

Writing about Past Mistakes Improves Performance, Research Finds

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Category : Human Interest

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

1. **dwell** / **dwɛl** / (v) – to talk, write, or think about something carefully
Example: I avoid **dwelling** on my past mistakes because it reduces my self-confidence.
2. **setback** / **'set, bæk** / (n) – a problem that causes someone to fail
Example: Because of the **setbacks** that we encountered, we were not able to submit our project on time.
3. **trivial** / **'trɪv i əl** / (adj) – not very important
Example: The meeting was unproductive because the attendees talked about **trivial** topics.
4. **gear up** / **gɪər ʌp** / (idiom) – to prepare
Example: My classmates and I are **gearing up** for the upcoming exam.
5. **anxious** / **'æŋk ʃəs** / (adj) – nervous
Example: The students are **anxious** because their test scores will be released today.

Article

Read the text below.

調査、研究

過去の過ちについてよくよ考える、思索する

～を加速する

A recent study in the United States found that **dwelling** on past mistakes can boost a person’s future performance.

効果

過去の挫折(失敗)は未来のパフォーマンスに関わる

作業成果

The study, which was published in the journal *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience*, looked into the effect of writing about past **setbacks** on one’s future task performance. Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania and Duke University invited two groups of volunteers for a ten-minute writing activity.

びえいびあるにゅーろさいえんず

～に関わる(参加する)

ささいなこと

彼らには見当違いの(無関係の)

ストレスの多い(精神的に疲れる)

～を伝える(述べる)

Those in the first group wrote about a time when they committed mistakes, while those in the second group wrote about **trivial** topics that are irrelevant to them. After writing, both groups performed some stressful tasks like delivering a five-minute speech in front of the researchers.

表示する(垣間見える)

注意力が上昇する

よりよい意思決定

The researchers found that the first group displayed lower stress levels and increased attention than the second group while doing the tasks. In addition, those in the first group did better decision-making than those in the second group.

それにも関わらず

(事実等を)強調する(力説する)

体のストレスの反応には直接は関係しない

作業効率に影響する

～に備えて準備する(gear up for)

やりがいのある作業(骨の折れる)

Nevertheless, researcher Bryne DiMenichi [brahyn dih-meh-ni-chi] emphasized that writing itself is not directly related to the body’s stress response, which can influence task performance. Instead, it only helped the volunteers **gear up** for the challenging tasks that were given to them.

実施された

影響

懸念してる(心配、案じる)

懸念

間近に迫っているテスト

Meanwhile, a study conducted by University of Chicago researchers analyzed how writing about worries affects one’s performance. The researchers asked high school students, especially those who were **anxious** about taking tests, to write about their concerns on an upcoming exam. After the exam, these students scored one grade point higher. Study author Sian Beilock [see-*u*/n bey-lok] explained that the writing activity helped students release their worries before taking the exam. Therefore, the students performed better because they were able to focus on the exam better instead of thinking about their worries.

心配を取り除く(放出する)

それゆえに

書くことは、心配を取り除くこと

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- Would you rely on writing about past mistakes or worries to boost your task performance? Why or why not?

- How do you usually gear up for a challenging task?

Discussion B

- Do you agree that dwelling on past mistakes is helpful? Why or why not?

- How do you avoid repeating the same mistakes?

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