

The Hindu EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

1st January 2025

**PREPARE FOR BANK (PO/ CLERK), SSC, UPSC,
State PSC, CAT, CTET, RAILWAY EXAMS, CDS,
TET, NDA/AIRFORCE, NET and all Govt.
Exams**

VOCABULARY

1. Pragmatic (व्यवहारिक)

Meaning: Dealing with things sensibly and realistically in a way that is based on practical considerations.

Synonyms: Practical, sensible, realistic

Antonyms: Impractical, unrealistic, idealistic

Example: A pragmatic approach to solving the problem helped the team move forward.

2. Counter-intuitive (विपरीत बुद्धि से)

Meaning: Contrary to what one would expect based on common sense or intuition.

Synonyms: Illogical, unexpected, paradoxical

Antonyms: Intuitive, logical, expected

Example: The idea that positive thinking could hinder progress was counter-intuitive but supported by the research.

VOCABULARY

3. Exhilarating (उत्साहजनक)

Meaning: Making one feel very happy, animated, or elated.

Synonyms: Thrilling, exciting, invigorating

Antonyms: Depressing, dull, boring

Example: The exhilarating ride made everyone feel alive and full of energy.

4. Tapping into (उपयोग करना)

Meaning: To gain access to or use something, usually a resource or skill.

Synonyms: Utilizing, exploiting, accessing

Antonyms: Ignoring, neglecting, avoiding

Example: The company is tapping into new technologies to improve its products.

VOCABULARY

5. Conjecture (अनुमान)

Meaning: An opinion or conclusion formed on the basis of incomplete information.

Synonyms: Guess, hypothesis, assumption

Antonyms: Fact, certainty, proof

Example: The theory was based on conjecture rather than solid evidence.

6. Perplexed (हैरान)

Meaning: Completely baffled or puzzled, uncertain about something.

Synonyms: Confused, bewildered, puzzled

Antonyms: Clear, certain, understanding

Example: She was perplexed by the complexity of the situation and didn't know how to proceed.

VOCABULARY

7. Gullible (जल्दी बातों में आ जाने वाला)

Meaning: Easily persuaded to believe something; credulous.

Synonyms: Naive, trusting, credulous

Antonyms: Cynical, suspicious, skeptical

Example: The gullible tourist was quickly swindled by the street vendor.

8. Acrimony (कड़वाहट)

Meaning: Bitterness or ill feeling.

Synonyms: Bitterness, animosity, hostility

Antonyms: Goodwill, harmony, friendship

Example: The debate was filled with acrimony, leaving both sides more divided than ever.

VOCABULARY

9. Flamboyantly (शानदार ढंग से)

Meaning: In a very confident and lively way.

Synonyms: Ostentatiously, exuberantly, vividly

Antonyms: Modestly, subtly, quietly

Example: She flamboyantly announced her victory to the entire school.

10. Overhaul (सुधार)

Meaning: Take apart (a piece of machinery or equipment) in order to examine it and repair it if necessary.

Synonyms: Renovate, refurbish, repair

Antonyms: Neglect, damage, destroy

Example: The company decided to overhaul its entire network system to improve efficiency.

VOCABULARY

Phrasal Verbs:

1. Bash about

Meaning: to criticize somebody/something strongly

2. Chime in

Meaning: to join a conversation or discussion

3. Steal up

Meaning: to move somewhere quietly and secretly

4. Zone out

Meaning: fall asleep or lose concentration or consciousness.

VOCABULARY

Idioms & Phrases

1. Wool over the eyes

Meaning - to trick or deceive someone.

2. Jump through hoops

Meaning - to do a complicated things in order to get or achieve something

3. Up in the air

Meaning - (of a plan or issue) still to be settled; unresolved.

VOCABULARY

4. By the book

Meaning - exactly according to the rules.

5. To get down to business

Meaning - to start the work that has to be done.

Article for Reading

**The strategy that turns
daydreams into reality**

How often do you find yourself lost in a fantasy, imagining just how wonderful your life would be if you trained for a marathon, learnt a new language, founded your own start-up or wrote a novel? It's natural to daydream about the things we want – but contrary to the positive-thinking literature, simply visualising a brighter future won't make it any more likely to happen. Instead, psychological research shows that we should start making pragmatic plans to accomplish our goals instead of simply dancing in daydreams. This means comparing those rosy visions with our current reality, identifying the obstacles and finding the best way to overcome them. Psychologists call this process “mental contrasting”. Their research shows that most people fail to effectively engage the strategy in their daily lives – meaning that our good intentions remain wishful thinking, and we never reach our dreams. Learning how to mentally contrast effectively can improve our problem solving, motivation and self-control – all of which can bring huge benefits to our personal and professional lives.

Gabriele Oettingen, a professor of psychology at New York University, has pioneered much of the research in this field, which she calls “Fantasy Realisation Theory”. Her interest began with some studies in the 1990s that yielded counter-intuitive results: all revealed that positive thinking on its own could be surprisingly counter-productive. Studying dieters, for instance, she found that the more people fantasised about the weight loss, the less likely they were to actually drop any pounds. Students, meanwhile, who dreamt of academic success tended to get worse grades than those who didn’t. How could positive thinking backfire so badly? Given these results, Oettingen speculated that participants were non-consciously confusing the daydreams for reality; the warm emotions the fantasies aroused led them to feel as if they’d already met goals, meaning that they were less likely to put in all the hard work needed for actual success. And so, in the early 2000s, she set about investigating whether a simple reality check could put them back on track. Working with colleagues in Germany, she recruited 55 school children studying English.

Some were asked to write a story about the benefits of being proficient in the language – a “positive fantasy”. (Their answers ranged from “my father is happy” to “I can talk to the Back Street Boys”.) Others were asked to list the obstacles that might stop them achieving that goal – the “negative reality”, such as not knowing enough vocabulary or being tempted to play football rather than doing their homework. And a third group were asked to do both, engaging first in the positive fantasy followed by an acknowledgement of the negative reality. This was the “mental contrasting” intervention. Sure enough, Oettingen found that the children who’d engaged in mental contrasting made much better progress over the following three months. This was especially true for the students who had the highest initial expectations of success: the simple exercise allowed them to translate those hopes into the best possible grades, while the others obtained middling results. These early findings inspired a trickle, and then a torrent, of new studies in many different contexts over the following years – and together, they build a compelling case for mental contrasting as a versatile and valuable tool.

Summary

The passage explores the concept of mental contrasting, a psychological strategy that combines positive thinking with a realistic assessment of obstacles to improve goal achievement. It highlights research by Gabriele Oettingen, a psychology professor, whose studies reveal that merely fantasizing about success can be counterproductive, as it may trick the mind into feeling as though the goal is already accomplished, reducing motivation. Oettingen's Fantasy Realisation Theory demonstrates that pairing positive fantasies with an acknowledgment of challenges helps individuals translate aspirations into actionable plans. Experiments, such as those with schoolchildren learning English, show that mental contrasting enhances problem-solving, motivation, and self-control, leading to better outcomes.

The tone of the passage is informative and analytical, with a balanced approach that combines research insights and practical implications to emphasize the importance of mental contrasting in personal and professional growth.

Reading Comprehension

Based on the above passage, answer the following questions:

Question 1:

What is the primary purpose of “mental contrasting” according to the passage?

- a) To eliminate obstacles to achieving goals.**
- b) To combine positive visions with an actionable reality check.**
- c) To encourage people to dream bigger and aim higher.**
- d) To prevent people from daydreaming excessively.**
- e) None of the above**

Question 2:

In the study involving schoolchildren learning English, which group showed the best progress?

- a) The group that visualized only the positive benefits of learning English.**
- b) The group that listed only the obstacles to achieving their goals.**
- c) The group that did both positive visualization and acknowledged obstacles.**
- d) The group with no intervention.**
- e) None of the above**

Question 3:

What key insight did Oettingen's early research on dieters reveal?

- a) Daydreaming about weight loss leads to immediate behavioral changes.**
- b) Combining dieting with exercise was the most effective strategy.**
- c) Visualizing obstacles in dieting reduced the likelihood of success.**
- d) Dieters who fantasized more were less likely to lose weight.**
- e) None of the above**

Article for Skimming

**Finding Strength In
What Makes Us Feel
Vulnerable As A
Leader**

Have you ever, as a leader, felt unprepared or in need of help but hesitant to ask for it? Have you ever sat at your desk with your head in your hand, grappling with the right course of action? Have you ever felt betrayed or perplexed by a team member's behavior? Or doubted yourself, questioning your own abilities? Perhaps you've experienced the thrill of success so profound that you double-checked the data, or felt so proud of your team that you wanted to embrace every one of them. I recently posed these very questions to the CEO of a mid-sized organization. His response was telling. He lowered his gaze, paused, and slowly nodded. "Yes," he admitted. "I've felt that way." When I pressed further, asking which scenario and when, he continued to nod, eventually responding, "All of them. Just yesterday. Before noon."

If this resonates with you, you've likely experienced the rollercoaster that is leadership—a journey marked by exhilarating highs and daunting lows, sometimes all within a single day, or even a few hours. While it's tempting to dismiss such days as par for the course (because leaders are supposed to be resilient, right?), doing so may hinder personal growth. Taking the time to reflect on what captures our attention—whether it's moments that trigger a fight, flight, or freeze response or those that demand immediate focus—can shape us into more effective leaders, equipping us to navigate the full spectrum of challenges. Leadership often leaves us feeling exposed and vulnerable. We wrestle with decisions and later question if we made the right ones. We aim to inspire others with a clear vision of the future, even when we ourselves feel uncertain about it. We strive to be a source of energy for our teams, despite feeling drained or powerless.

Yet, despite these challenges, leadership remains one of life's most fulfilling pursuits—not for the accolades, awards, or recognition we might receive, but for the profound impact we have on the lives of others. The joy of helping others realize their potential or encouraging them to exceed perceived limitations is unparalleled. However, this comes with a greater responsibility: the need to cultivate self-awareness and apply the insights gained to our daily leadership practices. How we respond to challenges reveals invaluable truths about ourselves—insights that few other experiences can offer. This information is always accessible, waiting to be tapped into, learned from, and used as a guide to keep us moving forward.

Question 4:

How does the author suggest leaders should handle feelings of vulnerability and self-doubt?

- a) By suppressing these feelings to appear strong before their teams.**
- b) By seeking constant reassurance from peers and mentors.**
- c) By reflecting on these moments to gain valuable insights about themselves.**
- d) By delegating responsibilities to reduce personal pressure.**
- e) None of the above**

Question 5:

What does the author identify as a greater responsibility of leadership beyond achieving personal success?

- a) Maintaining an unshakable sense of self-confidence.**
- b) Helping others realize their potential and surpass limitations.**
- c) Ensuring team loyalty and preventing betrayals.**
- d) Developing strategic solutions to minimize risks.**
- e) None of the above**

Today's Descriptive Question:

- **Write an essay of 200 words about the cybersecurity challenges in the Digital Age.**

In the Digital Age, cybersecurity challenges have escalated due to the increasing reliance on technology and the internet. One of the primary concerns is the rise in cyberattacks, which target both individuals and organizations. These attacks range from data breaches and ransomware to phishing and advanced persistent threats. As more devices become interconnected through the Internet of Things (IoT), the attack surface for cybercriminals expands, making it harder to secure all potential entry points.

Moreover, the sophistication of cyber threats is growing. Hackers are continually developing new techniques to bypass security measures, often exploiting human vulnerabilities through social engineering. The rapid pace of technological advancements also means that security protocols frequently lag behind, leaving systems exposed to newly discovered vulnerabilities.

Another significant challenge is the lack of cybersecurity expertise. The demand for skilled cybersecurity professionals far exceeds the supply, leading to a gap that many organizations struggle to fill. This shortage can result in inadequate security measures and delayed responses to incidents.

Additionally, the regulatory landscape is constantly evolving, with governments implementing stringent data protection laws. Organizations must navigate these regulations while ensuring their cybersecurity strategies are robust and compliant.

In conclusion, the Digital Age presents numerous cybersecurity challenges that require a proactive and adaptive approach to safeguard sensitive information and maintain trust in digital systems.

- **Write a letter of recommendation for a colleague to support their application for a new position.**

[Your Title]

[Your Company]

[Company Address]

[City, State, Zip Code]

[Date]

[Recipient Name]

[Recipient Company]

[Company Address]

[City, State, Zip Code]

Subject: Letter of recommendation

Dear [Recipient Name],

I am pleased to recommend [Colleague's Name] for the position of [Position Title] at [Recipient Company]. Having worked with [Colleague's Name] for [number] years at [Your Company], I have seen their exceptional skills in [specific skill or area] and dedication to their work. They are proficient in [mention relevant skills or tools] and excel in [mention another relevant skill or trait].

I am confident that [Colleague's Name] would be a valuable addition to your team.

**Sincerely,
[Your Name]**

Match the column

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Wool over the eyes | A. to do a complicated things in order to get or achieve something |
| 2. Jump through hoops | B. exactly according to the rules |
| 3. Up in the air | C. to start the work that has to be done |
| 4. By the book | D. unresolved |
| 5. To get down to business | E. to trick or deceive someone |

Answer:

1-e

2-a

3-d

4-b

5-c

Vocabulary

1. Pragmatic:
2. Counter-intuitive:
3. Exhilarating:
4. Tapping into:
5. Conjecture:
6. Perplexed:
7. Gullible:
8. Acrimony:
9. Flamboyantly:
10. Overhaul:

RC ANS

1.

Answer: b) To combine positive visions with an actionable reality check.

Explanation:

The passage describes mental contrasting as combining positive fantasies with an acknowledgment of the negative reality, which helps to translate hopes into actionable steps.

Reference:

“This means comparing those rosy visions with our current reality, identifying the obstacles and finding the best way to overcome them. Psychologists call this process ‘mental contrasting.’”

Incorrect Options:

- a) Mental contrasting doesn't eliminate obstacles but helps recognize and plan for them.
- c) The goal isn't to dream bigger but to make dreams achievable.
- d) While it curbs excessive daydreaming, that is not its primary purpose.

2.

Answer: c) The group that did both positive visualization and acknowledged obstacles.

Explanation:

The group that engaged in mental contrasting, combining positive fantasies with recognition of negative realities, made the most progress in learning English.

Reference:

“Sure enough, Oettingen found that the children who’d engaged in mental contrasting made much better progress over the following three months.”

Incorrect Options:

- a) Positive visualization alone was ineffective and counterproductive.
- b) Listing obstacles without a positive vision didn’t yield the best results.
- d) There is no mention of a control group with no intervention in the passage.

3.

Answer: d) Dieters who fantasized more were less likely to lose weight.

Explanation:

Oettingen's research revealed that dieters who fantasized about weight loss were less likely to achieve it because the fantasies gave them a false sense of accomplishment.

Reference:

"Studying dieters, for instance, she found that the more people fantasised about the weight loss, the less likely they were to actually drop any pounds."

Incorrect Options:

- a) Daydreaming didn't lead to immediate behavioral changes.
- b) The passage doesn't discuss combining dieting with exercise.
- c) Visualizing obstacles wasn't mentioned as a deterrent to dieting success.

4.

Answer: c) By reflecting on these moments to gain valuable insights about themselves.

Explanation:

The passage advises leaders to use moments of vulnerability as opportunities for self-awareness and personal growth.

Reference:

“How we respond to challenges reveals invaluable truths about ourselves—insights that few other experiences can offer.”

Incorrect Options:

- a) Suppressing feelings is not suggested.
- b) Reassurance is not emphasized as a strategy.
- d) Delegation is not discussed in this context.

5.

Answer: b) Helping others realize their potential and surpass limitations.

Explanation:

The passage emphasizes the joy and responsibility of encouraging others to achieve beyond their perceived limits as a key fulfillment of leadership.

Reference:

“The joy of helping others realize their potential or encouraging them to exceed perceived limitations is unparalleled.”

Incorrect Options:

- a) Self-confidence is not the primary responsibility mentioned.
- c) Loyalty and betrayal are mentioned, but not as the core responsibility.
- d) Leadership involves strategy, but the focus here is on impacting others.

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