE & EQUANIMITY

## Working Well

When we experience challenging situations at work we have choices: change the situation or change our response. Sometimes we can waste a lot of energy ranting and railing about something we aren't going to be able to influence and a better option might be to focus on building acceptance. The following strategies may help achieve this.

### ☐ BREATHE!

If you are a person who experiences some worry or tension on most days, then developing a regular habit of conscious breathing will help you to create moments of calm, when you can recharge, and hopefully alleviate your sense of experiencing too many demands.

Try setting some regular times to practise, such as during the journey to work, or just as you arrive (on public transport or before you get out of your car).

Before important / challenging meetings, people or situations, breathing will help you manage those butterflies in the stomach if you feel nervous, and will help calm your emotions before a potential challenging interaction, and enable you present your best self.

After important / challenging events, breathing exercises will help bring you back to a calm state and recalibrate to normal more quickly than you would otherwise.

Whenever you feel tense or wound up, conscious breathing can prevent many a harsh word being spoken in haste. If you hear yourself being 'narky' or 'snapping', then it's time for a breath or two.

Give yourself a moment (ask for a moment) before letting yourself be hijacked by your emotional responses to what someone is saying or doing.

### ☐ SELF-DOUBT / IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Stop comparing what you see on other people's outsides to how you feel on your insides. Others' apparent confidence, capability and accomplishments are not the metric by which to grade your own success.

Forget about what everyone else is thinking of you – when you care too much about what others think about you, then you inhibit yourself and your actions. Would you rather do nothing and be judged for that, or do something and risk getting it wrong?

Monitor your emotions, pay attention to how your emotions influence your beliefs about your capability. If your anxiety rises, take steps to calm your body and your mind (breathing, exercise, distractions).

Ground yourself in the present moment and stop fretting about the past and the future – just concentrate on right here and now.

Balance negative thoughts with positive things about yourself and your capability.

Focus on what you have accomplished and what you have, rather than on what you may be lacking.

Nurture yourself. Self-care is important in managing the negative 'voices in our heads'. Eat well, exercise and sleep enough – these basics will assist your sense of perspective – see Vitality & Energy.

Face your fears. Consider the worst-case scenario "what is the worst thing that could happen?" How bad is that in the grand scheme of life and how likely is the probability of this bad outcome actually happening? Keep things in perspective.



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## Working Well (cont.)

### □ **REFINE YOUR 'DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS' TECHNIQUES**

Master your assertiveness, diplomacy, tact, persuasiveness, presence and other communication skills under pressure and during times of conflict or significant change. There are specific techniques every leader should become expert in. Seek input from your coach.

### □ **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Get into the habit of regularly checking in with yourself, reflect on how you are feeling; label and describe your emotions in as detailed a manner as you can.

'Moodtrack' is a useful app that can help you track and see patterns in your high and low moods.

### □ **CALMING YOUR MIND / STRESS / STATE-MANAGEMENT**

Use R.A.I.N. as an immediate circuit breaker –

- Recognise (what you are thinking and feeling)
- Allow (these thoughts and feelings to occur)
- Investigate (and get curious about what might be behind your reactions, and in the process of doing so, loosen your attachment to these beliefs)
- Non-Identify (i.e. remember to tell yourself we are not our thoughts, we are not our feelings - take a step back).

Stay present – make a big effort to 'stay present' in the moment without letting your mind wander, dwelling on what has happened in the past or becoming preoccupied with what might happen in the future.

Let it go – think of your mind as a stage – the thoughts, feelings emotions and sensations are the actors entering the stage. They arrive and then they leave. Thoughts are not facts and they are not permanent. The trick is in learning to notice your thoughts and feelings and to remember to let them go.

## “MAKE A BIG EFFORT TO 'STAY PRESENT' IN THE MOMENT...”

Below are some 5-minute relaxation techniques that can be practiced any time or place for a quick refresh:

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position. Put your hands on your abdomen and as you breathe in, let it expand like a balloon filling with air. As you exhale, slowly let the air out. You should feel your abdomen rising and falling as you breathe.
- Try to raise your shoulders up to your ears for 5 seconds, and then let your shoulders drop. One at a time, rotate each shoulder backward 5 to 10 times, then forward 5 to 10 times and then rotate them together forwards and backwards 5 to 10 times.
- In a relaxed position, close your eyes and breathe naturally. Think of the number 'one' as you inhale. Try to continue this for 5 minutes. Any time your mind starts to wander, gently pull it back to thinking 'one.'