Unit V - Self Development

Improving personality

Be the best you: Seven keys to a positive personality – Brian Tracy

Your **mental diet** largely determines your character and your personality and almost everything that happens to you in life.

What is a mental diet?

When you feed your mind with positive affirmations, information, books, conversations, audio programs, and thoughts, you develop a more positive attitude and personality. You become more influential and persuasive. You enjoy greater self-esteem. You learn how to be confident.

Those who use computers at work use the expression "G.I.G.O." or "Garbage in, Garbage out." But the reverse is also true, "Good in, Good out." When you make a clear, unequivocal decision that you are going to take complete control over your mind, eliminate the negative emotions and thoughts that may have held you back in the past, and become a completely positive person, you can actually bring about your own personal transformation.

Mental fitness is like physical fitness. One develops high levels of self-esteem and a positive attitude with training and practice. Here are the seven keys to becoming a completely positive person:

1) Positive Affirmations

While speaking to yourself, speak positively; control your inner dialog. Use positive affirmations phrased in the positive, present, and personal tense. Here are some tips:

"I like myself!"

"I can do it!"

"I feel terrific!"

"I am responsible!"

We believe that 95% of your emotions are determined by the way you talk to yourself as you go throughout your day. The sad fact is that if you do not deliberately and consciously talk to yourself in a positive and constructive way, you will, by default, think about things that will make you unhappy, lower your self esteem, or cause you worry and social anxiety.

As we said before, your mind is like a garden. If you do not deliberately plant flowers and tend carefully, weeds will grow without any encouragement at all.

2) Positive Visualization

Perhaps the most powerful ability that you have is the ability to visualize and see your goals as already accomplished. Create a clear, exciting picture of your goal and your ideal life, and replay this picture in your mind over and over. All improvement in your life begins with an improvement in your mental pictures. As you "see" yourself on the inside, you will "be" on the outside.

3) Positive People

Your choices of the people with whom you live, work, and associate will have more of an impact on your emotions and your success that any other factor. Decide today to associate with winners, with positive people, with people who are happy and optimistic and who are going somewhere with their lives. Avoid negative people at all costs. Negative people are the primary source of most of life's unhappiness. Resolve that from today onward, you are not going to have stressful or negative people in your life.

4) Positive Mental Food

Just as your body is healthy to the degree to which you eat healthy, nutritious foods, your mind is healthy to the degree to which you feed it with "mental protein" rather than "mental candy." Read books, magazines, and articles that are educational, inspirational, or motivational. Feed your mind with information and ideas that are uplifting and that make you feel happy and more confident about yourself and your world.

Listen to positive, constructive CDs and audio programs in your car and on your MP3 player or iPod. Feed your mind continually with **positive messages** that help you think and act better and make you more capable and competent in your field. Watch positive and educational DVDs, educational television programs, online courses, and other uplifting material that increases your knowledge and makes you feel good about yourself and your life.

5) Positive Training and Development

Almost everyone in our society starts off with limited resources, sometimes with no money at all. Virtually all fortunes begin with the sale of personal services of some kind. All the people who are at the top today were once at the bottom, and sometimes they fell to the bottom several times.

The miracle of lifelong learning and personal improvement is what takes you from rags to riches, from poverty to affluence, and from underachievement to success and

financial independence. As Jim Rohn said,"Formal education will make you a living; self-education will make you a fortune". When you dedicate yourself to learning and growing and becoming better and more effective in your thoughts and actions, you take complete control of your life and dramatically increase the speed at which you move upward to greater heights.

6) Positive Health Habits

Take excellent care of your physical health and wellness. Resolve today that you are going to live to be eighty, ninety, or one hundred years old and still be dancing in the evenings. Eat healthy foods, natural and nutritious, and eat them sparingly and in proper balance. A nutritional diet will have an immediate, positive effect on your thoughts and feelings.

Resolve to get regular exercise, at least two hundred minutes of motion per week, walking, running, swimming, bicycling, or working out on equipment in the gym. When you exercise on a regular basis, you feel happier and healthier and experience lower levels of stress and fatigue than a person who sits on the couch and watches television all evening.

Especially, get ample rest and relaxation. You need to recharge your batteries on a regular basis, especially when you are going through periods of stress or difficulty. Vince Lombardi once said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." Some of the factors that predispose us to negative emotions of all kinds are poor health habits, sleep deprivation, lack of exercise, and nonstop work. Seek balance in your life.

7) Positive Expectations

Practicing the Law of Attraction is one of the most powerful techniques you can use to become a positive person and to ensure positive outcomes and better results in your life. Your expectations become your own self-fulfilling prophesies. Whatever you expect, with confidence, seems to come into your life. Since you can control your expectations, you should always expect the best.

Expect to be successful.

Expect to be popular when you meet new people. Expect to achieve great goals and create a wonderful life for yourself. When you constantly expect good things to happen, you will seldom be disappointed.

https://www.briantracy.com/blog/personal-success/be-the-best-you-7-keys-to-a-positive-personality/

Reference only

https://www.bustle.com/articles/188882-9-things-to-do-to-improve-your-personality-be-the-best-version-of-yourself

https://www.lifehack.org/481944/8-life-skills-to-help-you-improve-your-personality

http://www.thewisdompost.com/self-improvement/personality/how-to-improve-your-personality-in-just-21-days-with-pictures/956

https://www.essentiallifeskills.net/improveyourpersonality.html

Leading with Integrity

How to lead with integrity – Michael Ray Hopkin

One of the most important characteristics of leadership is integrity. Integrity means you are true to your word in all you do and people can trust you because you do what you say. The word **integrity** has deep meaning and is often intermingled with words like **honesty *and* truthfulness.** It connotes a deep commitment to do the right thing for the right reason, regardless of the circumstances. People who live with integrity are incorruptible and incapable of breaking the trust of those who have confided in them. Every human is born with a conscience and therefore the ability to know right from wrong. Choosing the right, regardless of the consequences, is the hallmark of integrity.

In a recent Forbes article, Karl Moore and Chatham Sullivan discuss what integrity means and why it's so important: "Integrity is that particular quality of character that occurs when a person stays true to their commitments. This means that a person and in some cases an entire organization has a point of view about what matters. They declare something of value and they stick to that endorsement. They do what they say. They stand for something, even if, and especially if, they stand to lose something in the process".

Integrity builds character, which creates the foundation of great leadership. Coach John Wooden said it well: "Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are." And Moore and Sullivan go on to say: "Nothing matters more than integrity at the top. It is the rock foundation for good leadership. **Live with integrity; lead with integrity.**

https://leadonpurposeblog.com/2014/04/12/how-to-lead-with-integrity/

How to lead with integrity – Sam Reese

Customers want it; employees demand it and investors require it - integrity.

The increasing pressure to take shortcuts to success means business leaders must now, more than ever, model integrity and instill it in their people and organizations. While some may define integrity simply as honesty, I view it as even more than that. It's a commitment to a clear mission, vision and purpose.

As a C-suite leader, this is foundational. The mission, vision and purpose create an understanding of what the organization is aiming to achieve and governs decisions made at every level. I take every opportunity to bring them to the forefront and integrate them in everything we do.

Equally important is establishing expectations of transparency and the belief that everyone has a voice and ideas to help the company succeed. In the workplace, it's what colleagues, customers, and investors see as the predictable way the organization operates doing the right thing for all parties in full view. When integrity manifests itself in an organization, everyone understands the goals, operates in line with expectations and holds each other accountable to those standards.

How do you know when integrity is slipping?

1) There's more than one version of the truth. I stress the importance of having one story, the truth, to make clear where everybody stands and what's required to achieve success. That integrity drives accountability and makes leading much easier. If a leader always spins a story, it pressures the organization to be in constant flux to match the latest story. Leaders and companies that spin lose focus on their core strategy and beliefs. They lose integrity.

2) You see shortcuts in decision-making. Leaders can cause devastating damage to a company if they don't hold themselves and their teams to a rigorous decision-making process. Integrity requires due diligence when making decisions and rejecting temptations to ignore input that doesn't match your desired outcome.

3) Personal agendas win out. I worked for a Fortune 500 company that accidentally overpaid its employees due to a payroll-processing error. Some employees reported the error, while others justified why they deserved the extra money. We all knew the right thing to do, but sometimes when the result is something we want personally, we try to justify it. Integrity fights the reflex to justify bad decisions.

4) Humility takes a back seat. When leaders start to believe they're omniscient and don't need anyone else's perspective, integrity slips away. It's important to stay grounded and actively seek new points of view. I surround myself with people who help me reflect on my strengths and weaknesses, and challenge my thinking with new perspectives.

I've seen the level of integrity at companies improve over the years, in part, because of the transparency social media has created and the role that some large financial institutions, such as BlackRock, have started to play. When BlackRock's CEO published a letter to CEOs earlier this year stating, "Companies must benefit all of their stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, and the communities in which they operate," he was saying all companies should focus on integrity. They need to be responsible corporate citizens.

This stands in contrast to the late 1980s, when the goal of business was to simply generate investor returns. We've come a long way and realized it's not only about ROI. Today, we emphasize taking care of the team, letting the team take care of the customers and believing the rest takes care of itself. And that's integrity — doing the right thing, always and in full view, knowing the financial results will follow.

https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/growth-strategies/2018/04/how-to-lead-with-integrity.html

For reference only

https://www.thriveglobal.com/stories/15392-lead-with-integrity

https://execed.economist.com/blog/industry-trends/why-integrity-remains-one-top-leadership-attributes

http://hrprofessionalsmagazine.com/leading-with-integrity-the-power-of-walking-your-talk/

Enhancing Creativity

Creativity is one of our most powerful characteristics we possess, as it can be the knight in shining armor whenever we face a dangerous situation or the source for the ideas and concepts that help us to earn a living. Creativity has helped brilliant thinkers, geniuses and ordinary people to discover fantastic theories and concepts, encouraged the arousal of exciting ideas and allowed people to find solutions where pure logic wasn't sufficient enough. The amazingly positive characteristics of creativity are the reason why it feels so painful and awkward whenever we experience a lack of creativity, especially if one is dependent on his creativity, e.g. in one's job.

A lack of creativity is an uncomfortable sensation as the fascinating ideas that would normally start to arise are beyond a veil of unimaginativeness. Luckily there are some really great ways that can help you to boost creativity.

How to Enhance Creativity?

The best ideas are often those that arise all of a sudden, without any warning at all.

Part I: The Arise of Ideas

1. Distraction

Whenever I lack creativity I noticed that I'm stuck in a routine, e.g. I'm continuously staring at a blank paper, hoping that fantastic ideas start to arise without having any inspiration to start writing at all. These routines can be found wherever a person uses the process of creativity to create something, e.g. the painter stands in front of his easel without the inspiration on how to color the white paper and the musician is not "in the right flow" to mix vocals, rhymes and beats to a masterpiece. Something that helped me tremendously to break this unimaginativeness is distraction, particularly with inspiring activities that enable me to enhance my creativity. Whenever I face a lack of creativity I break the routine, sit down on a chair, put headphones on and turn on some music. [You can feel free to do the following with or without music, as some might get too much distracted by music]: I close my eyes and try to let go of all my thoughts, especially thoughts that revolve around creativity, such as:

"Why don't the ideas start to pop up?"

"Where are the cool ideas?"

"I´ve got to get started!"

It is my aim to solely focus my mind on my own breathing or (in case I'm listening to music) on the colorful pictures that start to arise in my mind, created by the different sounds of drums, beats and voices. It definitely takes some time and exercise to reach the point of inner silence, but from then on something amazing happens: an idea pop's into my mind like a flash of light in split-second. Sometimes really brilliant ideas arise, however most of them are just thoughts that I start spinning around and - if they are great and excite me - evolve into ideas or whole concepts. Not every idea that arises in these moments is fantastic and brilliant, some of them are totally random or not good at all, which is why it is important to let them go. Needless to say that this little method figuratively boosts my creativity into new spheres, whenever an exciting idea pops up.

2. Know your creative moods

Scientists have shown that the brain processes the events of the day when we sleep. I have discovered for myself that my brain does not only processes events, but also starts to slide into a very creative phase before I fall asleep, which is why I placed a notepad on my bed stand to capture ideas arising out of these phases. It can pay off to know everyday situations when you are in a creative mood and to make some efforts to capture and evolve ideas that arise out of such a mood. These creative moods occur especially in situations where you do not get distracted, which allow your thoughts to wander.

3. Ideas are situational

Only a slight fraction of my ideas arise when I'm following the method I explained in **#1** Distraction. The huge majority of ideas pops into my mind in everyday situations, when I'm showering, cooking, eating, talking with someone, exercising, bicycling, or driving in my car. Some of my very best ideas have arisen out of conversations with different people that inspired my creativity. You see, there are techniques to figuratively "force" ideas to arise, however most of your ideas will arise in everyday situations, especially when you haven't thought about the topic of the idea at all. I heard a story that a painful steel spring in a mattress inspired a person to use wire for his light bulb, a century ago. I might be mistaken and do not remember where I heard that story, however many other brilliant ideas arose all of a sudden, without someone forcing them to do so! This is why the next part is going to be very important, as it focuses on ways on how to catch these ideas.

Part II: Capturing Ideas

The best ideas will arise totally unexpected, sometimes in the most inconvenient situations, which is why it is important to have made some preparations to catch these thoughts as well. Here are some ways to capture the little bits of genius that occasionally arise and would disappear within a couple of minutes.

Basically, it all comes down to the method you prefer to write ideas down, from small notebooks, notepads, mobile and smart phones or audio-recorders. If you prefer the old fashioned approach to write ideas down on paper, then place a pen and a notepad on your workstation, your bed stand and try to have a piece of paper and a pen everywhere you go. Same goes for small

tape recorders, digital recorders and smart phones that you should have around whenever an idea arises.

Whenever I have a flash of genius I immediately try to write it down, either into my mobile phone or on a notepad and - in case I'm driving in my car or are in any other situation that makes it impossible for me to write it down - I try to remember as much as possible by creating associations. When I'm having a great idea in my car I try to associate it for instance with the warmth feeling of the sun on my skin or the grotesque look of an abandoned house. As soon as I found something where I can write my idea down I only need to re-think about my associations and the idea comes back into my mind.

Part III: Stimulation of Creativity

1. Variation

I already mentioned that music is for me an amazing way to stimulate my creativity with the variety of images that arises it in my mind. Variation in general is a fantastic way that helps me to enhance my creativity, as it supplies me with a lot of new experiences, feelings, thoughts, ideas and insights. You can increase creativity by discovering new places and areas, plunging into new societies when travelling around, listening to new sounds and inspirational conversations with your friends or people you just met. It isn't required to spend thousands of dollars to start travelling around, just make sure to break out of your everyday routines (especially those that were barriers for your creativity), habits and mix the inspirational sensation of variation into your life. Routines can be a barrier for innovation and creativeness, which is why I recommend you to implement activities that have a positive impact on your creativity, such as painting, learning how to play the guitar or simply by writing a poem. By implementing variation into your life you activate especially the right parts of your brain that is responsible for inspiration, creativeness and intuition.

2. Mind Mapping / Brainstorming

The creative potential of mind mapping or brainstorming shouldn't be underestimated and can be beneficial for your creativity. These tools help our brain to establish associations and integrate different ideas with each other. A brainstorming session can help you to generate a dozen of new ideas, concepts and associations.

3. Evolve ideas

Living in our modern society means that we have to accept the fact that many secrets have already been unhidden, theories constructed and many ideas discovered, often even before we could have thought about them. However, whenever I have an interesting thought or idea I try to evolve the idea until it starts to develop to an interesting concept/theory/etc. This process allows me to find new ideas as a result of already existing thoughts. Excellent questions to ask yourself are

"How could I solve (insert problem)?"

"How can I improve this idea/concept?"

"What are the problems of this idea and how can they be solved?"

Sometimes it can also be helpful to look at an idea from a completely different perspective. By changing your point of view you might discover some really fantastic new ideas.

"Could this idea be viewed from a completely different point of view?"

"How could this idea/concept be approached differently?"

"What would another person think about this idea?"

4. "Think outside the box"

The ability to think outside the box is a fantastic characteristic creative people have discovered for various aspects of their lives. Many people struggle with thinking outside the box, often because it is not clear what it really means. Therefore I'd like to give you a great example what it means to think inside the box, by quoting Charles H. Duell, Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office in 1899:

"Everything that can be invented has been invented."

Duell's statement - fantastic example for thinking inside the box at its best - is especially remarkable when keeping in mind that it was made in 1899. Another characteristic of in the box thinking is the acceptance of the way the things are how they are, in short: accepting the status quo.

Thinking outside the box can sometimes be different as it will require you to approach things completely different than you would have and it often takes the willingness and openness to view things from a new perspective. For me personally, thinking outside the box also means that I do not stubbornly persist in my opinion, whenever another person presents me facts that prove me wrong.

The Attitudes of a creative person

Creativity is definitely something that can be easily acquired by training oneself on creative characteristic. It is more a mixture of different characteristics and attitudes, mindsets and abilities that allow a person to develop creative thoughts, concepts or masterpieces. What are some attitudes and characteristics that creative people have in common? Or maybe even more important: what are attitudes that non-creative people have in common? Let's start with attitudes and characteristics of non-creative people:

Stubbornness, In-the-box-thinking and following instructions

I have been working at an insurance, which felt like it was the least creative place in the whole wide world. Every employee had to accomplish his very own tasks by following meticulous instructions and guidelines, always having the laws in mind that were pointed out in the legal text. I had varied tasks, however for nearly all of them I had to follow guidelines on how to approach tasks. My working experience in this job allowed me to find some insights about some of the least creative people: they are stubborn, follow instructions as precise as possible and feel uncomfortable whenever a situation requires coming up with own solutions.

What are the attitudes of creative people?

Individuality and Uniqueness

Creative people have many characteristics and attitudes; however their individuality is something that makes them unique. Just think about favorite musicians (Michael Jackson, Bob Marley) and how everyone of them was a unique individual. Their individuality is the main reason that creative people are often considered to be "ahead of time" and why they come up with completely new ideas on how to address problems.

Unconventionality

Unconventionality and individuality are two characteristics of highly creative people and both of these have a lot in common. Galileo Galilei is such a creative person who was amazingly unconventional. Unconventional people tend to do whatever they believe is right, even if it means to swim against the flow. Galileo by contrast had to figuratively swim against a whole storm surge with his revolutionary but true statement that the earth evolved around the sun.

Curiosity

Curiosity is another characteristic of highly creative people. A person that is curios discovers and experiences a lot more than other people would, simply by questioning things and by searching for suitable answers for his questions.

http://www.planetofsuccess.com/enhance-creativity/

Enhancing creativity at work – It's not what you think - Jacqueline Carter

Do you remember where you were the last time you had a really great idea about work? Chances are it wasn't sitting at your desk, staring at your computer. More than likely you were doing something completely non-work related like taking a shower, sleeping, or going for a walk. Why is it that "ah ha" moments only seem to creep up on us when we aren't looking for them? For many of us, this is a real challenge as finding creative solutions to today's problems is so important not only in our work but in all aspects of our lives. So if we want to enhance our ability to come up with new ideas, what can we do?

To begin, let's look at what moments of insight have in common. Most of the time, the common element is that you were not actively thinking about anything. In fact, most of our "ah ha" moments come when we are in what is known as a "perceptual" as opposed to a "conceptual" frame of mind. We are perceptual when we perceive the world around us through our senses - sight, sound, taste, touch, smell. We are conceptual when we process things through our cognition or thought. A perceptual mode is experiential and wordless whereas a conceptual mode is associated with thinking and words.

While we are all highly perceptual beings, many of us don't pay much attention to our perceptual experiences. Perhaps you can relate to rushing through a meal and not noticing any taste. You may not notice the taste, but the part of your brain that processes taste does. And if something isn't right, your subconscious will be sure to let you know. It is constantly evaluating all kinds of information from your environment and influencing your thoughts and behavior whether you are aware of it or not. So what is the link between being perceptual and creativity? When we open ourselves up to be more aware of our experiences, we create opportunities to tap into a much greater store of information outside the limits of our conscious conceptual awareness.

It stands to reason that if we can solve a problem simply by thinking about it then we are just accessing information we already know - we aren't being creative. Real moments of insight

are when we uncover something that we didn't already consciously know. For most people, these flashes come precisely when we stop thinking; when we let go of our conceptual processes and create mental space for novelty and innovation.

In the middle of a busy work day, it isn't always possible or convenient to take a shower, sleep, or go for a walk. But there are other ways that we can tune in to our perceptual mind and enhance our creative potential. In particular, there are specific mindfulness training exercises that help us be more clear minded, in the moment, and see things from a fresh perspective. In fact, a growing body of research has demonstrated clear linkages between mindfulness training and enhanced creativity. Specifically, mindfulness training has been shown to help people be less habitual in how they see things and generate more out of the box or "divergent thinking" - key for creative insights.

Furthermore, researchers from the University of Toronto used functional MRI scanning technology to observe differences in our "default" state of mind versus a mind that is present in the moment i.e. mindful. What they found was that for most of us, our default state is conceptual but with training, we have the ability to intentionally be in a more perceptual mode. In other words, we can train ourselves to let go of unnecessary thoughts and be more aware of our experiences. It stands to reason that this can be a powerful pre-condition for new ideas.

Steve Jobs was a well-known advocate of the benefits of mindfulness. He stated:

"If you just sit and observe, you will see how restless your mind is. If you try to calm it, it only makes it worse, but over time it does calm, and when it does, there's room to hear more subtle things - that's when your intuition starts to blossom and you start to see things more clearly and be in the present more. Your mind just slows down, and you see a tremendous expanse in the moment. You see so much more than you could see before."

I am not saying that if you take time out of your busy day to train in mindfulness you will come up with the next iPhone. But, since creativity is a key to innovation and results, a simple yet powerful technique that helps people be a little calmer and a little more capable of generating new ideas has to be a good thing.   `

In 2010, a Newsweek article entitled, "The Creativity Crisis" warned about an increasing decline in creativity in the United States since 1990. The article talked about the importance of creativity in terms of addressing the complicated challenges we face in our society at large.

I believe if we want to find ways to increase creativity and innovation in our work and our lives the place to start is with the mind. We have tremendous opportunity to cultivate the vast creative potential that exists within ourselves and today's organizations. To do so, we need to re-evaluate and re-design our habitual modes of thinking and working. Specifically, we need to place more value on our perceptual mind and create more mental space in ourselves, our work environments, and our world.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jacqueline-carte/enhancing-creativity-at-w_b_5482581.html

Reference only

https://www.veraison.com.au/teams/enhancing-creativity-and-innovation/

https://www.inc.com/larry-kim/9-ways-to-dramatically-improve-your-creativity.html

Effective decision making

How to make decisions – making the best possible choices

Imagine that your company has been expanding rapidly over the past 12 months. Sales are up 50 percent, but costs and overheads have also increased, so your operating profit has fallen. Decisions need to be made – and fast! But first you're going to need to consider your options. We make decisions every single day. Some of your decisions will be routine that you make them without giving them much thought. But difficult or challenging decisions demand more consideration. These are the sort of decisions that involve:

- **Uncertainty** – Many of the facts may be unknown.
- **Complexity** – There can be many, interrelated factors to consider.
- **High-risk consequences** – The impact of the decision may be significant.
- **Alternatives** – There may be various alternatives, each with its own set of uncertainties and consequences.
- **Interpersonal issues** – You need to predict how different people will react.

When you're making a decision that involves complex issues like these, you also need to engage your problem-solving, as well as decision-making skills. It pays to use an effective, robust process in these circumstances, to improve the quality of your decisions and to achieve consistently good results. This article outlines one such process for combining problem-solving and decision-making strategies when making complex decisions in challenging situations.

A Systematic Approach for Making Decisions

In real-life business situations, decisions can often fail because the best alternatives are not clear at the outset, or key factors are not considered as part of the process. To stop this

happening, you need to bring problem-solving and decision-making strategies together to clarify your understanding.

A logical and ordered process can help you to do this by making sure that you address all of the critical elements needed for a successful outcome. Working through this process systematically will reduce the likelihood of overlooking important factors. The seven-step approach takes this into account:

1. Create a constructive environment.
2. Investigate the situation in detail.
3. Generate good alternatives.
4. Explore your options.
5. Select the best solution.
6. Evaluate your plan.
7. Communicate your decision, and take action.

Let's look at each of these steps in detail.

Note:

This process will ensure that you make a good decision in a complex situation, but it may be unnecessarily involved for small or simple decisions. In these cases, focus on the tools in Step 5.

Step 1: Create a Constructive Environment

Decisions can become complex when they involve or affect other people, so it helps to create a constructive environment in which to explore the situation and weigh up your options. Often, when you are responsible for making a decision, you have to rely on others to implement it, so it pays to gain their support. If it's most appropriate to make the decision within a group, conduct a **Stakeholder Analysis** to identify who to include in the process. To build commitment from others, make sure that these stakeholders are well represented within your decision-making group (which will ideally comprise five to seven people).

If you're not sure how much say other people should have in the final decision, use the **Vroom-Yetton-Jago Decision Model** to decide whether to consult them or to give them a vote.

To **avoid groupthink**, encourage people to contribute to the discussions, debates and analysis without any fear of the other participants rejecting their ideas. Make sure everyone recognizes that the objective is to make the best decision possible in the circumstances – this is not the time for people to promote their own preferred alternative.

The **Charette Procedure** is a systematic process for gathering and developing ideas from many stakeholders. Alternatively, consider using **The Stepladder Technique** to introduce more and more people to the discussion gradually, while ensuring that everyone gets heard.

Step 2: Investigate the Situation in Detail

Before you can begin to make a decision, you need to make sure that you fully understand your situation. It may be that your objective can be approached in isolation, but it's more likely that there are a number of interrelated factors to consider. Changes made in one department, for example, could have knock-on effects elsewhere, making the change counter-productive. Start by considering the decision in the context of the problem it is intended to address. Use the **5 Whys** technique to determine whether the stated problem is the real issue, or just a symptom of something deeper. You can also use **Root Cause Analysis** to trace a problem to its origins.

Once you've uncovered its root cause, define the problem using **Appreciation** to extract the greatest amount of information from what you know, and **Inductive Reasoning** to draw sound conclusions from the facts. You can also use the **Problem-Definition Process** to gain a better understanding of what's going on. As well as this, consider using **CATWOE** to explore the problem from multiple perspectives, and to make sure you're not missing any important information.

Step 3: Generate Good Alternatives

The wider the options you explore, the better your final decision is likely to be. Generating a number of different options may seem to make your decision more complicated at first, but the act of coming up with alternatives forces you to dig deeper and look at the problem from different angles.

This is when it can be helpful to employ a variety of creative thinking techniques. These can help you to step outside your normal patterns of thinking and come up with some truly innovative solutions. Our **Creativity Tools** page has a comprehensive set of tools and techniques that can help you generate great ideas.

Brainstorming is probably the most popular method of generating ideas, while **Reverse Brainstorming** works in a similar way, but starts by asking how you can achieve the opposite outcome from the desired one and then turning the solution on its head. Other useful methods for getting a group of people producing ideas include the **Crawford Slip Writing Technique** and **Round-Robin Brainstorming** . Both are effective ways of ensuring that

everyone's ideas are heard and given equal weight, regardless of their position or power within the team.

Don't forget to consider how people outside the group might influence, or be affected by, your decision. You can do this by using tools like the **Reframing Matrix** , which uses 4Ps (Product, Planning, Potential, and People) as a way to gather different perspectives. You can also ask outsiders to join the discussion, or use the **Perceptual Positions** technique to encourage existing participants to adopt different functional perspectives (for example, having a marketing person speak from the viewpoint of a financial manager).

If you have very few or unsatisfactory options, try using **Concept Fans** , to take a step back from the problem and approach it from a wider perspective, or **Appreciative Inquiry** , to look at the problem based on what's "going right" rather than what's "going wrong." This can help when the people involved in the decision are too close to the problem. When ideas start to emerge, try using **Affinity Diagrams** to organize them into common themes and groups.

Step 4: Explore Your Options

When you're satisfied that you have a good selection of realistic alternatives, it's time to evaluate the feasibility, risks and implications of each one. Almost every decision involves some degree of risk. Use **Risk Analysis** to consider this objectively by adopting a structured approach to assessing threats, and evaluating the probability of adverse events occurring – and what they might cost to manage. Then, prioritize the risks you identify with a **Risk Impact/Probability Chart** , so you can focus on the ones that are most likely to occur.

Another way to evaluate your options is to consider the potential consequences of each one. The **ORAPAPA** tool helps you evaluate a decision's consequences by looking at the alternatives from seven different perspectives. Or you could conduct an **Impact Analysis** or use a **Futures Wheel** to brainstorm "unexpected" consequences that could arise from your decision. Other considerations are whether your resources are adequate, the solution matches your objectives, and the decision is likely to work in the long term. Use **Starbursting** to think about the questions you should ask to evaluate each alternative, and assess their pros and cons using **Force Field Analysis** or the **Quantitative Pros and Cons** approach. Weigh up a decision's financial feasibility using **Cost-Benefit Analysis** . Our **Bite-Sized Training session on Project Evaluation and Financial Forecasting** can also help you evaluate promising financial alternatives using a range of effective techniques such as NPVs and IRRs.

Step 5: Select the Best Solution

Once you've evaluated the alternatives, the next step is to make your decision. If one particular alternative is clearly better than the rest, your choice will be obvious. However, if you still have several competing options, there are plenty of tools that will help you decide between them.

If you have various criteria to consider, use **Decision Matrix Analysis** to compare them reliably and rigorously. Or, if you want to determine their relative importance, conduct a **Paired Comparison Analysis** to decide which ones should carry the most weight in your decision. **Decision Trees** are also useful when choosing between different financial options. These help you to lay options out clearly, and bring the likelihood of your project succeeding or failing into the decision-making process.

Group Decisions

If your decision is being made within a group, there are plenty of excellent tools and techniques to help you to **reach a group decision** .

If the decision criteria are subjective, and it's critical that you gain consensus, **Multi-Voting** and the **Modified Borda Count** can help your team reach an agreement.

When anonymity is important, decision-makers dislike one another, or there is a tendency for certain individuals to dominate the process, use the **Delphi Technique** to reach a fair and impartial decision. This uses cycles of anonymous, written discussion and argument, managed by a **facilitator** . Participants do not meet, and sometimes they don't even know who else is involved.

Step 6: Evaluate Your Plan

With all the effort and hard work you've already invested in evaluating and selecting alternatives, it can be tempting to forge ahead at this stage. But now, more than ever, is the time to "sense check" your decision. After all, hindsight is great for identifying why things have gone wrong, but it's far better to prevent mistakes from happening in the first place! Before you start to implement your decision, take a long, dispassionate look at it to be sure that you have been thorough, and that common errors haven't crept into the process.

Your final decision is only as good as the facts and research you used to make it. Make sure that your information is trustworthy, and that you've done your best not to "cherry pick" data. This will help you avoid confirmation bias, a common **psychological bias in decision making** .

Discuss your preliminary conclusions with important stakeholders to enable them to spot flaws, make recommendations, and support your conclusions. Listen to your own intuition, too, and quietly and methodically test assumptions and decisions against your own experience. If you have any doubts, examine them thoroughly to work out what's troubling you.

Use **Blindspot Analysis** to review whether common decision-making problems like over-confidence, escalating commitment, or groupthink may have undermined the process. And consider checking the logical structure of your process with the **Ladder of Inference** , to make sure that a well-founded and consistent decision emerges at the end.

Step 7: Communicate Your Decision, and Take Action

Once you've made your decision, you need to communicate it to everyone affected by it in an engaging and inspiring way. Get them involved in implementing the solution by discussing how and why you arrived at your decision. The more information you provide about risks and projected benefits, the more likely people will be to support your decision.

If people point out a flaw in your process as a result, have the **humility** to welcome their input and review your plans appropriately – it's much better to do this now, cheaply, than having to do it expensively (and embarrassingly) if your plans have failed.

Tip:

There are many tools and techniques that you can use as part of making a good decision. If you use them all, however, you could wind up spending a very long time making a very small decision. Pick and choose tools appropriately, depending on the nature and scale of the decision you want to take.

Key Points

Although problem solving and decision making are different processes, it is often necessary to combine them when making a complex decision.

Systematically incorporating problem-solving and decision-making tools can help you make fully-informed decisions, either individually or as part of a group. The seven-step strategy is:

1. Create a constructive environment.
2. Investigate the situation in detail.
3. Generate good alternatives.
4. Explore your options.
5. Select the best solution.
6. Evaluate your plan.

7. Communicate your decision, and take action.

Think about an upcoming decision you have to make. How could this seven-step process help organize your own decision-making process? Next time your team has to make a decision, use this seven-step approach to streamline the process.

Reference only

https://hbr.org/1967/01/the-effective-decision

http://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/management/leadership-and-management/making-decisions/content-section-7.3

https://www.edx.org/course/effective-decision-making-dealing-with-complexity

https://smallbusiness.chron.com/make-effective-decision-55034.html

<div align="center">

Sensible Communication

</div>

Ten tips for effective workplace communication – Stephanie Watson

Communication is something we do reflexively -- like breathing. We talk to our spouses, kids and friends without giving much thought to how we're doing it. It might seem easy, but communicating effectively actually takes quite a bit of finesse. Choosing the right words, listening with our minds instead of just our ears, and getting our message across are skills that we all need to work on.

At home and in social settings, miscommunication can lead to arguments. In the workplace, the repercussions can be far more serious. Poor productivity, unmotivated employees - even lawsuits - can result from communication breakdowns at the office. To improve communication within your team and throughout your entire company, you need to implement a few easy but important changes to your corporate philosophy and practice.

In this article, you'll learn some of the tips management experts use to improve communication. You'll also see how changing your communication strategy can lead to real improvements in employee motivation, productivity and profitability.

1. Make work fun

Who said a 9-to-5 job has to be drudgery? It doesn't matter whether you're producing movies or computer chips, the work day can be as fun and exciting as your company wants to make it. If you visit Hyland Software in Cleveland, Ohio, on any given afternoon, you might find employees racing paper airplanes in the atrium or relaxing in recliners and listening to the

soothing sounds of the ocean in the company's "rejuvenation station." Other companies have set aside a break area for their employees to "hang out," or bring in an ice cream truck once a month.

2. Don't hear – Listen

You have conversations with your employees all day, but are you really listening? Here's a clue: If you're thinking ahead to the next meeting or planning tonight's dinner during the conversation, you're not paying attention. Being an effective communicator means listening as well as talking. Sounds easy, but listening actually takes some practice.

Each time you have a conversation, pretend there's going to be a quiz at the end of it. Try to keep a mental checklist of all the important points the other person makes. When the conversation is over, force yourself to recall at least three important things the person said. Get in the habit of doing this until listening becomes second nature.

One helpful way to improve your listening skills is to repeat what the other person has said. For example, you can say something like, "I understand that you're not happy with the current health insurance policy, Frank. I'm going to look into it." Or you can say, "I want to make sure I've understood you correctly, Tim. You're telling me that you want to extend the health insurance benefits to spouses. Is that right?" This technique offers the added bonus of showing your employees that you're interested in what they have to say.

3. Take your emotions out of equation

You try to promote professionalism at the office, but that's not always easy to do when so many different personalities converge in such a small space. Sometimes work discussions can turn into personal attacks. When an employee is starting to get under your skin, take your emotions out of the equation. Instead, take a deep breath, count to 10 and respond in a calm, unemotional way.

When you do respond, don't make it personal. For example, instead of saying, "You did a terrible job putting together that sales presentation!" try, "Here are a few points I think you need to work on that will really add to what you've already written," or "I'm having some trouble understanding what you're trying to get across in this presentation. Can you please explain it to me?" Also, make sure the person on the receiving end isn't taking your comments the wrong way. Everyone views the world within his or her own emotional framework. No matter now innocent your intentions, they can be misconstrued.

Ask for clarification at the end of conversations to make sure you and your employee are on the same page. You might say, "My intention in talking about your recent absences is to make

sure everything is okay with your job and your health, and to see what we can do together to improve the situation. How do you feel about the issues we've discussed?"

4. Make employees feel like owners

Software giant SAS ranks at the very top of Fortune magazine's "Best Companies to Work For" list, and with good reason. Not only does the company offer a bounty of perks -- top-notch health insurance, a state-of-the-art 66,000-square-foot fitness center and unlimited sick days -- but SAS has also built a foundation based on "trust between our employees and the company," according to CEO Jim Goodnight [source: Fortune].

Corporations built on trust actually listen to their employees. Atlas Container Corp., a Maryland-based manufacturer of shipping materials, lets its employees vote on major issues that shape the company, including health insurance, disciplinary policies and bonuses. But first, the company educates its employees about those issues to ensure they'll be informed voters.

Transparency is another important part of employee ownership. That means management doesn't keep secrets. Atlas does something that's virtually unheard of -- it opens its books, revealing its sales, costs and profits at employee meetings.

How can companies succeed when they relinquish so much control? Because motivated employees produce real results. Atlas' business has grown 25 percent for the past 10 years [source: Inc.]. Even though SAS doesn't pay the highest salaries in the industry or offer stock options, its turnover rate is unbelievably low -- just 2 percent -- compared with 22 percent for the average software company [sources: Fortune, CNN].

5. Trust your people

Everyone has had at least one micromanager at some point in his or her career. This meddler is like a shadow, hanging around every employee's desk to make sure teach one turns work in on time. You didn't hire a group of complete idiots (if you did, it wasn't a particularly good management decision). You hired people with the skill and intelligence to get the job done. That being the case, there's no need for you to hover over them.

When employees feel as though they have control over their job, they feel a sense of purpose and are more invested in the entire process. Autonomy breeds innovation and job satisfaction. Babysitting, on the other hand, makes employees feel as though the company doesn't consider them competent enough to do their job. They feel insecure and unmotivated.

Provide your workers with the tools they need to get their job done, and then give them the freedom to do it. To keep updated on their progress without meddling or micromanaging, hold weekly status meetings or ask for regular e-mail progress reports. Then back off.

6. Give employees what they want

Research shows there are four things that motivate employees:

- the desire for compensation and material things
- the need to bond with others and feel as though they belong
- the need to make sense of their environment
- the desire to defend their accomplishments (Psychology Today)
  - Satisfying the desire for compensation doesn't have to mean paying astronomical salaries. The salaries at Zappos.com, the online shoe store, are well below market rates (only about $23,000 annually for the average hourly employee), yet the company still manages to inspire almost cult-like loyalty from its employees with its free-spirited corporate culture and dedication to molding its entry-level hires into managers [source: Inc.].
  - Compensation doesn't have to be monetary. It can come in many forms: stock options, extra time off or even a drink out with the boss.
  - You can satisfy the need to bond by creating a corporate culture that's based on mutual respect and support. Instead of making employees compete against one another -- which creates a cutthroat environment in which people willingly step on their co-workers to get ahead -- reward employees as a team to encourage camaraderie.
  - To satisfy the third need, you must have transparency. The company's goals and the employee's responsibilities should be obvious from the moment a new person is hired. Everyone's job should be very clearly delineated, and each employee should understand how his or her individual piece fits into the bigger picture.
  - Finally, employees should be recognized for every contribution they make to your organization. Whether that reward comes in the form of a promotion, salary increase or just a round of applause at a company event, it's still recognition.

7. Give good feedback

No employee wants to exist in a vacuum. Whether they're working tirelessly to get projects done or slacking off, your workers need to know that you recognize and appreciate their efforts – or expect them to work harder. You don't have to hold regular meetings to share

feedback, although that's one way to do it. There are many other ways to let your employees know what you're thinking – through e-mail, phone calls, or a brief status update a couple of mornings a week.

When you do give feedback, make sure it's as clear and detailed as possible. Try to offer solutions if there is a problem. For example, don't just say, "You aren't putting in enough effort." Instead say, "When you are late 3 weeks in a row filing your budget reports, it gives me the sense that you don't have enough time invested in your accounting procedures. Can you let me know why you've been late and how we might help you get back on track with these reports?"

Don't forget to give positive feedback, too. Praise and recognition make employees feel important, which motivates them further. Take your team out to lunch to celebrate a sales milestone, get key employees gift certificates to say thanks for a job well done, or just tell them, "You did a great job on that presentation. Good work."

8. Respect Cultural differences

In 1992, while touring Australia, former President George H.W. Bush flashed the peace sign to some farmers. What he didn't realize was that in Australia, his well-intentioned message was the equivalent of giving the finger. President Bush's mistake makes for a funny anecdote, but at the workplace, a similar kind of cultural faux pas could lead to far more serious implications.

The world is shrinking. Companies not only hire foreign employees, but they also work with more colleagues abroad. As a result, management needs to be culturally sensitive and aware of the subtle differences in the way people of different nationalities interpret words and gestures. Companies need to create an environment that's understanding of, and sensitive to, the needs of all their employees, no matter what their culture or religion. That includes providing kosher or vegetarian options in the cafeteria, allowing employees to take time off for religious holidays, and providing sensitivity training to help staff members gain a better understanding of and appreciation for all of their co-workers.

9. Revive the great lost art of conversation

Since the late 1990s, companies have become dependent on e-mail as their primary connection with outside clients and colleagues. They even prefer e-mail for internal communications (which means employees sitting just a cubicle-length apart are writing to, rather than talking to one another). We've become so reliant on our computers and BlackBerrys that we've neglected the art of conversation.

Technology is wonderful for improving speed, but it can have a detrimental effect on personal relationships. How many times have you sent an e-mail with the best intentions, only to have its message misconstrued on the other end? A short response sent in haste can easily be misinterpreted as a lack of care – or worse, as a sign that you're angry.

The majority of meaning construed in conversation comes not from the words themselves, but from the speakers' facial expressions and body language, according to research conducted by UCLA psychology professor Albert Mehrabian [source: Inc]. Take gestures and smiles out of the equation, and recipients can easily get the wrong idea, especially when the sender isn't the most articulate writer.

There's a cure for technology overload: Pick up the phone once in a while and make a call. Better yet, take a little walk across the office and talk to your employees face-to-face.

10. Handle conflicts with diplomacy

Put a group of different personalities in the same room for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, add the stress of multiple deadlines, and you've got a recipe for conflict. No matter how well intentioned and intellectually compatible the group of people you've hired may be, inevitably you're going to have squabbles over who jammed up the copier or accidentally deleted a co-worker's file. Most minor issues will disappear on their own, but a few can turn into major disputes. Some office arguments can be serious enough to prompt legal action.

To prevent small conflicts from exploding into major crises, nip issues in the bud right away. Let employees know from the start that your door is always open. Encourage them to come to you by creating a safe environment in which they feel comfortable honestly and openly voicing their frustrations. All conversations held in your office should remain completely confidential.

When you respond to conflicts, do so with an open mind and a nonjudgmental approach. That means absolutely no personal attacks. By asking questions and really listening to the responses so you understand how each person in the dispute feels, you can help the two parties reach a resolution that's acceptable to everyone. Finally, if company policies are to blame for the issues, go to management and suggest some permanent policy changes.

https://money.howstuffworks.com/business/starting-a-job/10-tips-for-effective-workplace-communication.htm

Reference only

https://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/articles/2017-04-19/how-to-effectively-communicate-at-work

https://www.projectmanager.com/blog/12-effective-communication-strategies-work

https://www.forbes.com/sites/brentgleeson/2016/11/29/3-steps-for-effective-communication-and-dealing-with-sensitive-issues/#62f88b3049a1

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1998/02/17/sensible-communications/2728a2b6-80ec-4865-bb7c-e51a4357e421/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.9c2193b1b0a4

The Listening Game

8 Creative and Engaging ESL Listening Activities for Adults

We know that listening practice is vital when learning any language. But let's be honest, the CDs that come with ESL textbooks absolutely need supplements. Hearing the same voices over and over can get boring, and the topics could be more current. So how can we live it up for our adult students? We need to mix in some spirited *creativity* to our ESL listening activities! Especially for adults, where it sometimes takes more to entertain while teaching them, original listening activities will go a long way. Just like children, adults learn better when they're interested and engaged.

The Importance of ESL Listening Activities for Adults

Speaking and listening are both critical to the success of learning a language. In order for a student to have speaking success, he or she must first listen to the language being spoken. The listening practice is critical because it reinforces previously learned material, builds the student's confidence and improves the skill of natural pronunciation.

Reinforces Learning

After going through vocabulary words and reading comprehension exercises, it is important to do a listening activity to reinforce what information the brain is trying to process. The more times your brain gets to encounter the material, the better!

Builds Confidence in Understanding

Students are encouraged when they hear words that they understand. Read or play appropriate material that is suited for their skill level. Students should be able to understand many of the words and the general concept of the material that they are listening to, but there should still be words that are new to them in the audio.

Improves Natural Pronunciation

Listening to native English speakers helps ESL students improve their enunciation, pronunciation and natural flow of words.

Reference only

https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/i-wanna-talk-about/beating-stress

https://www.smartsheet.com/top-team-building-games-experts-share-their-favorites

https://socialmettle.com/active-listening-games

https://www.trainingzone.co.uk/develop/cpd/trainers-tips-active-listening-exercises

http://blog.trainerswarehouse.com/communication-exercises/

https://plentifun.com/listening-games-for-adults

http://www.experiential-learning-games.com/listeninggames.html

http://goexplorenature.com/2013/01/listening-game.html

https://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator-english/esl-listening-games/

https://education.seattlepi.com/games-listening-skills-3321.html

https://busyteacher.org/14765-5-easy-listening-games-esl-beginners.html

http://lucysanctuary.com/16-games-to-encourage-attention-and-listening-skills

https://www.exploratorium.edu/listen/online_try.php

Managing Self

Managing self and personal skills

Description

- Willing and able to assess and apply own skills, abilities and experience
- Being aware of own behaviour and how it impacts on others

Managing Self

- Managing workload and making effective use of time
- Being well prepared for meetings and presentations
- Demonstrating an awareness of own values, motivations & emotions
- Keeping up to date with what is happening in professional area
- Having an enthusiastic and positive 'can-do' approach
- Maintaining a healthy life balance
- Speaking and writing by using clear succinct language
- Showing consistency between words and actions
- Being self-motivated

- Accepting and demonstrating personal responsibility for health and safety, data protection and other compliance areas

Managing Others

- Giving and receiving constructive feedback as part of normal day-to-day work activity
- Developing and maintaining personal networks of contacts
- Ensuring own behaviour, words and actions support a commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity
- Chairing meetings effectively, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to contribute
- Getting the best from others through effective communication
- Managing own response when faced with challenging situations

Organisation

- Taking an active interest in what is happening more widely in the organisation
- Keeping up to date with what is happening in wider HE environment

Behaviours indicating further development needs

- Talking or writing at inappropriate length
- Focusing almost exclusively on own job or own department
- Being consistently late for meetings
- Missing deadlines
- Reacting defensively to constructive criticism

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/professional-services/professional-behaviours/managing-self/

Self-management

Self-management is a key skill that will help you throughout your life. It involves setting goals and managing your time. Developing your motivation and concentration skills will help you to overcome the lure of procrastination. Effective self-management will help you to avoid stress and provide you with more opportunities to get involved in fun campus actitivies.

A key skill in self-management is self regulation. Self-regulation refers to individuals monitoring, controlling and directing aspects of their learning for themselves.

Self-Management Strategies

- Monitor – don't just let things happen, assess and see why then pick a strategy
- Evaluate – take the time to ask if things are working out for you

- Reinforce

Time Management/Anti-Procrastination Strategies

- Prioritise

- Plan

- Break things into small, manageable pieces

- Goal Setting

- Be Specific

- Use all time - e.g. even travel time can be used to review or quiz oneself

- Action builds momentum – do something, anything

- Make a commitment – create a deadline if one doesn't exist or you need an earlier one

Attitude/Confidence Strategies

- Stop making excuses – instead think in terms of challenges

- Focus on effort not results

- Thought stopping

- Reframe - e.g. "want" instead of "should"

- Self-Talk – use positive thoughts and challenge negative thoughts

- Affirm Yourself – use positive phrases including "I", like "I can do this" and say them often

- Exert Control over what you can, accept what you cannot change

Handling Distractions

- Get more active in the study process – ask yourself questions, join a study group, try to teach someone else

- Distribute study instead of cramming – easier to concentrate for shorter periods

- Keep memo or notebook - for thoughts or things to do that keep popping into your head

- Assign Worry Time - if you have a problem or difficulty to deal with

- Re-focus attention – by using trigger words like "just listen"

- Build time – do something for five minutes, then next time 7 minutes, etc.

- Routine – organise environment etc., much like an athlete before an event

Mind and Body

- Eat, sleep and exercise properly

- Don't ignore emotions or thoughts

- Manage your stress

https://student-learning.tcd.ie/undergraduate/topics/self-management/

For reference only

https://hbr.org/topic/managing-yourself

https://asparker.com/blog/2014/04/10-tips-for-managing-yourself-self-leadership/

https://www.lifehack.org/articles/featured/12-rules-for-self-management.html

https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/05/24/leading-others-starts-with-managing-yourself/#21d2a7a7b704

https://www.foundationeducation.edu.au/articles/2016/10/5-self-management-skills-you-need-to-win-at-life

Mediation for peace

8 Cool Meditation Secrets for Lasting Peace of Mind – Sejal Shah

Quietening the mind or having thoughtless state seem impossible and frustrating goal to many meditators. So many times I had felt that instead of relieving the stress, this process caused me more stress! Doing a few yoga and meditation programs guided by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar proved to be turning point in my practice. I take this opportunity to share some wisdom which made my meditation practice so easy and fun.

1. We are all born Yogis!

Have you observed small children? They are super flexible and do all the yoga postures easily. They are always smiling, bubbling with enthusiasm, joy and happiness. They are always in the present moment; before their tears dry, they start laughing! Their mind is non-cluttered and they live every moment 100%! This is how you and I were when we were a child. We all are borne with yogi's body, mind and spirit! In the process of growing up, as stresses start affecting us, our true nature gets covered. Purpose of our practice is to go back to our natural disposition.

2. Shifting gears from 'I want' to 'I have'!

We meditate because we **want** peace of mind. But what if we already **have** it? Just as our body is made up of different bones, muscles, organs, blood vessels, nerves, etc. our spirit is made up of love, joy, peace, bliss, and happiness. When we meditate, it is not that from somewhere outside we are going to bring peace and bliss and put them inside us. When we realize that we are that, we already have them inside us, we stop seeking it, wanting it, searching it. The starting

point of our practice changes from wanting to already having or being. Seeking stops and experiencing begins.

3. It is very easy and natural to meditate!

Many think meditation is very difficult and challenging! In fact it is very easy and natural for us to meditate. Just as our fingers fold and unfold easily and naturally, that easily mind meditates. Simply sitting with eyes closed and taking our attention inward for a few minutes will lead us back to our nature. For a novice, meditation is some sort of practice or routine which has scientifically proven so many benefits. Over a period of time as we go deeper into its understanding, meditation becomes something we live, we realize that meditation is our true nature and not just something we "practice".

4. Our Mind is like sky and thoughts are like clouds; they keep moving!

We have so many thoughts in a day, but how many of them we really remember? In most cases, we don't even remember what we were thinking 5-10 minutes ago! Thoughts are transient in nature, temporary, like clouds in the sky they just keep moving. Let them. Meditation is not about controlling the mind, focusing or concentrating on something, or resisting our thoughts or emotions or sensations. It is the opposite - de-focusing or de-concentrating, accepting the present moment as it is and relaxing into our being! Beyond the active and chattering mind, we can find the peace which is intact and unbroken.

5. You don't have to do meditation, meditation happens!

Meditation is the delicate art of doing nothing. When I sit to meditate, I sit with this background in my mind - I am nothing! I do nothing! I want nothing! For the time being, I just sit with my eyes closed dropping all my limited identities and roles that I play, become nothing. I stop all my deliberate physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual activities and do nothing and just relax into my being wanting or expecting nothing, not even peace of mind!!! Letting go the desire to resist or control anything with openness to any kind of experience and the faith that whatever experience is being offered is right for me at that moment. When we get into this mode of nothingness and openness, meditation starts happening.

6. Breath is our best friend in good as well as bad times.

Our breath has important lessons for us. For every emotion in the mind, there is corresponding rhythm in the breath and vice versa, the way we breathe can change or influence

how we feel. It is so difficult to handle our mind directly, but with breath we can handle it easily. Many a times we must have told our angry, nervous or agitated friend to take a couple of deep breaths to relax and calm down. Taking a few slow gentle breaths, or Alternate Nostril Breathing helps calm the mind. The rhythm in the breath helps get in touch with depth of our self, our soul, and our consciousness.

7. Brushing the teeth is dental hygiene, meditation is mental hygiene!

Brushing the teeth every morning though mundane, is an important activity. We don't even like skipping it for a single day. Similarly meditation clears all the dirt - all impressions from the mind and maintains mental hygiene. Just the way we don't analyze the dirt that comes out after brushing, we don't analyze any experience of meditation. The release of dirt-impressions can happen in so many ways, it is better to leave it unstirred by logic.

8. Connect your practice to a higher purpose.

When we meditate, people around us also benefit. You send positive and peaceful vibes to your environment. By you being peaceful, you make the world more peaceful. Inner peace and outer peace are strongly connected. I regularly meditate in larger groups. Practicing in big groups with common intent, you help to manifest that intent! Let's enjoy this beautiful journey of NOTHINGNESS to ONENESS!

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sejal-shah/8-cool-meditation-secrets_b_9372770.html

For reference only

https://peacerevolution.net/docs/en/inner-peace-how-to#/

https://www.wikihow.com/Find-Inner-Peace-Through-Meditation

https://www.greggbraden.com/blog/meditation-inner-peace-and-calm/

<div align="center">

Yoga for life

</div>

Why you should try yoga?

What is yoga, and why is it so popular? Yoga is a series of stretches and poses that you do with breathing techniques. It offers the powerful benefits of exercise. And since yoga is gentle, almost anyone can do it, regardless of your age or fitness level. Yoga is a 5,000-year-old discipline from India. It was developed as a practice to unite the mind and body. There are many branches of yoga. All yoga styles can help balance your body, mind, and spirit, but they achieve it in various ways. Some yoga styles are intense and vigorous. Others are relaxing and meditative. No matter which type you choose, yoga is a great way to stretch and strengthen your body, focus your mind, and relax your spirit.

Benefits of yoga

Yoga can make you stronger and more flexible. It's a great way to stay limber and energetic. You'll also feel more focused and alert. And yoga can help you feel great and function better in your daily life. Yoga can also help improve these conditions:

- Poor blood circulation
- High blood pressure
- Arthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Limited mobility
- Lower back pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Headaches
- Tension or stress
- Depression

Yoga's gentle movements are a big reason for why it's so popular. Yoga is good for people who haven't been active in a while. It's good for people who have certain health conditions like arthritis or osteoporosis. You can change the exercises to fit your needs. But yoga is also great if you're already fit and want a challenging workout. As you become more strong and flexible with yoga, it's easier to do other kinds of exercise like dancing, walking, or swimming.

Yoga can help you

- **Reduce your risk for injury.** Each yoga pose targets specific muscles. This helps you increase your flexibility and reduce your risk for injury.
- **Reduce stress.** Yoga can help soothe the mind and lower stress levels. It does this by focusing the mind on the moment and the movements.
- **Increase your concentration.** A main part of yoga is rhythmic, focused breathing. This can help you focus.
- **Understand the mind and body connection.** Yoga requires you to focus all your energy on each movement or pose exactly. This can help you feel the mind and body work together.
- **Gain strength and stamina.** More vigorous styles of yoga promote strength and stamina.
- **Improve balance and stability.** Balancing poses require you to use your core muscles. This can help you improve your overall stability.

- **Improve posture.** Yoga poses strengthen and open tight areas of the body like the shoulders and muscles of the upper back. This can help you keep good posture.
- **Develop body awareness.** Yoga requires you to contract or relax specific muscles as you stretch into each pose. This can help you become more aware of your body's strengths and weaknesses.

Types of yoga

You have many types of yoga to choose from. They use different kinds of movements called poses. You may prefer a certain type, depending on your goals and fitness level:

- **Hatha yoga.** This form of yoga is the most popular in the U.S. It's known as the yoga of force. It emphasizes strengthening and purifying the body. It involves physical postures (asanas) and breathing techniques (pranayama).
- **Iyengar yoga.** This style of yoga focuses on alignment. It is fluid and dancelike. It uses props like wooden blocks, straps, chairs, bolsters, and blankets to help you achieve and hold postures you otherwise couldn't hold.
- **Ashtanga yoga.** This kind of yoga is sometimes called ashtanga vinyasa or power yoga. It's intense and fast-paced. It's designed to build your endurance and strength. You do a series of postures in 1 continuous, flowing movement. You link the motions to breathing patterns.
- **Bikram yoga.** You do this form of yoga in a very hot room, unlike many other types of yoga. Bikram yoga involves a set of 26 postures that you practice twice per session. First you do standing and balance poses. Then you do back bends, forward bends, and twisting postures.
- **Restorative yoga.** This type of yoga does not use active postures. It focuses instead on the relaxation part of yoga.
- **Kripalu yoga.** This is a gentler, slower-moving style of yoga. It's between restorative yoga and the more vigorous forms.

Strength-training with yoga

Many people think yoga is essentially a stretching regimen. It is that, but it's also much more. How do you strengthen your muscles with yoga? Simply by getting into a yoga posture and holding it. Yoga can give you stronger muscles with poses such as:

- **Downward facing dog pose.** This strengthens your arms and legs.
- **Half moon pose.** This strengthens your legs and ankles.
- **Plank pose.** This strengthens your arms, wrists, and back.
- **Locust pose.** This strengthens the back of your torso, legs, and arms.

How to get started

It's easy to find all kinds of yoga classes. Check with your local community centers. Look at nearby gyms, dance studios, and health clubs. Or, check out Yoga Journal's Yoga Teacher Directory to see regional and national lists of yoga teachers and associations. It is important to find the right yoga style for you and a teacher you like. It's hard to know what a class is like until you attend it. Even when two teachers use the same terms to describe their classes, the classes may be quite different.

Talk with your health care provider before you begin yoga or any other kind of exercise. It's a good idea to take a class with an experienced teacher. Let the teacher know about any health conditions you may have like high blood pressure or arthritis. Tell him or her about any injuries or physical problems. A good teacher will know which exercises are best for you, and tell you which poses to avoid.

Give it a try

Yoga can help you get fit for life. It helps you deal with stress, pick up your child, control your dog, carry groceries, or work in your garden. It also can help to prevent or ease back pain and muscle or joint injury, and give you self-reliance and self-esteem.

Yet, one of the most important benefits of any yoga routine isn't physical — it's the quieting of the mind. The bottom line is learning to pay attention. You fine-tune your attention, beginning with the body, and then moving to the mind. As you get deeper into your practice over the years, you start to see the mental and spiritual benefits.

Medical Reviewers: Holloway, Beth, RN, Med

https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?contenttypeid=1&contentid=2767

For reference only

http://www.yogasite.com/why.htm

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marlynn-wei-md-jd/why-people-do-yoga_b_7758984.html

https://wanderlust.com/journal/21-reasons-yoga/

https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/7-reasons-you-should-start-doing-yoga-immediately.html