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EFS Servant Leadership Focus

A monthly newsletter to promote and stimulate servant leadership ideas & tools into the Viox culture.

Starting with the September 2016 issue and continuing with this issue of the Servant Leadership Focus Newsletter, we are in our next training phase of the Servant Leadership Coaching Process entitled: T.H.R.I.V.E.: *The Key to Unlocking Potential and Enhancing Performance.*

"Our life is what our thoughts make it." Marcus Aurelius



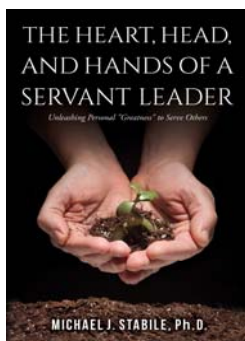
Retrain Your Thinking Patterns *By: Michael J. Stabile, Ph.D.*

(adapted from my new book published in December 2016, *The Heart, Head, and Hands of a Servant Leader: Unleashing Personal Greatness to Serve Others*)

"A lifetime of habits ingrained by repetition can seemingly make us slaves to a not always

beneficial master—our own brain."

—Jeffery Schwartz and Rebecca Gladding, *You Are Not Your Brain*



Do you feel like you are stuck in "Groundhog Day"? The 1993 movie *Groundhog Day*, starring Bill Murray, portrayed a man stuck

in the same day over and over. Nothing changes as much as he wants it to, and everything is very predictable. Many of us are like this character; we want to change our lifestyles, our mind-sets, and our habits, but we, too, are stuck in the trap of "Groundhog Day."

Left to its own devices, your mind can cause you to believe things that are not true and to act in any number of self-destructive ways. As we have seen in the previous chapter, when we believe toxic and deceptive brain messages, we go to places—mentally and emotionally—where we don't want to be and find ourselves acting in ways that aren't congruent with our hearts or doing things we really don't want to do.

Toxic thinking is deceptive, and we may believe and act in a number of ways:

- **Overthinking problems and fretting over things that are out of our control**
- **Getting stuck or panicked by unfounded fears and worries**
- **Blaming and chastising ourselves for things that are not our fault**
- **Engaging in unhealthy behaviors to escape life's daily stresses**
- **Reverting to past patterns when trying to make a change**

Does any of this sound familiar to you? The more often you act in unhealthy ways of thinking, the more you teach your brain that what is simply a habit (a learned behavior) is essential to your survival. Your brain does not distinguish between whether the action is beneficial or destructive; it just responds to how you behave and then generates strong impulses, thoughts, desires, cravings, and urges that compel you to perpetuate your habit, whatever it may be. Unfortunately, more often than not, these behaviors and patterns are not the ones that improve your life.

The good news is that you can overcome the brain's controls and rewire your brain to work for you by learning to renew your mind and thinking, debunking the myths and lies it has been so successfully selling you, and choosing to act in healthy ways.

Habits (good and bad) are what we create when we do something over and over, to the point where we no longer need to think about it consciously in order

to repeat the process perfectly. This applies not only to things we do physically but also to our thoughts. When we think the same thing over and over, it becomes a habit of thought. A habit of thought over time becomes an attitude or belief. There is nothing as powerful as attitude. Attitudes dictate our responses to the present and determine the quality of our future. **Attitude can simply be defined as our mind-set or mental conditioning that determines our interpretation of and response to our environment.** It is our way of thinking. Attitude is a natural product of the integration of self-worth, self-concept, self-esteem, and sense of value or significance. In essence, attitude is the manifestation of who we think we are. We live our lives based on who we think we are.

The **4R Model Approach** gives you a framework for understanding the process of how habits are formed and developed, and you can then learn how to focus your attention in beneficial ways so that you can retrain and renew your mind, habits, and thinking. **Let's look at an overview of the four steps.**

The first step is **Rewire—identifying** the thought, habit, emotion, or behavior through focused, reflective attention. The next step is **Reset**—recognizing that no thought or habit is harmless. You must choose to change and inhibit the negative thoughts, realizing the intensity and/or interference of negative thinking on new thoughts or building positive habits. The third step is **Refocus**—focusing attention on the "new" desired thought, habit, emotion, or behavior, which builds positive memory that is embedded into your daily routines. The fourth step is **Renew**—the process of new habit development is based on developing the "strength of memory" over time; **new thinking patterns over time = transformation.**



How to Make Positivity Go Viral in Your Organization

5 Ways to Avoid Catching an Emotional Cold

By: Michael Hyatt

We're used to hearing about people getting sick at the office. Someone brings in the cold or the flu, and it spreads. But that's not the only thing that goes viral in the workplace.

For a couple of decades now, researchers have been studying something called *emotional contagion*. It's important for leaders to understand because of the effect it has on our organizations.

The latest findings show us why you have to keep a close watch on the mood of your team. Managed well, it can energize your team to achieve results. Managed badly, it can poison all your efforts.

The Plague of Rudeness

While researchers talk about "*low-intensity deviant behaviors*," most of us know rudeness and negativity when we see them. The bad news is that rudeness and negativity spread like a plague in a team. They kill cooperation and slow down the work we do—and they're on the rise.

"Incivility at work has been on the rise, yielding negative consequences for employees' well-being and companies' bottom lines," warn researchers from the University of Arkansas.

After surveying people in the workplace, they found, *"experiencing incivility earlier in the day reduced one's level of self-control (captured via a performance-based measure of self-control), which in turn resulted in increased instigated incivility later in the day."* In other words, insults and slights frequently harmed performance. Worse, they provoked payback later in the day.

If this is happening to your team, by the time quitting time rolls around, people want to be anywhere but at work, and coming in the next day can be a drudgery.

You Already Have the Antidote

The good news is that you are not at the mercy of this plague. Why? It turns out positive energy spreads, too. We already know this intuitively, but it's important to remind leaders because their emotions have the greatest impact of all.

Here's how one employee described his boss to the *Harvard Business Review*: *"She energized me because she loved her job and was, in general, a very happy person. She always came in with a smile on her face which created a positive atmosphere."*

What would it take for your teammates to say the same about you?

5 Ways to Create Infectious Enthusiasm at Work

You can't always be in a good mood, of course. But you have far more control over what your team picks up than you might

realize. Researchers identified five ways in which you can spread positive energy to your team:

- ◆ **Have a positive attitude.** That doesn't always mean flashing smiles everywhere. But it does mean realizing that you're setting the tone and others will follow.
- ◆ **Create a positive vision.** Leaders must communicate organizational goals in a compelling way. You've got to ensure the team sees reaching those goals is a real and valuable accomplishment.
- ◆ **Contribute meaningfully to team conversations.** If you signal to your team that you respect them by meaningful engagement, they will do the same.
- ◆ **Be fully present and attentive.** This comes down to honoring others. Encouraging these behaviors is critical to overcoming rudeness and indifference.
- ◆ **Celebrate success.** When you reach important benchmarks, praise and reward the effort. It will boost the mood and maintain momentum.

"You are a source of relational energy as well as a recipient," HBR reminds leaders. *"When you generate relational energy in the workplace, your performance goes up."*

There's an old saying about parenting: *"More is caught than taught."* That's true in the workplace as well.

The Power of Less

Adapted from the book, The Power of Less

By: Leo Babauta

There is only so much we can do or consume. There are a finite number of hours in a day, and once we reach that limit to our production, we can't do more. The problem with trying to increase volume is that it doesn't always produce the best results. Doing more things means you're likely to do a lot of unimportant things, and you'll be over worked and stressed at the same time.

Principle 1: Set limitations

By setting limitations, we must choose the essential. So in everything you do, learn to set limitations.

Principle 2: Choose the essential

By choosing the essential, we create great impact with minimal resources. Always choose the essential to maximize your time and energy.

Choosing Things with the Most Impact

Make the choice to do fewer things, but with the most impact. What makes a task high-impact? Some examples are; getting you long-term recognition, making you a lot of money in the long run, have the potential to greatly advance your career etc.

To determine which tasks have the most impact, first examine your task lists. Ask yourself whether a task will have an impact that will last beyond this week or this month? Is it furthering a long-term goal? If the answer is yes, this task has a high- impact.

An alternative way to determine which task has the most impact is by first assessing your goals and identifying what you want to accomplish in the next year. Plan your tasks so that each day, you are doing something to further these goals along.

Apply limitations to every aspect of life:

First, ask yourself the following questions; *which areas of your life are overwhelming? What would you like to simplify? Do you want to limit the number of possessions you have, what information you receive or what responsibilities you have?* For example, if you have too many emails in your inbox, apply a limitation: only check your email twice a day and respond to 5 emails each time. This way you'll work more effectively and only deal to important emails.

Choosing The Essential and Simplifying

Once you know what's essential, you can reduce your projects, your tasks, your stream of incoming information, your commitments, and your clutter. You just have to eliminate everything that's not essential.

A Series of Questions – Choosing the Essential

What are your values? Do you have goals? Do you love? Identify the things most important to you.

What has the biggest impact? Where is the most long-term impact? (Needs vs. wants)

Eliminate the nonessential: *Continual editing Note: choosing the essential is almost never a one-time decision. It's something you have goals change, as you learn that you can live with less and less.*

Principle 3: Simplifying – Eliminating the Nonessential

Once you've identified the essential, the task of simplifying is theoretically easy – you just have to eliminate all the non-

essential. In practice, this isn't always easy; although it does get less difficult the more you do it.

Principle 4: Focus is your Most Important tool in Becoming more Effective.

Focus is the most important factor in determining whether you'll achieve a goal or stick to creating a new habit. Maintain your focus on goals and habits. Focusing on now, the present can also do a lot for you. It helps reduce stress and helps you enjoy your life to the fullest. Only focus on the task at hand, and focus on the positive. Be aware of negative thoughts and replace these with positive ones.

Single Tasking

Multitasking is less efficient, due to the need to switch gears for each new task and then switch back again. It is more complicated and leaves you prone to stress and errors. Multitasking can make you crazy, and in this already chaotic world, we need to rein in the terror and find a little oasis of sanity and calm.

Instead, single tasking is the way to go. First thing in the morning, work on your most important task; don't do anything else until this is done. Block out all of the distractions while you work on this task shut off email and phones etc. Resist the urge to check emails, focus only on the task at hand. Once you've completed the task, process your notes and inbox, add new tasks to the to-dos and process any emails.

Focus on the Present

When you eat, just eat. Do one thing at a time. Be aware, especially of your thoughts Exercise, focus only on the exercise you are doing Have daily routines, put up reminders, and remember, there is no failure. Celebrate every little success.

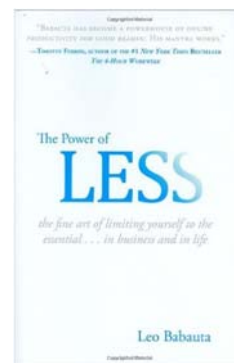
The Power of a Morning Routine

With a well-planned morning routine you can prepare for your day and set goals. You can fit in some exercise, reading, writing or other things you don't have time for. You can do something enjoyable, calming and relaxing.

Supercharge Tomorrow with an Evening routine

In the evenings you can use time to prepare for the next day, unwind and review your day. Calm yourself before bed or spend quality time with loved ones. You can log, journey, write or exercise.

Pick activities that you enjoy and try your new routines out for a few days, then adjust as needed. Maybe you start with a cup of coffee while you watch the sunrise, followed by a quick stroll around the neighborhood and a short planning session. You can wind down your day by cooking dinner and eating with a loved one, reviewing your day, preparing for the day ahead and reading something enjoyable.





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