

THE PRODUCTIVITY SECRET

WORKSHEET 3

STRESS STORIES FOR SELF-REFLECTION



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Stress Story 1: The Lobster

There was a fascinating life lesson that I learned years ago while reading a magazine when I was sitting in a dentist's waiting room about to get an x-ray.

So I was reading this article, and it was talking about how Lobsters grow. Now, I can't say that I was initially interested in it, but as the article pointed out, the lobster is a soft sea animal, that lives inside of a rigid shell – and just to get clear here, this ridged shell is something that does not expand.

So, the question you might be asking yourself here, is, if this lobster lives inside of such a ridged shell, how could it possibly grow? Well, as the lobster grows, the shell it lives in becomes very confining, and the lobster comes to a point where it begins to feel under pressure, and, starts to feel uncomfortable.

So, it goes to the bottom of the seabed, surrounds itself by rocks so it can disguise and protect itself from other predatory fish, it casts off its old shell, and over time, it starts to produce a new shell, that's big enough for it to grow into.

As time goes on, this new shell will also begin to get uncomfortable, so again, as the lobster starts feeling under pressure, it goes back to the seabed where it carries out the whole procedure once more. Throughout the rest of its life, the lobster will repeat this process a number of times - as many times as it needs to, in order to grow to it's fullest potential.

I just want to point out here, that the stimulus for the lobster to grow is that it 'feels uncomfortable'. Now, if you think about it, if lobsters had human doctors, they would never grow.

They'd be told to take some time off work, do more exercise, eat healthier and perhaps practice some meditation or yoga exercises The doctor might even give the lobster some valium, and for a short space of time, the lobster feels fine, but it doesn't take off its shell, and in effect, it never grows.

You see, the Lobster principle tells us that in times of stress, even though we don't like these feelings, they are signals for periods of personal growth. And if we can learn to use adversity to our advantage, then we also get to grow through times of pressure and stress.

Questions for Self-Reflection

Qu 1. State an area in your life that you'd like to be more productive in, which contributes to the stresses of your daily life?

Qu 2. What could you begin doing 'MORE OF' today, to reduce the stress that you're experiencing in this life area?

Qu 3. What could you begin doing 'LESS OF' today, to reduce the stress that you're experiencing in this life area?

Qu 4. If you had to learn a lesson from the stress that you're experiencing in this area of your life, what would it be?

Qu 5. What practical guidance would you offer someone who was stuck in the same or a similar situation?

Stress Story 2: The Wise Fish

Prevention is better than cure

This phrase often advises us to take preventive steps to keep us away from the many stress related problems that we can encounter throughout life.

If we were to consider illness. As soon as we know we've caught some form of a disease, we take immediate preventive measures such as drinking plenty of water, washing our hands before and after taking meals, and other good habits of hygiene like this which help us in preventing the disease from spreading further.

Dealing with the consequences and repercussions of illness is always more challenging than what it would be to build stronger guard rails and preventative measures into our lives that may prevent us from catching the illness to begin with.

There is an old story, where three fish lived in a pond that connected to a nearby river. Out of the three fish, one was sagacious and suggested to his friends that if the summer comes, the connecting tunnel between the pond and the river might go dry.

If this were to happen, the three of them might end up having to live in an insecure pond where they'd stand at risk of being caught by some local fishermen. None of them wanted that!

The other two fish laughed at him, so the wise fish swam through the canal and made his way to the river. Summer came, and as the wise fish had predicted, the canal dried up which resulted in the water levels of the pond also going down.

One day, two fishermen came and threw their nets into the pond and caught all of the trapped fish. The two friends of the wise fish were also caught, and eaten later on that day.

Thus, prevention is better than cure.

Questions for Self-Reflection

Qu 1. Name three daily habits that you could begin integrating into your daily routine that could start minimising the risk of you getting stressed out?

Habit 1)

How would this daily habit prevent you from entering stress?

Habit 2)

How would this daily habit prevent you from entering stress?

Habit 3)

How would this daily habit prevent you from entering stress?

Qu 2. What good advice (or guidance) about managing your stress have you been given in the past that:

a) You didn't listen to?

b) You Ignored?

c) Has worked for you in the past?