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FUTURENOW CONSULTING

SERVANT LEADERSHIP COACHING SYSTEM

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

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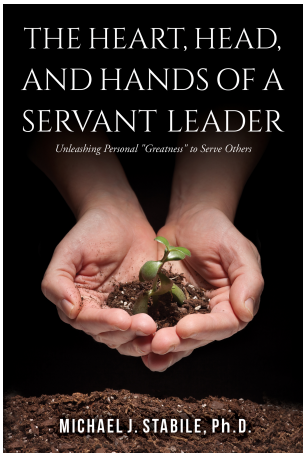
Transformational Stories

Inhibit Negative Thinking Patterns by Michael J. Stabile

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



GiGO is a term in computer software that means **garbage in = garbage out.** Likewise, what we create and allow in our minds will affect how we live. Allowing negative thinking patterns is like putting toxic waste into our systems, which will affect our overall well-being. What we put into our minds and our thinking will come out in our attitudes, actions, and behaviors. **We become what we think.** Negative thinking corrodes our operating systems, causing a sluggish and corrupted programming of our strength of mind. However, our thinking patterns can be mastered and controlled; we don't have to be hindered or stuck.

You are not doomed to repeat the patterns of thinking that you have acquired over time or that have been repeated in your family. **You are not controlled by your biology, and you can transcend the influence of your environment.** If you have been told something different, you have been misled and lied to.

The truth is, no matter how toxic your thinking, background, biology, memories, or environment, there is hope. You can break the chains that have been limiting your development into your unique, God-given "sweet spot" of greatness. Ancient wisdom and modern science affirm that we can reframe, reshape, and transform our heart mind-sets.

That's why I get excited to share with you what I have found and what many others are now experiencing. I want to make principles and research simple so that everyone can understand and can learn enough to have the clarity to take action to overcome negative thinking patterns and experience the joy, freedom, and confidence of living in the "sweet spot" of greatness.

An educator who had been suffering from stress reported to me after going through this process *(Reversing Toxic thinking through Observe, Log, Refute)* over the course of sixty days that she felt like she was taking charge of her thought life and was experiencing an internal peace through this simple exercise. She commented:

"My situation or circumstances have not changed, but I am taking control of my reactions. This exercise has been life changing. Not only am I lowering my stress levels, but for the first time in many years I am experiencing restful sleep and feel energized."

A middle-level manager who had been struggling with depression and a sense of hopelessness stated:

"I know people have recognized my mood and attitude at home and work, but I didn't realize how depressed I have become. My thoughts were over- whelming me, and I felt like I had no control, a victim. There were times when I just felt like this was my life, and nothing was ever going to change. I am so thankful for this exercise; it is changing my life one thought at a time. I have to admit, it is hard, but now I feel like I can take control of my thoughts, and I have hope. I have tools and weapons to combat my own negative thoughts."

Another participant reported that she struggled with self-confidence and self-image:

"After sixty days, I realized that what I believed about myself was being exaggerated in my own mind. My thoughts and the "tapes" I played in my head kept me locked in a type of prison. The messages kept repeating themselves, telling me I wasn't good enough and that I wasn't smart enough; I wasn't going to amount to much. What I have realized is by journaling and refuting is that those messages aren't true. I am good enough and smart enough, and now I am starting to believe it. "

A senior leader reported that he felt like he was gaining clarity and power over his thought life:

"I feel like a new man. I still struggle, but I don't feel stuck in my thinking. When I find myself drifting back to negativity, I now have tools and a process to take back control. My wife commented to me the other day that she noticed how upbeat and positive I have become. In fact, she said, I am a much better listener. Wow, I didn't realize how negative I was, and it all starts with my own internal thoughts."

Will you join those who are taking control of negative thinking patterns through this simple sixty-day challenge? You, too, can experience the transformational mind-renewal process. You can take control of your thinking, which begins with inhibiting negative patterns that may be subtle or unconscious, but over time, each thought does add up.

How to Stop Negative Emotions From Derailing Your Success

Learn to stop your mental triggers before they happen.

By: **Shawn Achor - September 23, 2016 Success Magazine**

Sometimes we come across obstacles in our lives that lower our overall level of happiness and disrupt our path to success—**I call these mental map hijackers.** A common hijacker is a negative boss who tries to drive productivity through intimidation.

There are two parts of the brain I call the Jerk and the Thinker. *The Jerk is the amygdala, the most primitive part of the brain, which responds to threats. The Thinker is the prefrontal cortex, which helps you make good decisions.* Fear is a map hijacker because when you activate the Jerk, you shut off the Thinker, wasting your valuable brain resources on avoiding that fear instead of pursuing your goals. Instead of letting your boss's negativity bother you, look for meaning in your work. This will shut off the Jerk and allow the Thinker to channel your brain's full suite of intelligences toward accomplishing that goal.

What are your mental hijackers? *Write down **five triggers** that consistently lead to **counterproductive behavior**. Are there certain people or places that let good habits slip? Once you know what your hijackers are, you can replace them with positive mental map markers.*

1)

2)

3)

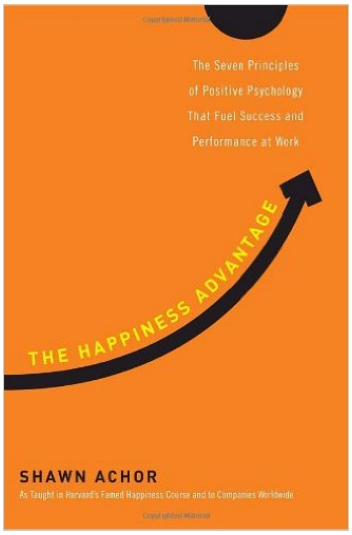
4)

5)

5 Ways to Turn Happiness Into An Advantage

by Shawn Achor

The Happiness Advantage



For you, which comes first: happiness or success?

My guess is that you have already answered that question several times today. You answer it every time your brain says, "I'll be happy when I find a job." "I'll be happy when I get a promotion." "I'll be happy when my dissertation is finished."

The formula is clear: work harder, then you'll be successful, and then you'll be happier.

When I asked some of my Harvard students, their answer was easy: "I'm working my butt off now so I can be happy when…[fill in the blank with a six figure banking job, make a scientific breakthrough, get into medical school, etc.]."

But here's what these brilliant students often forget: getting into Harvard was supposed to make them happy. How many of them in high school thought they'd be happy once they got in? Why didn't the success then happiness formula work?

It's hard to find happiness after success if the goalposts of success keep changing.

Watch my TEDx talk on The Happiness Advantage at Harvard

Our society's formula for success and happiness is broken.

Now for the good news, based on the findings in *The Happiness Advantage*: **if you reverse the order of the formula, you end up with greater happiness and greater success rates.** Happiness is and advantage, and the precursor to greater success. Every single relationship, business and educational outcome improves when the brain is positive *first*. If you cultivate happiness while in the midst of your struggles, work, at school, while unemployed or single, you increase your chances of attaining all the goals you are pursuing…including happiness.

So how can we pursue happiness right now? When I was counseling overwrought Harvard students, one of the first things I would tell them is to stop equating a future success with happiness. Empirically, we know success does not lead to happiness. Is everyone with a job happy? Is every rich person happy? **Then step one is to stop thinking that finding a job, getting a promotion, etc. is the only thing that can brings happiness. Success does not mean happiness.** Check out any celebrity magazine to look for examples to disabuse you of thinking that being beautiful, successful or rich will make you happy.

Second, realize that happiness is a work ethic. Happiness is not a mystery. You have to train your brain to be positive just like you work out your body. We not only need to work happy, we need to work at being happy. Try an experiment right now called the **21-Day Challenge**. Pick one of the five researched habits and try it out for 21 days in a row to create a positive habit, then comment on this blog or Facebook me and tell us your results.

1. **Write down three new things you are grateful for each day** into a blank word document or into the free app I Journal. Research shows this will significantly improve your optimism even 6 months later, and raises your success rates significantly.

2. **Write for 2 minutes a day describing one positive experience you had over the past 24 hours.** This is a strategy to help transform you from a task-based thinker, to a meaning based thinker who scans the world for meaning instead of endless to-dos. This dramatically increases work happiness.

3. **Exercise for 10 minutes a day.** This trains your brain to believe your behavior matters, which causes a cascade of success throughout the rest of the day.

4. **Meditate for 2 minutes, focusing on your breath going in and out.** This will help you undo the negative effects of multitasking. Research shows you get multiple tasks done faster if you do them one at a time. It also decreases stress and raises happiness.

5. **Write one, quick email first thing in the morning thanking or praising a member on your team.** This significantly increases your feeling of social support, which in my study at Harvard was the largest predictor of happiness for the students.

If you are having trouble getting started, at the end of my TED talk I describe how to make those habits even easier to start by managing activation energy.

If you reverse the formula, you can turn happiness into a success advantage, raising every business and educational outcome. Start by doing one of these habits. And once and for all, stop yourself and others from saying, "I'll be happy when…" That formula is broken. But there is a better one: happiness leads to greater success.

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Coaching reminders:

Mike is available for individual leadership coaching.

Call or email for appointments.

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