

Sustainable productivity workshop

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Overview of workshop & topic (09:05)

<u>Title</u>	Phones. Off or on? Note: at least two breaks for emergencies.
<u>Website</u>	Website resources. Open source: I'm not an expert: This is what I've got. Here to learn and discuss. Write down, however sloppily, anything that resonates with you. We'll come back to those notes.
<u>Goal</u>	Goal: create sustainable productivity by reflecting on relationship stress, productivity, mental health.
<u>Mattis</u>	Why am I here? Worked as a consultant, hospital visit because of too much stress... Twice.
<u>Why</u>	... but why are you here? (If you don't have trouble with sustainability, you can help others out!)
<u>Data</u>	Every year, more and more people get sick – exhausted – because of stress. What is going on? Data in Sweden: most common reason sick leave. +14% of all emergencies "acute stress reaction" Why are we exhausting ourselves? Most common females 30-40. Nurses, teachers , social workers.
<u>Information</u>	Looking at experts, it's all "common knowledge." But why are we not doing what we should?
<u>System think</u>	Instead: systems thinking . Consider big picture. Be specific: what is making your situation unsustainable? Why not focus more on productivity hacks? Because most people who want to work at startups <i>are already ambitious and productive</i> . North star + alignment + remove obstacle = you don't need much else.
<u>Make this great</u>	Ask questions. Listen. Explore. Be open.
<u>Challenge</u>	Grab coffee, visit bathroom. But don't start fixing other problems! Time at challenge: 0930.

The neuroscience & evolution of stress (09:40)

<u>Stress & fear</u>	<p>Amygdala(s) part of limbic system. ~225 m years old (shrews have them!) = iterated and QA:d.</p> <p>Quick fast-and-up system. Overrides thinking part of brain – the prefrontal cortex. Self-talk hard.</p> <p>Subconscious identification of danger, not rational. What do you need to be afraid of in 2017? Reflection = understanding patterns. Need distance from self.</p> <p>Imagining problem in future enough to react. What happens if we always worry about future?</p> <p>Fight or flight or freeze. (Opposite is rest & digest.)</p>
<u>Fear?</u>	<p>Ask relevant questions to get to root cause.</p>
<u>Cave people</u>	<p>Homo sapiens sapiens not changed for ~50 000 years. Not built for this environment. Bugs.</p> <p>What made us more successful than other species: ability to plan & cooperate. Feature.</p> <p>Not able to survive alone = social part of stress often most important. But not talked about.</p> <p>Ask the real questions. (Slack is not the problem, just like trains and telegrams were not the problem.)</p>
<u>HSP</u>	<p>We're built differently. Some have larger / more active amygdalas and thus stressed out more.</p> <p>Different environments shape us. Bad family situation with "danger" causes amygdala to grow.</p> <p>Good news that brain is plastic. 8 weeks of meditation shrinks amygdala. (but fighting 225m years!)</p>
<u>The fucks I'm giving</u>	<p>Caring as pre-requisite of stress. What if you didn't give a f-? Can you?</p> <p>Again we're different: different qualities appraised differently based on gender (i.e. aggressivess).</p> <p>+ Life outside of work is completely different!</p>
<u>Challenge</u>	<p>Grab coffee, visit bathroom. But don't start fixing other problems!</p>

Time at challenge: 1010.

Stress & productivity (10:20)

<u>Bell curve</u>	Not binary. Not two different kinds of stress. Compare to exercise / calories / coffee.
<u>Productivity</u>	Too much stress is unsustainable: but too little is, too. We want to be challenged, engaged = stress.
<u>Yerkes-Dodson</u>	Net stress. Percieved situation. Control, support, recovery. Not workload! Compare CEO. Life outside of work. How do we know? Mental (listed) + physical + long term (cynicism, exhaustion) Where are you? Hand raise.
<u>Task complexity</u>	Surgeon. Many companies still have industrial view of work. Best to be at the desk for X hours. Why?
<u>Add stress</u>	Standard method of management. Different leadership skills depending on scale. Example: talking about mission & values. Before we take actions ("Increase sense of urgency") we need to know where we are.
<u>Challenge</u>	Grab coffee, visit bathroom. But don't start fixing other problems!
<i>Time at challenge: <u>1050</u>.</i>	

Stress management, part 1 (11:00)

<u>Short or long term</u>	Before we try to solve stress: 1) <u>symptom</u> or cause? 2) figure out where the actual problem is.
<u>ABCs</u>	Nobel prize: categories of stress management.
<u>Attention</u>	Against rumination. Stress is rarely about now. Escapism?
<u>Body</u>	Physiological change. Might look stressful: BJJ. Don't out-think yourself.
<u>Control</u>	Can you be stressed w/o being out of control? Again: subjective.
<u>Mindfulness</u>	Are you sick of it or want to learn more? Lots of hype, but what the h*ck is it?
<u>Definition</u>	<i>Usually</i> we mean something like this. unclear in many studies. Also: placebo?
<u>Religion</u>	Mindfulness comes with religious connotations ... even when they say it doesn't.
<u>Pragmatic</u>	Method has helped me and others to fight anxiety. Why? Look at ABCs. PNS
<u>Practice</u>	<i>Usually</i> we call this meditation. But it's just focusing on breath. Try for 1 min.
<u>The benefits of not being mindful</u>	Thinking about past: learning. Thinking about future: planning. + creativity Judging things as good and bad is obviously helpful for learning and planning Alternative cost: is there something better we could spend time/energy on that? ... and some people just don't like it. Trauma, breathing ... Do something else!
<u>Idleness</u>	As an option to mindfulness. Schedule time to chill. Recover. Take walks or w/e.

Stress management, part 2 (11:30)

<u>Trap of self-improvement</u>	<p>Accepting stress. This is the challenge I choose. It's because I want too, because I care.</p> <p>This is the flip side of a positive quality, like loyalty, caring, ambition, creativity ...</p> <p>Happiness illusion. Stressed about being stressed, sad about being sad, etc.</p> <p>Purpose of <i>all</i> feelings.</p> <p>"Perpetual problem." ← the problem is probably with me.</p>
<u>Work environment</u>	<p>Research on org's with low sick leave numbers. Which of these do you already have? Need?</p> <p>To feel secure with others and to be affirmed by others. To perform & be challenged. Development.</p> <p>Salary, office, personnel policy, competent co-workers.</p> <p>Leadership: Mission and values, clear goals, inspiration, support.</p> <p>Reported main stressor: high workload. But isn't it lack of control/support/recovery that is problem?</p>
<u>Challenge response</u>	<p>Different reactions to challenge (psyched!) and danger (scared!). Dopamine in addition to fear.</p> <p>Examine the worst case. Realize it's not that bad. Now it's a challenge. We can lower/raise bar.</p> <p>Mindset: Out mental image of the world shapes how we react. Jury still out on the science.</p>
<u>Trouble-shoot</u>	<p>Ask participants if they have things then want to discuss when it comes to long-term stress. Root causes.</p>
<u>Q&A</u>	<p>Is there something we haven't talked about that we should pick up?</p>
<u>One thing</u>	<p>Prioritize. What if I can only do one thing? Note what I can, not can't.</p>
<u>Contact</u>	<p>Please contact me with questions / feedback / thoughts / book recommendations. Add me on LinkedIn too.</p>
<u>Site</u>	<p>I will email you this site where you will find everything.</p>
<u>Thank you!</u>	<p>Thank you!!! Turn on phones now (if you want to)</p>

Bonus

Greatest hits

Individual: lower / raise ambition based on life situation. (instead of assume ambition / non-agile)

Team: psychologically safe environment: honest, affirming.

Organization: allow individual to decide best work situation – (example w/ sick family)

On burnout and work environment

- Prevent sick leave: noticing and acknowledging the symptoms, examining the underlying causes, developing preventive strategies to counteract your particular pattern of burnout.
- Increasing emphasis within many companies on short-term, tangible and measurable goals. When these goals can no longer be meaningfully linked to overall and more long-term goals, then motivating power disappears and they are transformed instead into stressors.
- Some researchers say that as few as 7% of professionals have been seriously impacted by burnout. But others have documented rates as high as 50% among medical residents and 85% among financial professionals. A 2013 ComPsych survey of more than 5,100 North American workers found that 62% felt high levels of stress, and extreme fatigue.
- Stress correlated, but not causing cancer. Why? Unhealthy methods for managing stress?
- Burnout: "A state of physical, emotional and mental fatigue caused by long-term involvement in emotionally stressful situations."
- High workloads without opportunities for recovery. "Sprinting all the time."
- Company culture and expectations. Startups want to be cool & chill & friendly at the same time as they want to be ambitious to the point of the extreme. Better to be honest. Also: culture of awesomeness might lead to suppressing (helpful) negative emotions (anger etc.)
- The hardest thing is spending energy on the right things.

On how the brain works

- "... one of their findings was that the brain reacts in almost the same way whether we are experiencing somatic pain (our body hurts) or social pain (being rejected by person/group)."
- Novelty bias and distractions as cause for stress. Parent yourself by installing Freedom.
- Dualism: "How can I use my brain to my advantage?" "What if I was a dog?" etc.
- Traditionally we think of mental and physical as separate. What's the difference?

Other

- Illusion: looking for calm state in new house / vacation / hikes / clothes.
- Gratitude practice is effective. Why? Perspective.
- When should we accept something, and when should we change it?
- Support: hill slant experiment. people perceive hills to be less steep when they're with other people or when they imagine a supportive significant other alongside them.

The most frequent reported stressors in studies of work stress are

- * high workloads,
- * working under time pressure and continual deadlines (without recovery time)
- * conflicting and unclear requirements
- * continual interruptions
- * relationships with managers, colleagues and customers.
- * the frustration arising when personnel do not manage to live up to their own professional ambition levels
- * increasing emphasis within many companies on short-term, tangible and measurable goals.
- * continuous availability and not merely during working hours.

Vision for organization

Clear goals,
an appropriate structure and a democratic leadership,
staffed by good people who know their jobs,
are willing to develop both themselves and the group's work in conjunction with their colleagues
and, not least of all, have a fair amount of self-awareness and self-confidence.