

Looking after yourself

Looking after yourself

You need to look after yourself and be in a good headspace. This impacts in a number of ways:

- Looking after yourself helps you be more positive and energised
- Positivity is four times more predictive of your influence in an organisation than your role or position in a communication network.
- When you are in a better headspace you are better able to prioritise, think long term, are better at problem solving and less likely to be caught up in the frenzy of day to day work which is tactical.
- Your relationships at home are better too!

warm up exercise

Where are you now?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Grumpy, negative work is a chore, disengaged</i>								<i>Positive, wouldn't change a thing, engaged</i>	

Where would you like to be?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Grumpy, negative work is a chore, disengaged</i>								<i>Positive, wouldn't change a thing, engaged</i>	

resources

- The Positivity Ratio. Youtube, Barbara Fredrickson
- The surprisingly dramatic role of nutrition in mental health: TEDx Christchurch, Julia Rucklidge
- The Power of Habit, TEDx, Charles Duhigg
- Dr Martin Seligman's Top Strengths, Youtube, Martin Seligman
- Three good things, Youtube, Martin Seligman
- One more reason to get a good nights sleep, Tedx, Jeff Iliff
- Why You Need To Walk 10,000 Steps A Day, Youtube
- https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_focusing_on_the_breath_does_to_your_brain?

physical

exercise

- Being active is more important than being sports fit for your health. Get a pedometer (or app on your phone) and do 10,000 steps a day (WHO recommendation).
- Going fast (accelerated heart beat) every third day for 20 minutes makes you happy, increases your performance on the job and reduces stress. Exercise at least five hours before you go to bed (see note below).
- Lift some heavy things occasionally - carry the groceries to the car instead of using the trolley. Build inconvenience into your day!

sleep

- Aim for around eight hours per night (seven in summer and nine in winter) to have optimal coordination, attention, decision making and impulse control. Inadequate sleep results in increased cardiovascular disease, blood pressure, metabolic disorders (obesity and diabetes), early onset dementia, alzheimers and immune system dysfunction.
- Regular - go to bed at the same time helps your body adjust and get to sleep faster. During the day adenosine builds up at the same rate as your body temperature increases (over a degree during the course of the day). You feel sleepy when your body starts to cool down (as part of your circadian rhythm two hours before your normal bedtime) but the adenosine is still building up. Exercising less than five hours before bed increases your core temperature and stops you feeling sleepy at your normal bed time.
- Get outside for half an hour a day and switch off light sources in your room - the differential between light and dark increases the production of melatonin which is what makes you feel refreshed. If you use devices get an app which cuts out the blue light and switch this on two hours before you go to bed.

'A' Players have the ability to energise not only themselves but everyone who comes into contact with them. They make business productive and fun at the same time.

Jack Welsh

eat well

- The less processed the food the better - would a four year old be able to see that the raw ingredients were related to the finished product? People who eat unprocessed foods have a greater diversity of bacteria in their gut which is linked to better mental and physical health.
- Eat the food triangle at every meal. Have an early and light evening meal for optimal sleep.

get outside

- 20 minutes of sun on your skin and 30 minutes outside without dark glasses on - helps you sleep better and be happier.

psychological

Take some deep breaths once a day - especially if you feel yourself getting stressed/feeling hot and fuzzy in the head and reacting negatively. Take a walk around the block and breathe deeply using your diaphragm.

gratitudes

Three good things is a simple and proven way to build your psychological resilience and well being.

- Good things and bad things happen. We are more inclined to notice the bad things and dwell on these. Changing our focus:
 - moves us to a more accurate perception of the world
 - improves our happiness, health, resilience and well being
 - makes our neurones become better at processing good events and our cells become more receptive to positive emotion

exercise

- Before you go to bed, record three good things that have happened in last 24 hrs, each day for two weeks. Importantly, for each good thing also record the *causal explanation* - why did it happen? Who was involved?
- Be as specific as possible—specificity is key to fostering gratitude. “I’m grateful that my co-workers brought me soup when I was sick on Tuesday” will be more effective than “I’m grateful for my co-workers.”
- Go for depth over breadth. Elaborating in detail about a particular person or thing for which you’re grateful carries more benefits than a superficial list of many things.
- Get personal. Focusing on people to whom you are grateful has more of an impact than focusing on things for which you are grateful.
- Try subtraction, not just addition. Consider what your life would be like without certain people or things, rather than just tallying up all the good stuff. Be grateful for the negative outcomes you avoided, escaped, prevented, or turned into something positive—try not to take that good fortune for granted.
- See good things as “gifts.” Thinking of the good things in your life as gifts guards against taking them for granted. Try to relish and savour the gifts you’ve received.
- Savour surprises. Try to record events that were unexpected or surprising, as these tend to elicit stronger levels of gratitude.
- Revise if you repeat. Writing about some of the same people and things is OK, but zero in on a different aspect in detail.

Good Thing	Causal Explanation
Example 1.	
2.	
3.	
Day one	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Day two	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Day three	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Day four	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Day five	
1.	

2.	
3.	
Day six 1.	
2.	
3.	
Day seven 1.	
2.	
3.	
Day eight 1.	
2.	
3.	
Day nine 1.	
2.	
3.	
Day ten 1.	
2.	
3.	

Day eleven	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Day twelve	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Day thirteen	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Day fourteen	
1.	
2.	
3.	

mindfulness

‘Mindfulness’ refers to the ability to observe one’s thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations without judging them as good or bad; it’s the skill of paying careful attention to the present moment. Research links mindfulness better ability to focus and refocus your attention, to lower stress and higher well-being. A basic method of building mindfulness is to focus your attention on your own breathing. After setting aside time to practice mindful breathing, you should find it easier to focus attention on your breath in your daily life—an important skill to help you deal with stress, negative emotions, and sharpen your skills of concentration.

The steps below are a short guided mindfulness session. 15 minutes a day for one week has been shown to have measurable benefits. You can listen to audio of this guided mindfulness session, http://marc.ucla.edu/mpeg/01_Breathing_Meditation.mp3.

- Find a relaxed, comfortable position. You could be seated on a chair or on the floor on a cushion. Keep your back upright, but not too tight. Hands resting wherever they're comfortable. Tongue on the roof of your mouth or wherever it's comfortable.
- Notice and relax your body. Try to notice the shape of your body, its weight. Let yourself relax and become curious about your body seated here—the sensations it experiences, the touch, the connection with the floor or the chair. Relax any areas of tightness or tension. Just breathe, soften.
- Tune into your breath. Feel the natural flow of breath—in, out. You don't need to do anything to your breath. Not long, not short, just natural. Notice where you feel your breath in your body. It might be in your abdomen. It may be in your chest or throat or in your nostrils. See if you can feel the sensations of breath, one breath at a time. When one breath ends the next breath begins.
- Now as you do this you might notice that your mind may start to wander. You may start thinking about other things. If this happens, this is not a problem. It's very natural. Just notice that your mind has wandered. You can say “thinking” or “wandering” in your head softly. And then gently redirect your attention right back to the breathing.
- Stay here for five to seven minutes. Notice your breath, in silence. From time to time, you'll get lost in thought, then return to your breath.
- After a few minutes, once again notice your body, your whole body, seated here. Let yourself relax even more deeply and then offer yourself some appreciation for doing this practice today.

strengths

What are your top 4 - 5 strengths on the VIA strengths survey (www.viacharacter.org). Of those 24 which three seem the most accurate at describing your character?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

These are called your Signature Strengths.

- Every day for one week, use any of your signature strengths in a new, different or more frequent way.
- In order to extend your signature strengths you will need to be creative in the activity you plan.
- Think about your cues for doing more of your strength, and how will you reward yourself for doing it. Perhaps allocate 10 minutes per day?

tips

- Use the feedback you get from the three best things to identify trends and understand the strengths of those people you work with.
- Notice and comment on their strengths - ‘you seem to be very ...’. If you are wrong they will correct you.
- How could you get them using their strengths more at work or at home?

resources

- <http://www.strategichr.co.nz/strengths-development-guide/>

Strength & Activity	Effect
Example	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	

Key Research	Where are you at?	What are your goals?
Be active - 10,000 steps a day is the World Health Organisation recommendation.		
Make sure you are eating properly - the less processed the better - Mediterranean style diet.		
Sleep to 7-9 hours per day in the dark. Have a regular bedtime. Avoid the devices an hour before you go to bed.		
Get outside for 30mins per day for your Vitamin D, endorphines and to help you sleep.		
20 mins increased heartbeat (fast enough to sweat) every third day - increases resilience, job performance and happiness.		
Keep hydrated - if your urine is yellow drink more water.		
Focus on one of your own strengths each day for a week. How can you stretch it, or use it a bit more?		
For two weeks, before you go to bed recall the three best things that happen during the day, and what caused them.		
What is your purpose? How can you stay connected to this?		
Take a break every two hours and make time for re-creation! Working long hours decreases productivity!		
Focus and appreciate something for 15 minutes a day for 7 days. When your mind wanders tap your leg and bring it back to focus.		

www.strategicengagement.nz

John Eatwell
Chartered Organisational Psychologist
0508 StratHR ((7872847)
0274 465 592
john.eatwell@strategicengagement.nz

 strategicengagement
simply better