



# **Mental Fitness Coursebook**

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**Break Barriers.  
Change Perspective.  
Take Action.**

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**Symbia**

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## Break Barriers. Change Perspective. Take Action.

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In an increasingly complex and uncertain world, we all need tools to understand and manage our most important asset - our own minds.

The reality is that everything we do, or want to do, starts inside of us, in our minds. It is our inner game that makes the difference in how we see and respond to the world:

- Whether the ongoing narrative in our heads (known as mindchatter) is on our side or playing against us
- Whether we manage fear and uncertainty or unknowingly use our worries and concerns to keep us in a state of anxiety
- Whether we're telling ourselves we can do something or telling ourselves we can't

Sometimes, it's easy to feel helpless and that everything is out of our control, but the one thing we have control over is how we let life's events affect us. If we can master our thinking and our mindset, we can release confidence and potential we didn't know were there.

So we've designed this course to help **break barriers** and overcome the mental obstacles which may be holding you back. We focus on **changing perspective** because this in itself can reveal new possibilities and opportunities. And arguably most important of all, we've curated a set of impactful tools and techniques to inspire to you to **take action**.

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### In this course:

- We'll demystify the workings of the mind by sharing some basic neuropsychology and showing you how it directly affects our behaviour
- We'll teach you about perception and how often it plays tricks on us
- You'll learn all about thinking traps, what they are, and how to challenge and overcome them
- We'll give you some tools and techniques that you can use to make an immediate positive change to your mindset and your thinking.
- And most importantly, we're going to give you the foundations to kick start your own Mental Fitness journey - so that you can make sure your mind is playing for you not against you.



**Let's  
get started!**

## Timing

Mental Fitness is a comprehensive 5-module course that's been designed to be completed over a flexible timeline. Each module will take you 1-2hrs dependent on how you like to work plus extra time for any actions you want to take on the back of each module.

It's up to you how long you wish to take to go through the content. While you shouldn't take *too* long in between modules, we'd advise you to allow enough time for personal reflection on what you learn. Your 'eureka' moments may come randomly in the shower, on a drive, cooking dinner, etc) as your subconscious will be at work connecting the dots. It's often what happens in these in-between moments that make the difference.

## Consistency is key

Keep in mind that there are no quick-fixes here. The process of raising your self-awareness and learning self-regulation takes time, commitment, and practice. We will not be giving you 'the answer'; we are providing you with new ways of thinking, exercises, tools and techniques to practice. You will decide which are most helpful for you to apply to your own journey.

## Each module contains:

- A set of short videos for guided self-learning with professional development expert, Jodie Rogers
- Content PDF including theory and principles to bring the key module points to life
- Complementary exercises to put theory and learning into practice
- Tools & techniques for your easy reference

## What you need:

We recommend that you dedicate a notebook or journal to this course in order to keep all your thoughts and progress in one place for you to refer to. This should be an ongoing exercise in your Mental Fitness journey. We advise that keep things organised by module and write down:

- Notes of ideas or concepts you want to remember
- Insights or lightning bulb moments
- Your to-do list or actions to be completed
- Goals or ideas for implementation



## Module 1

# Perception

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The possibilities in our life  
are not determined by  
**what we do** or **what we have**  
but by our **view of the world**

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.....

Perception is the module that  
**SETS UP EVERYTHING ELSE**

.....

You will learn how  
your interpretations  
of the world **may not  
be as accurate as you  
think**. This will help  
explain some common  
issues you may have  
faced in the past

You will be able  
to spot when **your mind  
is playing tricks on you**  
and skewing  
your perception

You will realise that  
**you have control**  
over your perception

You will recognise  
that if you change  
your perception  
**you can change  
your world**

# Why is perception important?

**Perception is the gateway between our external world and our internal world.**

It's what we **observe** to be happening, or more accurately it's how we **interpret** what is happening, which helps give meaning to the world around us. Our perception is fed via all of our senses in the moment, but it is also coloured by past events. As life passes us by so quickly, it's rare that we stop to examine our perception. More often than not we are 'subject' to it, rather than seeing it for what it often is, 'one interpretation' of events.

Neuroscientists tell us that 1/3 of the brain's cortex is engaged in vision, it is the most prioritised sense. But that doesn't mean we see what's exactly there, we still make mistakes. You see, we tend to think of vision like a camera, but we 'snap' more than what we see. Millions of neurons and synapses are engaged in vision. They work hard to interpret what we see, they often fill in the 'gaps' for us, gaps we didn't even know were there.

Therefore our brains CONSTRUCT what we need to see in the moment and sees the world the way it is useful to see it, not necessarily the way it IS. We make these leaps of faith, fill in the gaps, take artistic license, project our own feelings, emotions and experiences on to things... all to help ourselves make sense of what's going on.

Therefore, if perception is never objective, but instead subjective, it's fundamentally important to be aware of our moods, beliefs, physiology, experiences, etc. because they are colouring our interpretation of the world— even if we are tuned into it or not.

Our Mental Fitness journey starts with Perception, our gateway to everything else...

**Our brains construct what we need to see in the moment and sees the world the way it is useful to see it, not necessarily the way it is.**



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“Your external world predicts  
10% of your long-term happiness,  
**90% of your happiness is dictated  
by how your brain processes  
the external world.”**

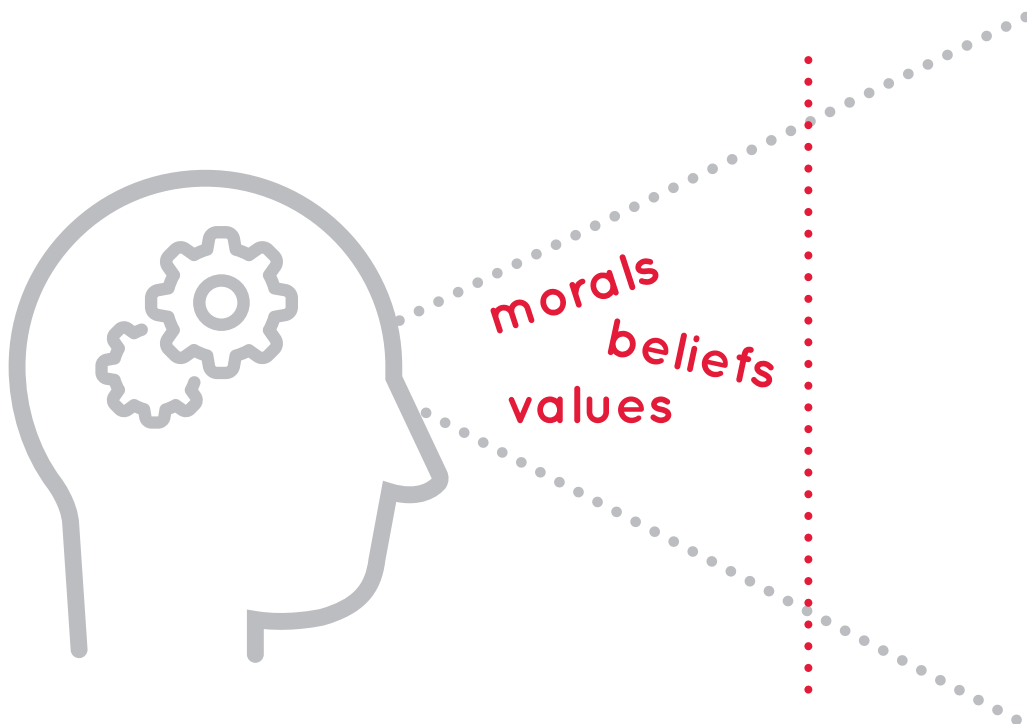
**Shawn Achor**

Author of *“The Happiness Advantage:  
Linking Positive Brains to Performance”*

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# What is perception?

Our **perspective** is made up of core convictions which establish our point of view on the world.



Our **perception** is the observation of life through this filter of core convictions.

## Understanding perception

So let's explore how  
we see our world.

Do we see how it is?  
... Or how we think it should be?

Do we see everything there  
is to see, or what we believe  
to be enough?

## How does vision play a role?

Neuroscientists tell us that one-third of the brain's cortex is engaged in vision (the occipital lobe) – it is our most prioritised sense.

But that doesn't mean we're seeing exactly what's there, we still make mistakes. Why is that?





## So what's going here?

Vision scientists know that the amount of information we can see at any given point of time is relatively small, only the equivalent of the surface area of our thumb.

You see, we tend to think of vision **like a camera**, but we 'snap' more than what we see. Millions of neurons and synapses are engaged in vision. They are all working to fill in the 'gaps' for us.

This is a great example of how what we think  
we see is altered through our own mind's eye.

**Y0UR M1ND 15 R34D1NG 7H15  
4U70M471C4LLY W17H0U7 3V3N  
7H1NK1NG 4B0U7 17  
17 1S F1LL1N5 1N 7H3 G4PS**

Neuroscientists agree that we therefore  
CONSTRUCT what we need to see in the moment.

**The brain sees the world  
the way it is useful to see it,  
not necessarily the way it is.**

We make leaps of faith, fill in the gaps,  
take artistic license, project our own feelings,  
emotions and experiences... all to help ourselves  
make sense of what's going on.

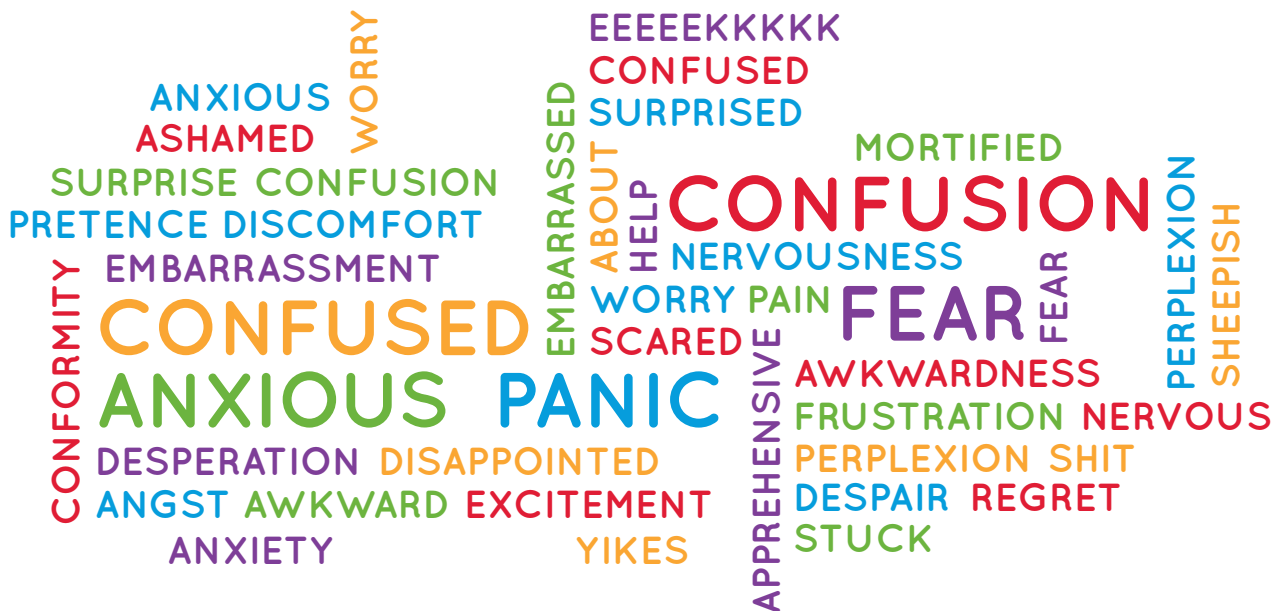
## How does vision then affect our relationships?

In a social experiment we asked people to describe the emotion on this guy's face.

Take a moment to think about what **you** think he's feeling...



## So what do you think he's feeling?



What's interesting about this is the fact that we were all looking at the very same face but we all saw things slightly differently.

## Why is that?

**Because perception is subjective, we alter things through our own mind's eye.** This is why it's important to be aware of our moods, beliefs, experiences, etc. because it will be colouring our interpretation of the world.



## Perception vs Reality

We're inclined to think that perception is a window to reality as it is – but we now know (through the theory of evolution) that this is not the case.

**The extent by which our perception changes is highly influenced by the individual's situation.**

For example, it has been proven that dieters perceive the size of apples to be larger than people who are *not* counting calories!



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## **Can we teach ourselves to see the world differently?**

Neuroscience says we RE-construct our reality,  
mixing signals and making cognitive guesses.

We're continuously misinterpreting  
the content of our perceptual experiences.  
But we're blind to our own blindness!

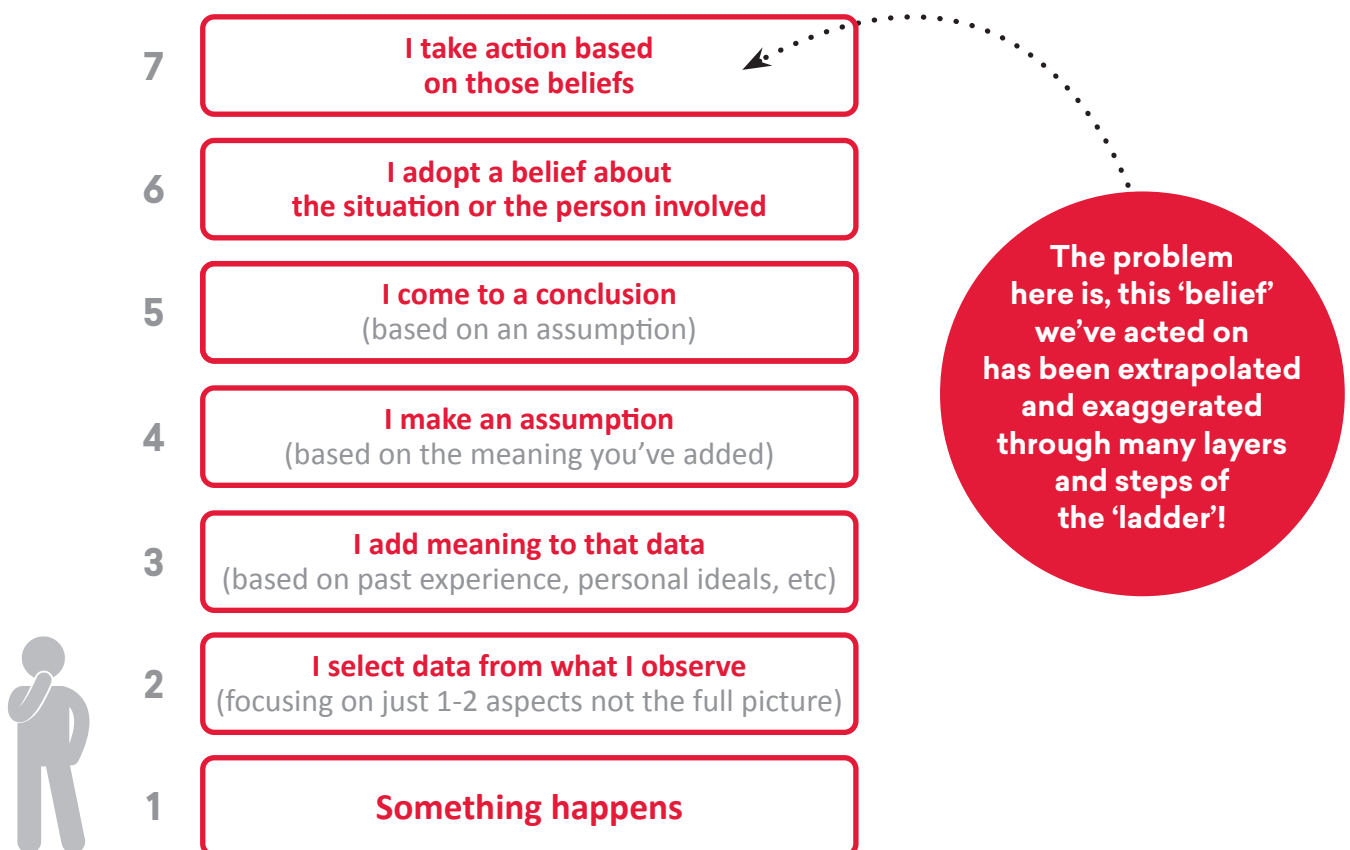
We have science and technology to help  
us with this. BUT in our day-to-day we  
don't have scientists pointing out our  
interpretation flaws for us.

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# How interpretation can lead us astray

It's important to be aware of how we are interpreting the world around us and how that interpretation is not always right. It's not just *what* we're seeing but also *what we're telling ourselves about what we're seeing* because this narrative is influencing our decisions in life.

When we find ourselves having exaggerated feelings about events or situations, it's very easy to continue to layer on further meaning and before we know it, we often find ourselves in an extreme version of where we started! Let's start by breaking down the steps:



Climbing 'up' this ladder can happen instantaneously, over a few hours, or even a few days – we often don't even realise when we've applied all those layers. What's important is that we learn and practice how to come back from that kind of exaggerated thinking, which we refer to as "The Ladder of Inference."

# The Ladder of Inference

To best illustrate how the 'ladder' works, see the example below. Start with the red column to see how exaggerated thoughts can get, then move to the green column to see equally if not more plausible thinking on the same situation!

What happened was... <b>I SENT IMPORTANT EMAIL TO MY BOSS</b>	
I observe that...  MY BOSS DIDN'T RESPOND	But what I didn't see was...  THEY WERE IN 3 DAYS OF TRAINING
So, I decided this meant...  IT'S BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T AGREE WITH MY OPINION	But it could have also meant...  THEY WERE JUST BUSY
Because of this I assume...  THEY ALWAYS TAKE A LONG TIME TO RESPOND TO ME, I THINK THEY JUST DON'T VALUE ME	But I might've been wrong because...  IT'S AN IMPORTANT TOPIC AND THEY WANTED TO SPEAK TO ME RATHER THAN SEND AN EMAIL
I then conclude...  THE ISSUE IS WITH ME... THEY DON'T VALUE MY WORK... THEY DON'T EVEN LIKE ME...	But I could have equally concluded...  THEY JUST NEED MORE TIME
Which made me believe...  I THINK THEY THINK I'M NOT THAT GOOD AT MY JOB	But it's also possible that...  OTHER THINGS ARE TAKING PRIORITY RIGHT NOW
And so I...  ACT STRANGELY AROUND THEM... START DOUBTING MY WORK... START LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB!	When I could have...  SIMPLY BOOKED A MEETING WITH THEM TO DISCUSS IT

# What can we learn from this?

As we challenge our thinking by filling in the different prompts of the ladder (e.g. ‘But what I didn’t see was...’ ‘But it could also have meant...’), it’s this new thinking, reframing and opening of perspective that allows us to see the previously unseen.

It’s easy to become selective in our focus, then add layers of meaning and end up in an exaggerated thought process. But when we take the time to open up our perspective it can lead us to better quality thinking (one not tainted by emotions) and ultimately to better actions, which gets us better results in life and in business.

Try it for yourself on page 23 in the Module 1 Exercises section!

# Why reframing your perception is important

## 1 To highlight that we sometimes get things wrong

If we consider the perceptual illusions as a metaphor for how we are interpreting our world generally, no doubt other illusions exist (e.g. **cognitive illusions, decision making illusions** and so on).

We aren't as **objective as we hope we are**. Therefore we need to be open to the fact that sometimes how we are seeing and interpreting our world, events, situations around us might be wrong.

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## 2 To demonstrate that if we change our perception we can change our world

If you consider that our perception is a lens by which we view the world through, then it stands true that if you change your perception you can change how you see and interpret your world.

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## 3 To do this we need to raise our self-awareness

Given that our experiences and our perceptions ultimately shape how we interpret the world and the meaning we give to it. It makes sense to know as much about ourselves as possible.

It's important to know: **who we are, what we believe, how we respond to things.**

Because all of these elements are impacting our perception of the world and ultimately the decisions we make. And the culmination of all our decisions determines our results in life.



## Module 1 Exercises

# Ladder of Inference

**Part 1** To stop an emotional response from getting us even deeper into frustration, it's important to pause, and try to see things from more than one angle. Use the template below to examine your thinking, either on a current or past situation and reflect on how your actions are being or have been impacted by perception.

What happened was...	
I observe that...	But what I didn't see was...
So, I decided this meant...	But it could have also meant...
Because of this I assume...	But I might've been wrong because...
I then conclude...	But I could have equally concluded...
Which made me believe...	But it's also possible that...
And so I...	When I could have...



# Ladder of Inference

**Part 2** Once you've completed your Ladder of Inference, either for something you are experiencing now (in the moment) or as a reflective piece (something that has already happened) – try answering the below questions to help you see the new possibilities or how you can evolve your thinking for the future.

**1** Looking at the ladder I now realise...

**2** What I could have thought / assumed / acted on differently is/was...

**3** In what way could the outcome be/have been different?



## Module 2

# Thinking

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“A man is but the product  
of his thoughts, what he thinks,  
he becomes.”

**Mahatma Gandhi**

.....

# What to expect

.....

A heightened awareness of how  
**you commonly talk to yourself**

.....

Recognition of the  
different thinking traps  
**you may be falling into**

You will have an  
understanding of how  
these thinking traps can  
make you **misinterpret**  
**situations and events**  
around you

.....

An introduction into  
neuroplasticity and  
**how you can change**  
**your brain - literally**

An explanation of the  
**negativity bias** and  
what it means for you

.....

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## **Why are our thoughts so important for Mental Fitness?**

Because our thoughts are impacted by our beliefs and values and vice-versa.

When we pay attention, we hear our mind-chatter. This is where we overlay meaning onto what we are experiencing (whether it's accurate or not!).

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# The Monkey Trap

The monkey trap, traditionally used in some countries, is a glass bowl or coconut husk which has a hole in the middle...

**just big enough to get a hand in.**

Locals put a banana inside and leave it out, near the edge of an overgrowth or jungle, in order to catch a monkey. And more often than not a monkey comes, puts its hand in and grabs the banana. But then when it tries to pull its hand out it can't because the banana stops it!

## It's impossible to get out.

The monkey will sit there going backwards and forwards, jumping up and down, making frantic monkey noises all the while holding on to the banana.

Then it will see its captors coming and it will start screaming and going crazy. And then a sack goes over its head and it's caught!

## All the monkey had to do was let go of the banana... but it didn't.

Sometimes they do but the majority don't, that's why it's such an effective trap. Why doesn't it let go of the banana? Because the banana has value to it, it brings something to the monkey's life.



# The People Trap



**Now just like monkeys have a trap,  
we have a 'trap' too!**

Our trap is our thoughts. Often we don't even realise that we do that to ourselves; we latch on to negative thinking that can limit us from doing or saying things that we really should be doing or saying. Did you know:

**We have 80,000 thoughts a day  
and 75% of these are negative!**

Is it any wonder we struggle to achieve our goals when we are being so negative towards ourselves? We have the same thoughts everyday, they just go around and around.

**Unless you do something different.**

## Imagine this...



“I know we’re supposed to go for that romantic getaway this weekend, I’m sorry, but I just don’t feel like it. Would you mind cancelling the hotel? We’ll chat after work but right now I have to run.”

**What do you think she’s thinking?**



# Now, what about you?

**You call a colleague about an issue with an important project that will impact the deadline, no answer.**

**You leave a message.**

Some time passes by with no reply. You think about it, maybe you worry a little, maybe you start to over-think.

You start thinking that they're upset with you. Then you start generating possible things they're annoyed about, you mention it to other colleagues.

They're more senior than you, so you start to worry what they think about you. Have you offended them in some way? Should you have talked to them in person instead of calling? You re-read the email exchanges from the past week to check if there was something that might have been misconstrued. Then you start get annoyed with *them* for not following up, you build up evidence in your head for how they're being 'rude' – you turn the tables from being insecure to being angry!

**We've all been there.**

But nothing happened. Literally nothing happened!

You made a call, and nothing happened. Everything else has been created in your mind. Someone not returning your call could mean something or it might mean NOTHING.

Perhaps they never got the message... or they intend to call back and have been very busy... or they prefer to arrange a meeting to discuss it in detail with the whole team.

Pay attention to the 'story we tell ourselves' and the 'thinking traps' they cause us to fall into because it's this story that impacts how we feel and influences our decisions – for the good and the bad.

# Identifying ‘thinking traps’

Have you ever paid attention to that voice in your head? The one that tends to narrate what’s happening in front of you – when you do, you might hear things like:

*“I can’t believe I just said that, they’re going to think I’m stupid!”*

*“Oh, don’t say that thing you’re thinking of, it’s probably not important and might be wrong, let the others speak instead.”*

*“I can’t believe after working all weekend, my boss never replied to my email when I sent the work in.”*

...and so on.

This is often referred to as ‘mindchatter’, we all have it going on, but some of us are more attuned to it than others. Also, a few of us have more positive narratives going on, but for most of us the voice tends to get louder in our heads when it comes to worry, insecurity, fears and doubts.

Have you ever noticed how negative our thoughts can sometimes be? How we often fear the worst and can easily and quickly spiral out of control? For this reason we call them “thinking traps”.

When these negative thoughts go unchecked, un-policed and unedited, they can run in the background like a low playing radio which can affect our confidence levels and ultimately influence our decisions in life.

**When negative thoughts go unchecked, un-policed, and unedited, they can run in the background like a low playing radio which can affect our confidence levels and ultimately influence our decisions in life.**



Negative thoughts tend to happen automatically, half the time you don't even realise they're happening. The mind has a habit of projecting our fears, many of us even tend to catastrophise.

**Why is that?**

# Common thinking trap examples

## Personalisation

Believing that things others do or say is a direct, personal reaction to you – when it's likely nothing to do with you at all!

### Example:

*"My boss seems irritated and distant today... I must have done something to make them angry with me."*

(When, in reality they may just be jetlagged and catching up from that week-long business trip!)

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## Catastrophising

Exaggerating how badly something will turn out and how you'll be unable to cope with it.

### Example:

*"My doctor asked me to call the office. There must be something wrong with my test results. I just won't be able to handle it if I'm seriously ill."*

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## Mind-reading

When you believe that you know what others are thinking (even though this isn't possible!) and assume the worst.

### Example:

*"She hasn't met me for dinner in weeks even though I've asked 3 times. She probably thinks I'm annoying now and is avoiding me because of it."*

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## Filtering

Only paying attention to the negative aspects of a situation while ignoring all the positives. This stops you from drawing a more balanced conclusion.

### Example:

*"My boss looked so bored... my presentation must have been awful!"*

(Even though other colleagues looked engaged and gave feedback on how useful they found it)



“The brains of humans and other animals contain a mechanism that is designed to **give priority to bad news**.

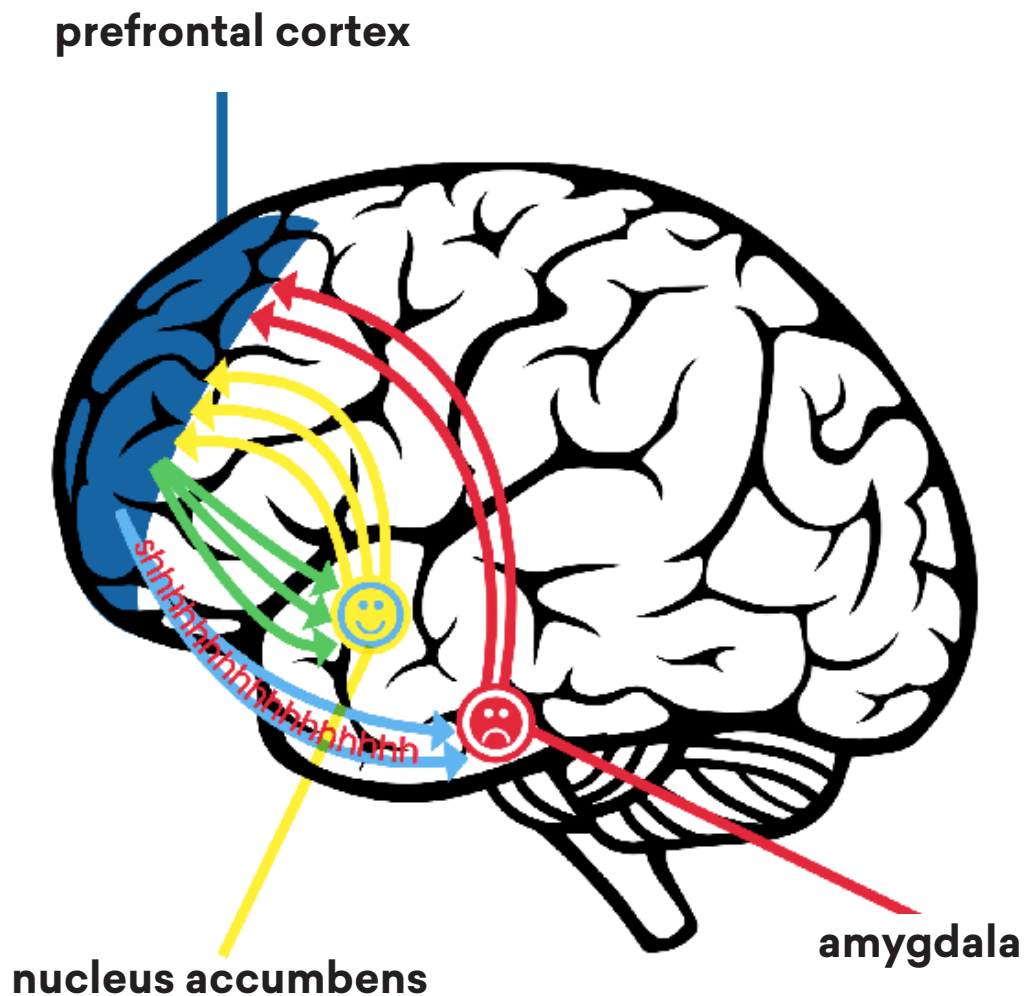
By shaving a few hundredths of a second from the time needed to detect a predator, this circuit improves the animal’s odds of living long enough to reproduce.”

**Psychologist Daniel Kahneman**  
**“Thinking, Fast and Slow”**

# What is neuroplasticity?

The concept of neuroplasticity has replaced the formerly-held position that the brain did not change after childhood, and was hard-wired and fixed by the time we were adults.

Neurobiologist Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin, Cognitive & Emotional Brain.  
Elaine Fox, Cognitive Psychologist & Author of Rainy Brain Sunny Brain



# What is neuroplasticity?

Only in the last decade has research told us that this is simply not true. The brain can and does change throughout our lives.

## Neuroplasticity means that the brain can be reshaped and moulded.

In “Rainy Brain, Sunny Brain” Elaine Fox says “The brain circuits underlying our [pessimistic] brain and our [optimistic] brain are among the most plastic in the human brain.”

No one was born smart, we all start at zero, we can’t walk, talk, or do math. There was a time when Einstein couldn’t count to 10 and even Shakespeare couldn’t read.

## But we are all built to learn.

### The brain’s ability to change

Neurobiologist Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin, an expert on the emotional brain, calls it “neurally inspired behavioral therapy.” He is talking about a kind of therapy that identifies the brain activity underlying an emotional trait you wish to change, such as a tendency to dwell in anger, and then targets this brain activity with mental exercises designed to alter it. The result is a healthier “emotional style,” as Davidson calls it.

Fortunately, the brain’s emotional circuits are actually connected to its thinking circuits, which are much more accessible to our conscious volition. That has been one of Davidson’s most important discoveries: the “cognitive brain” is also the “emotional brain.”

### How a resilient brain works

Davidson discovered that people who are resilient— able to regain their emotional balance after a setback rather than wallowing in anxiety, anger, depression, or another negative emotion—have strong connections between the left prefrontal cortex (PFC) and the amygdala. The left PFC sends inhibitory signals to the amygdala, basically telling them to quiet down. As a result, the negative feelings generated by the amygdala peter out, and you’re not mired in unhappiness or resentment. In contrast, people with little emotional resilience (including those with depression, who may be shattered by every disappointment) have fewer or weaker signals between the PFC and the amygdala, due to either low activity in the PFC or poor connections between it and the amygdala.

# What is neuroplasticity?

## Learning to re-train your brain

Many self-help books tell you about positive thinking and happy thoughts.

## But a prescription for “delusionally positive” thinking can have negative consequences.

Research shows that trying to suppress thoughts only makes those thoughts more likely to recur. If I tell you “don’t think about the pink elephant!” What’s the first thing that pops into your mind?

Our mindsets are habitual ways of thinking, so to change them means you first have to identify the habitual thinking that is not serving you then replace it with a more useful way of thinking.

This is how you change your mindset.

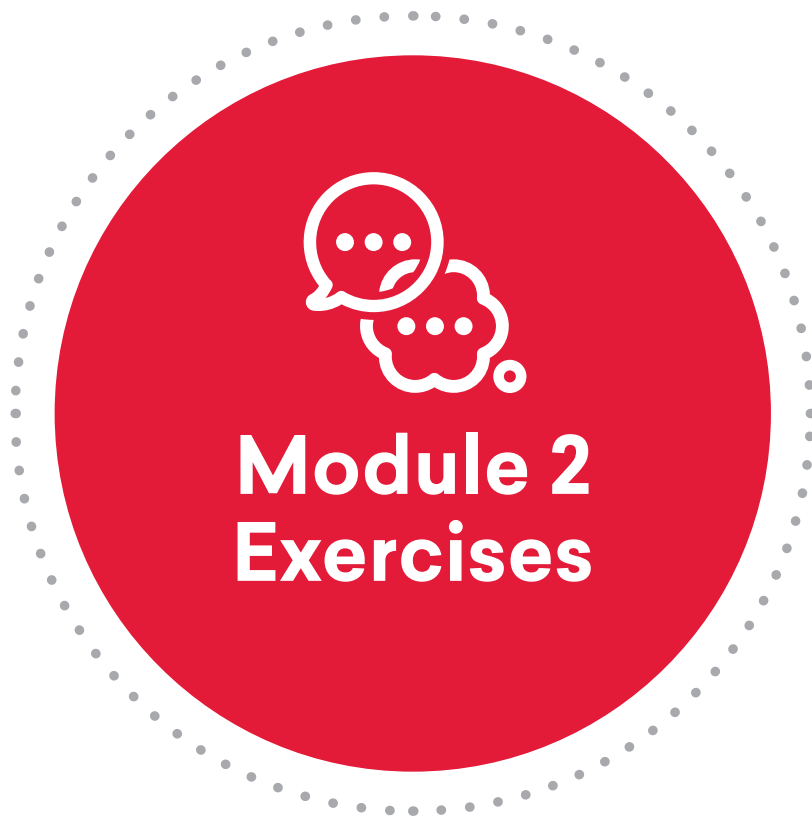
*REFERENCE Wenzlaff, R. M., & Wegner, D. M. (2000).  
Thought suppression. Annual Review of Psychology, 51(1), 59–91*

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“You can’t grow muscle without challenging it with greater weight. You can’t build emotional resilience without forging through hardship and loss. You can’t build a better mind without challenging your own beliefs and assumptions”

**Mark Manson**





## Exercise 1

# Learning from thinking traps



We all have a tendency to fall into a number of thinking traps – it's normal, we're all people with very human emotions that we've been wired to feel!

But it's how you respond to the situation and what meaning you give to it (*"It's because they don't like me," "It must be because they lost their phone,"* etc.) that's all determined by **your mindset, your past experiences, your beliefs, and your values.**

Try answering the questions below to see what you can change for the future.

**Reviewing the situation:** Think of a recent issue that you could have handled better and write down what happened as objectively as possible

# Learning from thinking traps

**Identifying the emotions:** Really think about the emotions you felt. “Angry” is an emotion, but challenge yourself to question what else might be behind that anger – did you feel disrespected? Misunderstood? Etc

**The impact on behaviour:** How did you react because of those emotions (yelled and walked out of the room, said something you didn’t mean, etc).

# Learning from thinking traps

**Thinking about change:** Look back at your notes, what could you have done differently in the moment or how could you have managed yourself for a different or even better outcome?

# The Committee

We speak to ourselves throughout the day, sometimes we don't even hear the words or sentences, we just get the feeling that comes with it (scorn, disappointment, etc).

Whilst the voice may be ours, it's often coming from a place that we don't always recognise and we can be really tough on ourselves. Indeed, there's little chance we would say to others what we say to ourselves as it's likely to lose us friends!

**It's important to tune into these voices and even identify the different ways we talk to ourselves.**

**“The Committee”** is a great exercise for doing just this.

The objective is to hear the different ways we talk to ourselves and then name them. By creating these “characters,” we disassociate ourselves from the voices (“It's not me, it's Sarcastic Susie”) thus taking some of their power away.

Let's give it a try!

# The Committee

## Part 1

- Think of the different situations when you tend to say something to yourself (“You’re not good enough,” “I can’t believe you just said that!,” etc).
- For each voice, decide if they’re male or female (they might all be male, all female or a mixture of both).
- Next, think of the tone or the emotion that comes from each voice. Maybe you get angry with yourself, perhaps you speak to yourself sarcastically or in a ridiculing tone.
- For each voice think of a character’s name which works with the description of the tone / emotion (e.g. Sarcastic Suzy, Ridiculing Richard). Write their names below.
- Draw a face to represent the person – don’t fall into the trap of telling yourself stories about whether you can or can’t draw. It’s not important, the exercise is what is important.
- Fill in the speech bubbles with what each character would typically say to you.

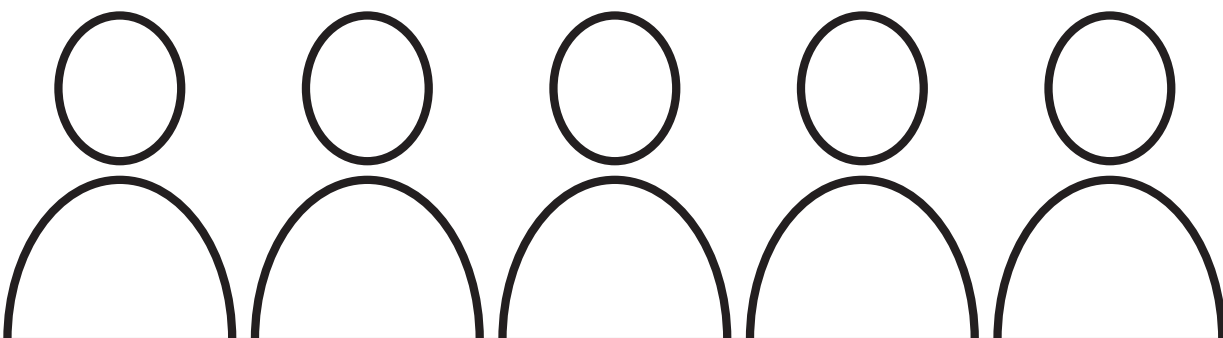
“

“

“

“

“



# The Committee

## Part 2

Once you've brought all your different characters to life go back around the table and write the reason(s) why they are the way they are under each character.

See the example below for inspiration.

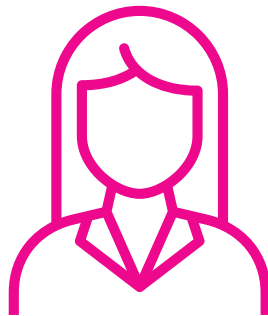
**"WHY DID YOU  
SAY THAT?!?!"**



**Angry  
Anthony**

Angry Anthony gets angry fast because his expectations are very high. He doesn't mean to shout, he just wants me to get things right and is nervous about not doing his best.

**"Oh yea, that  
was real smart."**



**Sarcastic  
Susie**

Sarcastic Susie is actually quite shy and doesn't want me to look foolish. She thinks she's being protective, but it doesn't always help.

**"Hahaha, wow you re-  
ally embarrassed your-  
self, didn't you?"**



**Ridiculing  
Richard**

Ridiculing Richard is very insecure and because of this he lashes out. Deep down he just wants us to have connection and love.

**"That's a  
dumb idea"**



**Condescending  
Cathy**

Condescending Cathy never thinks she's good enough, and doesn't want us to look stupid. She masks this insecurity through her 'put downs'. She is good enough, she just doesn't know it.

### Tip

Assume that the voices are coming from the best of intentions, even if their message, tone, or delivery is harsh.

## The Committee

...

Now moving forward, when you speak to yourself in a negative way, try and pinpoint who in your Committee is talking.

Name them and give an explanation for why they are talking to you the way they are...

*“Oh that’s just Angry Anthony, he didn’t get much sleep last night so he’s very sensitive and quick to fly off the handle today. He just needs a good night’s rest.”*

*“That’s Judgemental Julie, she wants the very best for me but no one can meet her ridiculously high standards.”*

By doing this you are dissociating (or distancing) yourself from the voice. It makes it much easier to ignore the voice or at least limit its power.

**This means the voice will have less control over you and you can liberate yourself from its desire to self-sabotage!**

...



### Exercise 3

# Getting in touch with your inner voice



First, locate your inner voice. This could be tricky because it may not be a voice at all, you may see words in your head, you may get a sensation of what's going on, a feeling. Either way get in touch with it and answer the questions below:

**1 Where does it live?** *(in your head, on your shoulder, etc)*

**2 Give it a name.** *(Gremlin, Monkey, "It," etc)*

**3 What tone of voice does it use when it's talking to you?**

**4 What percentage of negative thoughts does it give you?**

**5 What does it do? Encourage you, support or inspire you? Or does it tell you things are too hard? Does it remind you of all the things you can't do?**

**6 What excuses do you feed yourself?** *("I would if I could...")*

## Getting in touch with your inner voice

...

Have you ever checked in with yourself like this before? Were you surprised by the things you heard?

**You should get used to tuning into your inner voice because then you can CATCH the negative thoughts and REFRAME them into positive affirmations.**

When you hear a limiting belief your immediate reaction should be STOP – and replace it with the positive.

...



## Module 3

# Meaning

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<b>From visual illusions to cognitive illusions</b>	<b>55</b>
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.....

Nothing has inherent meaning,  
only the meaning we decide to give  
to it. The meaning we add to events  
and situations is influenced by how we  
perceive situations and also by  
our thinking patterns.

.....

# What to expect

.....

You will learn how,  
when and why we add  
**different meanings to  
different situations**

You will get to see  
what the **external and  
internal influences** are  
working on you

.....

You will be able to  
adjust for influences,  
making your **actions  
and decisions in  
life much more  
straightforward**

You will realise  
that **you have absolute  
control**. The meaning  
you give to things is  
up to you

.....

# What is Meaning?

The meaning we give to a situation, object or event is influenced by 3 elements:

## **Content**

What is the object, situation etc. telling me, what sensory information is it providing?

## **Context**

What other information is surrounding the situation, object, event?

## **Experience**

When have I seen or experienced this before?  
What can I learn from those memories?

...

Let's first look at these through the lens of vision so we can see these influences more clearly.

We have specific areas in the brain dedicated to vision. We can interpret billions of bits of data.

But... we still get it wrong.

**So what else are we getting wrong?**

# From visual illusions to cognitive illusions

.....

“What if the way we perceive a problem is already part of the problem?”

Slavoi Zizek

.....

Whether we’re aware of it or not, all people keep a running account of what’s happening to them, what it means, and what they should do about it.

In other words, our minds are constantly monitoring, interpreting, and deciding. That is simply how we stay on track.

## But sometimes the interpretation process goes awry.

Some people put more extreme interpretations on things that happen—and then react with exaggerated feelings of anxiety, depression, or anger!

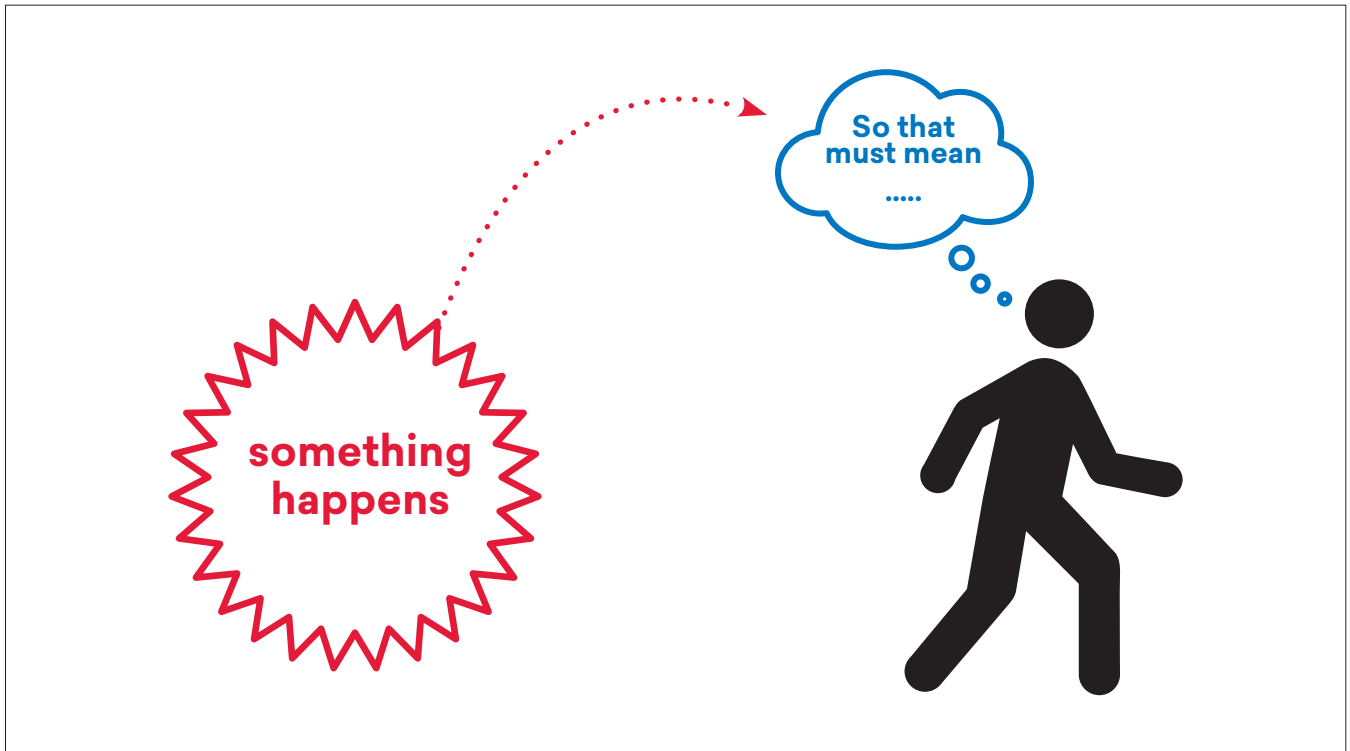
.....

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”

William Shakespeare, ‘Hamlet’

.....

# From visual illusions to cognitive illusions



What happens to us and what we think that means are **two different things**.  
It's the story we tell ourselves that creates the end result.

Examples:

*"My boss looked angry when I asked for a day's holiday,  
it's **because he doesn't want me to go.**"*

*"My friend didn't call back, it's **because they're mad at me.**"*

*"Someone yawned during my talk, it's **because I'm bad at speaking.**"*

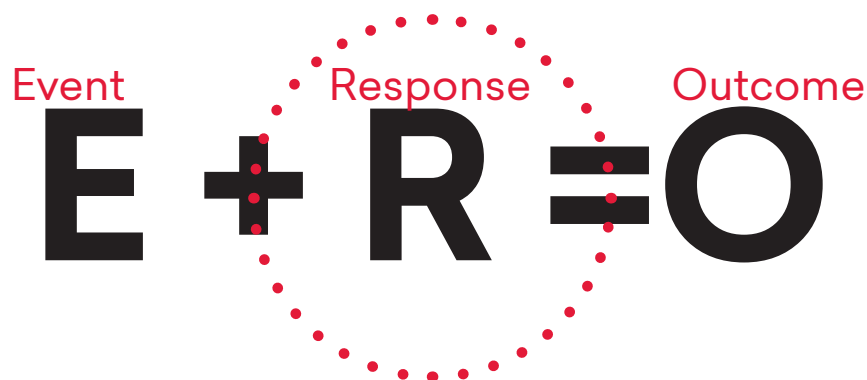
*"My dad asked about my weekend – it's **because he thinks I'm always partying and not working hard enough.**"*



.....

Your ability to respond  
is based on the meaning we give to things.

**You have a CHOICE.**



.....

“If you always do what you’ve always done,  
you’ll always get what you’ve always got.”

**Jack Canfield, The Success Principles**

.....

# The stories we tell ourselves

These 'stories' we tell ourselves tend to progress from facts to 'faction' (a bit of fact + a bit of fiction), the more we elaborate and the further from the event we move, the more fiction comes into play.

We build things up and up and with the help of other people's stories we soon move to fantasy but all the while we think we are still in 'fact.'



# Applying perceptual illusions to life

Just as **Content**, **Context** and **Experience** all impact our visual perception they also impact the **meaning** we give to things.

What else makes us see things in different ways from each other?

Well, we each give different meanings to events depending on **who we are**, **what we think**, **how we feel** and **how we act**.

These are also the components which make up our **ATTITUDE**.

These all act as filters on our perception.

## **Emotional**

Moods, emotions

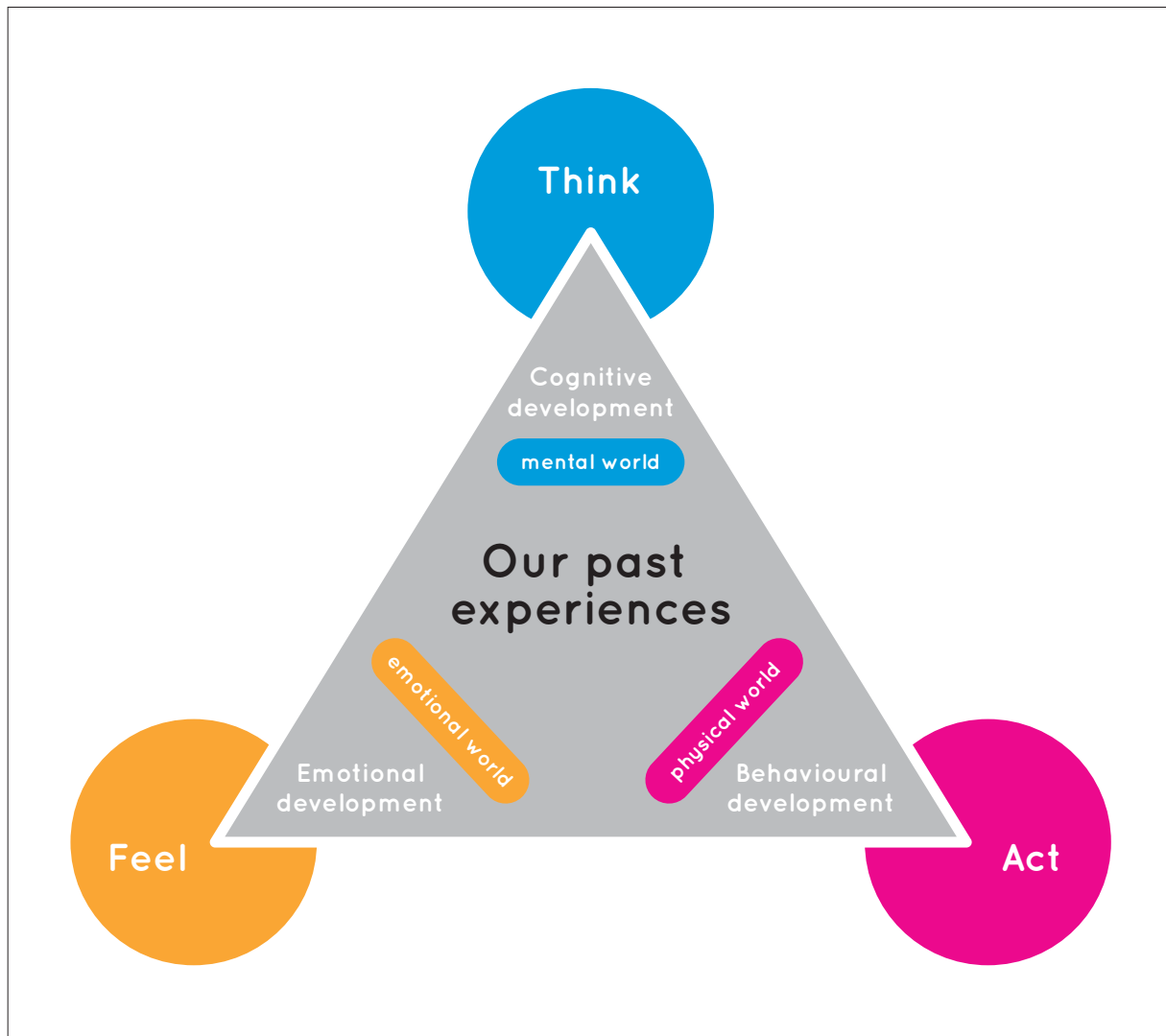
## **Physical**

Physiology (tired, hungry etc.), behaviour

## **Mental**

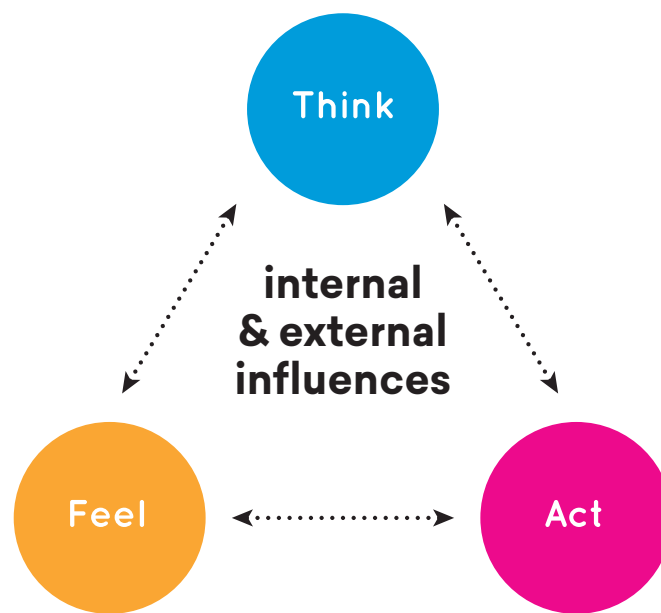
Memories, experiences, thoughts, beliefs

# The Attitude Model



When thinking about behaviour it's important to not consider it in isolation. Too often we think that the brain 'stuff', our heart 'stuff' and our physical 'stuff' are all separate. The reality is that everything is connected. If we ever want to change anything we need to affect it at all levels: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural.

# The Mind-Body Connection



We have a tendency to disconnect our brains, from our feelings (usually associated with our hearts) and our actions. But as we see in the Attitude Model, also known as the Mind-Body connection, everything is connected whether we acknowledge it or not:

## **Our thoughts impact our feelings**

If we are in a self-conscious or negative loop it will influence our emotions to be the same

- Eg. Thinking “‘I’m not ready” can make us feel anxious, nervous, insecure

## **Our feelings impact our thoughts**

If we feel energised and happy it changes the quality of our thinking to also skew to the positive

- Eg. We display more gratitude and are more likely to interrupt ambiguous scenarios as ‘giving people the benefit of the doubt’ vs thinking the worst

## **Both our feelings & our emotions impact our behaviour**

We make different decisions based on what we think and feel (whether we are conscious of it or not) which leads to different actions

The Mind-Body connection is influenced by:

### **The Present**

- Internal factors: Physiology - what is happening in our body (relaxed, centred, tired, hungry all underpinned by hormones such as adrenaline , DHEA etc.)
- External factors: Society, economy, weather, politics

### **The Past**

- Our experiences
- Our beliefs (shaped by our experiences)

Knowing what is influencing you and how you can leverage the different aspects of the mind-body connection will accelerate our ability to get into the right mindset at the right moment.

.....

“Our mood/emotions (anger, fear, etc.) impact our behaviour as do our drive states e.g. hunger, thirst, sexual desire. If we are in a ‘hot state’ (emotionally charged or very hungry, for example) this will impact our decisions.”

George Lowenstein,  
“Emotions in economic theory and economic behaviour”

.....

**Research shows that individuals are tuned to perceive things that are similar to their current mood.**

.....

“Mood is almost an obvious one, I mean we know largely when we are in a bad mood that we are going to see things more negatively. But, we often tend to ignore (some-times deliberately) this obvious effect and its impact.”

*Source: Niedenthal, P. M., & Setterlund, M. B. (1994). Emotion Congruence in perception Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 20, 401-41*

.....



“A positive mood makes people more receptive to interpreting new information in a positive way.”

Schwarz, 2000

.....

“Greater reliance on intuition and a reduction in both critical thought and focus on detail.”

Isen and Means, 1983

# Mood influences decision making

This is why we should pay attention to the things happening within us and around us. We need to be aware of:

Our physiological state, are we hungry, tired, sick etc. as this will make our thinking and our mood more irritable and potentially negative.

We need to know how we are feeling, are we insecure, nervous, worried. Again all of this will impact how we are interpreting the world around us.

**What is the state of our cognitive processes?**

**Have we been working or thinking too hard, does our brain hurt?**

**Have we been exerting a lot of will power and depleting our resources?**

All of these things will drain us a little and impact how we are thinking, feeling and behaving.



# Mood influences decision making



Context effects can be nullified if we are made consciously aware of the outside stimulus or past history that may **influence our decision**.

Norbert Schwarz and Gerald Clore Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association (1981) ALSO Tourangeau, Roger; Rasinski, Kenneth A. (1 January 1988). "Cognitive processes underlying context effects in attitude measurement." Psychological Bulletin.

---

## **Perception underpins everything we think, know, and believe.**

### **Everything begins with perception.**

But we are only ever responding based on  
how we've responded before.

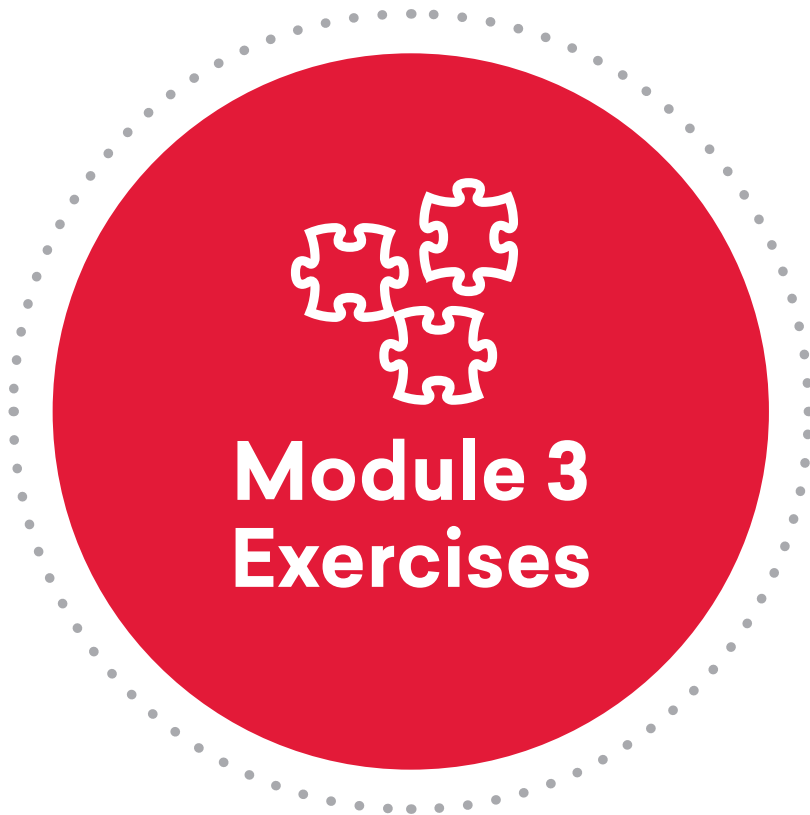
All new perceptions begin with a question.

But questions create uncertainty.  
Evolutionarily speaking uncertainty is dangerous  
(it may make us hesitate and be killed by a predator)  
so we are wired to avoid it.

...

**When we are courageous to question  
what we think to be true, we are already  
stepping into the potential for growth.**

---



Before reacting to a situation, take 5 minutes to ask yourself the following questions:

- 1 What else is going on here?**
- 2 Have I experienced a similar situation in the past?**  
Did I have a negative reaction? Is that what's happening now?
- 3 How was I feeling before this event/situation? Angry, happy, average?**  
Could this be impacting my interpretation of the situation now?
- 4 What's my physiology like? Am I tired, hungry, sick or stressed?**  
Is this also impacting my perception?

If you answered YES to any of questions in black then your perception is being influenced by the meaning **you** have overlaid onto what you see.

You need to take space & time before reacting or be prepared to deal with the consequences...

**To move forward, you have 3 options:**

1. Give the other person / situation the benefit of the doubt.  
Assume they come with the best intentions and react according to these positive intentions (not your negative interpretation).
2. Remove yourself from the situation and respond when you are able to say NO to all of the questions.
3. Use the **Perceptual Positions** technique on the following page and then act.

# Perceptual Positions

This is a simple yet incredibly powerful technique for **changing your perception or viewpoint** about an experience in order to gather more information.

You can use Perceptual Positions to **see the point of view of other people** and to disassociate yourself from emotions that may ‘cloud’ your perception of a situation.

For example, there may be relationships you want to improve or a difficult boss at work. You could use this exercise by placing them in Position 2.

This exercise is something you can do alone, however it is usually more effective if you work with someone else to ask you the questions.

**Be sure to watch the demo videos before you start!**

# Perceptual Positions

## Setting up

You don't have to use chairs as in the demo. Feel free to cut out the squares below to place on the ground, use post-its, or whatever works best for you and is convenient in the moment.

There are 3 key positions (or perspectives) to move through:



### Position 1

The situation through your eyes



### Position 2

The situation through the other person's eyes



### Position 3

The entire picture from a wise, neutral party's eyes. Think Buddha, Yoda, Gandalf – whoever works for you!



**Optional** – Use this position as a neutral space to pause and gather learning before you switch to a new position.

# Perceptual Positions

**1****Position 1****Through your eyes**

Imagine standing in front of the person you're having the conflict with. Be yourself and tell them exactly how you feel, what you're thinking, what you think the problem is, etc.

Have your partner ask you the following questions (or write down your answers if working alone):

**What is going on from your perspective?**

**What do you want from the communication?**

# Perceptual Positions

**1**

When you have said absolutely everything you want to say move to the **Learning Position** and talk about any new insights about the situation with your partner (if you are working alone write them down).

What have you learned so far?

What are you feeling? Anything else?



# Perceptual Positions

## 2

### Position 2 Through other's eyes

Now imagine you are the other person. Try to really get into 'character' by sitting or stand how they would, hold your posture like theirs), use the tone of voice they use. Imagine you're really them - but not in a mocking or disrespectful way!

This pretend version of that person has just heard everything you said to them so now is their chance to respond. Just say whatever comes. REMEMBER to speak in the first person, as if you were them.

Have your partner ask you the following questions (or write down your answers if working alone):

What is going on from your perspective?

What do you want from the communication?

# Perceptual Positions

**2**

When you have said absolutely everything you want to say move to the **Learning Position** and talk about any new insights about the situation with your partner (if you are working alone write them down).

What have you learned so far?

What are you feeling? Anything else?

# Perceptual Positions

**3****Position 3****Through neutral eyes**

Now put yourself in a neutral position where you can 'see' the interaction that just went on between Positions 1 and 2. Say what you're thinking and feeling as you look at the scene having heard what was said by both parties.

Ex.

*"I noticed that Position 1 was getting frustrated because Position 2 kept walking away. But also, understandably, Position 2 didn't want to be shouted at."*

Have your partner ask you the following questions (or write down your answers if working alone):

**What is going on from your perspective?**

**What do you want from the communication?**

# Perceptual Positions

**3**

When you have said absolutely everything you want to say move to the **Learning Position** and talk about any new insights about the situation with your partner (if you are working alone write them down).

What have you learned so far?

What are you feeling? Anything else?

# Perceptual Positions

4

## Changing perspective

Finally, go back to Position 1 and see if and how you feel different about the situation and the details of what happened.

What changed about how you initially 'saw' the situation?

What will you do differently now as a result of what you've learned?



Module 4

# Stress & Performance

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<b>What happens in your brain when stressed?</b>	<b>82</b>
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.....

Our beliefs, thoughts, emotions  
and attitude dictate our focus.

The attention we give  
to different aspects of our life  
determines our experiences and  
subsequently our behaviour.

.....

# What to expect

.....

You will explore how **stress is directly impacted by the perceived level of control you have** (or don't have) over a situation

You will have a better understanding of **the effect of emotions** like stress on our ability to focus and what it does to the brain

.....

You will learn how to **regain control of your brain** when the amygdala gets hijacked.

You will learn how to get yourself in 'flow,' **the optimum state for effortless focus.**

.....

You will realise that **attention is a skill that you can develop** and exactly what exercises you can do to train it.

.....



# The nature of stress

Pressure and stress are unavoidable and we deal with a variety of things on a daily basis, in one way or another. However, the ability to understand the nature of stress and recognise our reaction to it when it's happening is what's needed to manage its impact on us both mentally and physically. If you're expending energy on irrelevant things or negative thought patterns, you're taxing your brain unnecessarily and wasting this precious resource.

In reality, the key is *not* to eliminate stress, but instead find the ways in which to manage it and its associated emotions in a healthy and productive way.

## Changing our relationship with stress

Allowing stress to take over can inflict direct damage on our career, relationships and well-being. But when taken as something to learn from, stress can be:

- A great motivator
- A source of strength
- A survival instinct that pushes us beyond our conceived limits

Stress is experienced internally, and as such changing your response to it is actually within your ability – if you know how.

**If you're expending energy on irrelevant things or negative thought patterns, you are taxing your brain unnecessarily and wasting this precious resource.**

# What happens in the brain when you're stressed?

Any time we have a sense of fear, insecurity, doubt, worry, or anxiety a pathway between our *amygdala* and our prefrontal cortex gets activated. The amygdala is part of the limbic system, often referred to as the place where the fight, flight, or freeze response occurs. It's designed to prioritise our survival in any and all situations, like our alarm system when we feel threatened in any way. It's designed to protect us, but sometimes it can be over-sensitive. The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain designed for reason and logic. It's the newest part of the brain which sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom.

So any time the amygdala is activated, it sends a signal to the prefrontal cortex saying *"Hey! We're in danger!"*. When the prefrontal cortex receives the amygdala's 'high-alert' message, its job is to assess the situation rationally (not emotionally like the amygdala) and then send a signal back through a neural pathway saying *"Calm down, it's all fine"* (see diagram on following page). This response allows us to not over-react unnecessarily but usually needs to be trained in many people.

As we mentioned in Module 2: Thinking, this neurological bias was designed to ensure our survival from predators. These days, the danger is less likely to be a real physical threat and more likely to be triggered by an email from our boss!

But because the amygdala is the oldest part of our brain, the neural pathways firing from it to the prefrontal cortex (sending panic signals!), are strong and well used. However, interestingly, neurobiologist Richard Davidson discovered that people who are emotionally resilient and have more of a positive mindset (meaning able to gain emotional balance after a setback rather than wallowing in anxiety, anger, depression, or other negative emotions) have strong neural pathways *from the prefrontal cortex* to the amygdala. So for these people, the negative feelings generated by the amygdala peter out, and they don't get mired in feelings like unhappiness or resentment.

In contrast, people with little emotional resilience have fewer or weaker signals from their prefrontal cortex to the amygdala, due to either low activity or poor connections.

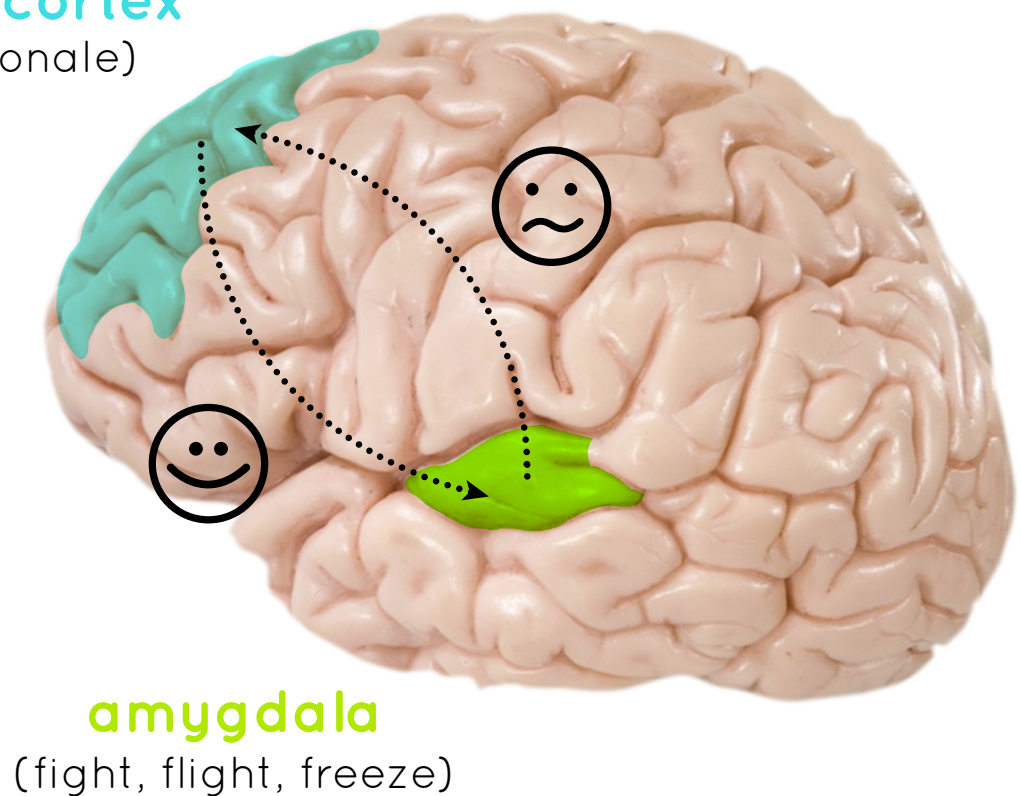
The good news is, we can exercise and strengthen our neural pathways through repeated practise. In the next pages, you'll find different exercises and some simple behaviour 'hacks' to strengthen this important pathway, helping train your brain on how to prepare for and positively respond to negative or challenging situations.

# What happens in the brain when you're stressed?

**“HEY PFC,  
WE’RE IN  
DANGER!!!”**

**prefrontal cortex**  
(logic & rationale)

**“Calm down,  
amygdala,  
it’s all fine.”**



Stress is not necessarily the result of the heavy workload, the demanding boss, or the “traffic jam” of unfinished projects. It occurs when the demands of a situation exceed your perceived ability to control them. The more you perceive you can control, the lower your stress levels, and vice versa.

It’s very important to know what you have influence and control over in your life to determine how and when to react to stress. When you control a situation, you influence the outcome. Every time you exercise control you

determine what happens in your brain, body, and the situation itself. In a confident and calm state, you work faster, solve problems more easily, and make fewer mistakes.

You can create immediate and dramatic shifts in your effectiveness and stress level by exerting control in small situations throughout the day. But before you can do that, you need to be able to determine what you can and can’t control along with what you can and can’t influence.

---

## Matrix of Influence & Control

Using the matrix on the next page, map out your current stressors to determine what you can only influence and what you have neither influence nor control over. Once you’ve filled out your matrix, read the notes below on how to start taking action over your stressors:

### Control + Influence

The things within your control and influence which are stressing you out you must take action on, whether that’s killing the task, changing the perimeters, delegating, etc.

If you need help in assessing your task list, use the exercise on page 24 that might help you organise this.

### No Control + Influence

The things you can’t control but have some influence over you must influence but then let go – you can’t control the outcome so it’s important to recognise that.

Remember, it’s our perception of control or rather lack of control over a situation that’s what stresses us out. However, if we have never had control in the first place, it’s important to acknowledge that we can’t dictate the outcome.

Once we’ve influenced as much as we can, we must let go and accept the outcome for what it is.

### No Control + No Influence

For the situations or events stressing us that are both out of your influence and control, we need to adopt a more ‘zen’ attitude and really LET GO of the anxiety.

Meditation and mindfulness help create space between stressors and our reaction to them. But allowing something we have neither influence nor control over affect our emotions, our stress levels and overall well-being is irrational – we must practice and perfect the art of ‘letting go’.

# Matrix of Control & Influence



# Internal distractions and how to manage them

Emotions are like ‘attention magnets’, so managing your emotions is vital to focusing effectively.

Daniel Goleman, author of *“Emotional Intelligence and Focus”* states that “emotions make us pay attention right now — “this is urgent” - and gives us an immediate action plan without having to think twice.”

Goleman coined the term **amygdala hijack** to refer to an “immediate and overwhelming emotional reaction, disproportionate to the stimulus. Because it triggers a deeper emotional threat.”

The *amygdala*, when on high alert, **shuts off the prefrontal cortex which is responsible for logical thinking, conscious thought and sensory perception**. So your logic is overridden by emotion.

**Why it happens?** The amygdala hijack is designed to save our lives.

Work by McEwen, Arnsten and other laboratories in recent years suggests that chronic stress tends to increase the influence of more instinctive, limbic networks involved in fear and desire at the expense of more highly evolved, prefrontal-based networks whose job it is to moderate and manage behaviour according to long-range goals (not short term goals).

In the short run it serves you well to be more wary and aggressive in a dangerous situation but such situations are RARE these days. When it doesn’t reverse itself after the danger has passed, then you’ve got problems.

In today’s modern world of heavy congestion and urgent deadlines, this is not uncommon.

**Your sustained focus relies on maintaining a balance of emotions.**

.....

**“The human brain hasn’t had a hardware upgrade in about 100,000 years”**

Daniel Goleman

.....

# Handling the amygdala hijack

The Amygdala Hijack is an immediate, overwhelming emotional response with a later realization that the response was inappropriately strong given the trigger. When this happens, the brain shuts down the neo-cortex, causing a strong emotional response that precedes more rational thought.

To help manage your focus in these moments, there are 4 different techniques you can try to get back into control:

## Meditate

A lot of research has been done into the effectiveness of mindfulness, not just in the moment, but its long-term effects.

### Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

They measured people's brains using an MRI before and after the course. They found that after the 8 weeks, the grey matter around the amygdala had reduced, it had changed structurally as a result of the mindfulness training. The mindfulness practice had created new neural pathways in the brain.

In another study they found that 20 minutes of mindfulness a day resulted in a significant difference on attention tests in as little as 4 days.



---

## Counting from 1 to 10

"If you're angry, count to ten in your mind before you say anything. If you are very angry, count to one hundred."

### Thomas Jefferson

It sounds simple, but Jefferson was right. When you count, you are switching 'on' the prefrontal cortex (the part of your brain that deals with logical thinking) which has just been shut off by the amygdala hijacking. Forcing yourself to count 'overrides' the amygdala which is has gotten you in the state of 'fight, flight, or freeze.'

So if you start to count while you feel that intense emotion, you effectively get some space from it.



# Handling the amygdala hijack

## Counting & Breathing

The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for fight or flight. Then there's the parasympathetic nervous system which is responsible for rest and digest.

When you take those deep mindful breaths you are activating the parasympathetic nervous system and the net result is that we feel calmer and more focused.

Combine intentional counting with mindful breathing and you have a surprisingly powerful tool to combat hijack and regain control.

Close your eyes and focus on the breath and if you begin to think about something else, just gently bring your focus back to the breath. Don't judge yourself if your mind begins to wander, just return your attention to the breath.

Every time you bring the wandering mind back to this state you're working out the muscle of concentration.



.....

## Silent Scream

The quickest way to get rid of adrenaline going through your body and deal with the physical effects of the amygdala hijack is to tackle it with physiology.

The Silent Scream is simple and effective.

Go somewhere ideally private (so people don't think you're crazy). Clench all of your muscles, legs, arms, face everything and scream silently. You can of course scream properly as long as you know you aren't going to alarm anyone!

Do this until all your nerves have gone.

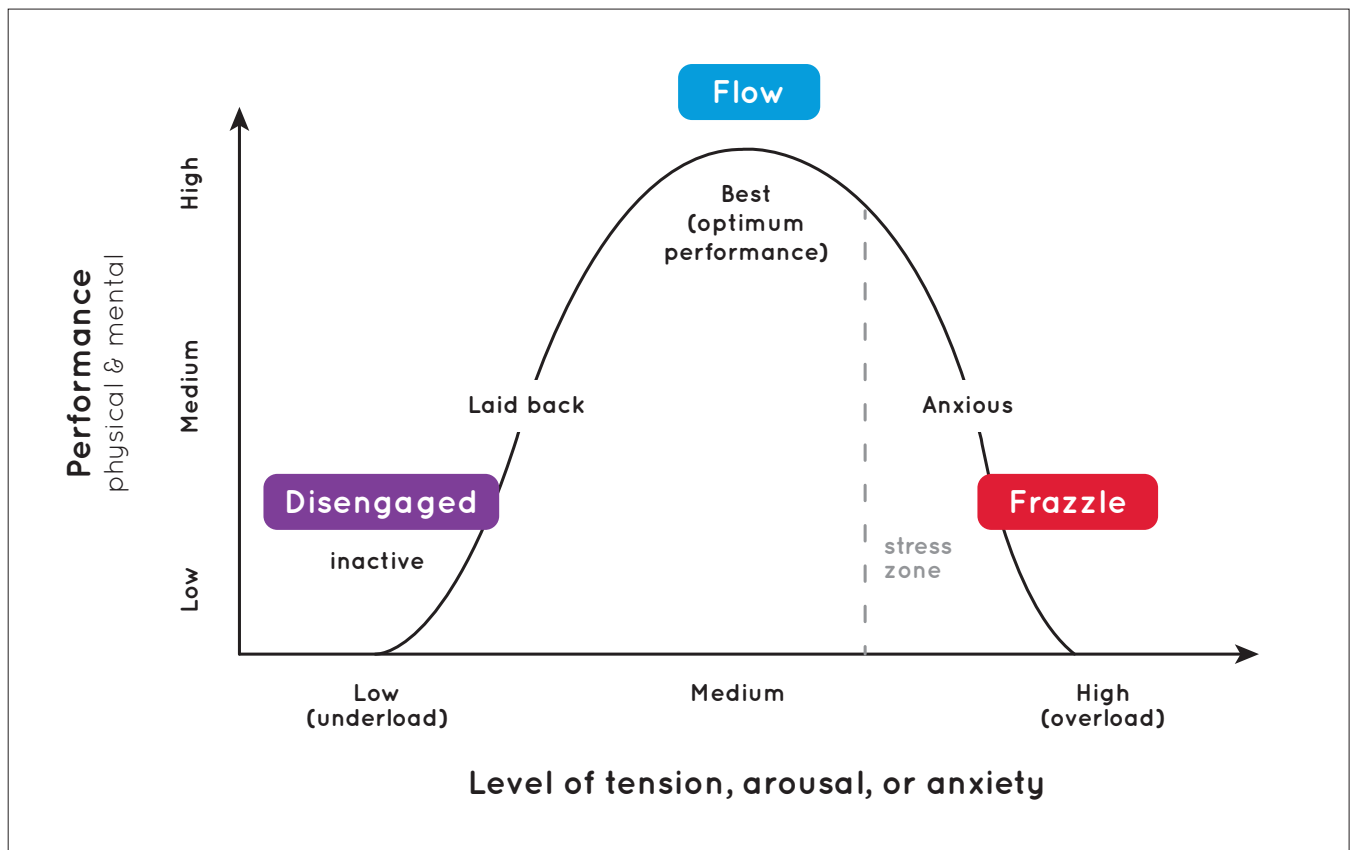




# Yerkes-Dodson Law

The relationship between stress and performance has been known for about a century in psychology. It's called the **Yerkes-Dodson Law**.

This is a different way of thinking about how the brain operates to help or hinder our performance, whether at work, in learning, in a sport, or any domain of ability.



The three main states are Disengaged, Flow, and Frazzle. Each of these has powerful impacts on a person's ability to perform at their best: **disengagement and frazzle torpedo our efforts, while flow lets them soar.**

(Daniel Goleman)

## Disengaged

When people are bored you see randomly scattered neural activation, rather than a sharp delineation of activity in the areas relevant to the task.

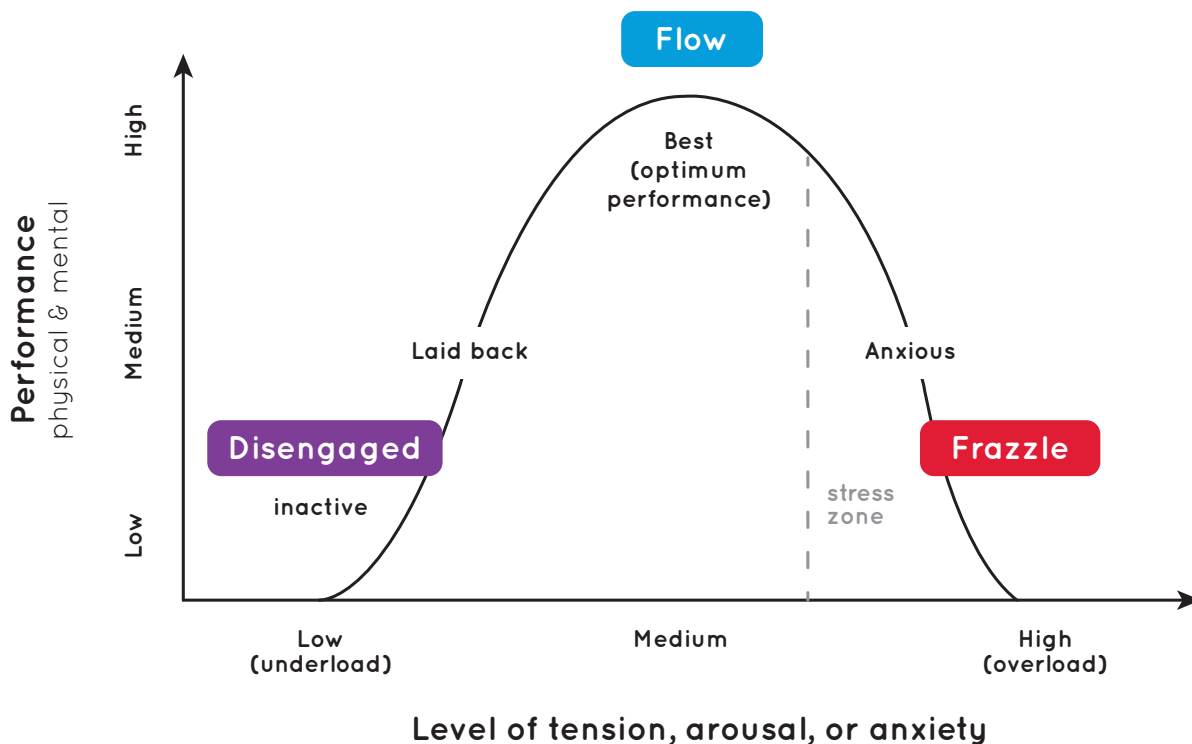
## Flow

While people are in flow, only those brain areas relevant to the activity at hand are activated.

## Frazzle

When people are stressed you find lots of activity in the emotional circuitry which is irrelevant to the task at hand, and which suggests a state of anxious distractedness.

# Yerkes-Dodson Law: Disengaged



## What happens when we're 'disengaged'?

Many workplaces around the world have varying percentages of people stuck in disengagement: bored, uninspired and disinterested.

“The good news is that the scientists who’ve been studying motivation have given us a new approach. It’s built much more around intrinsic motivation. Around the desire to do things because they matter, because we like it.”

It’s based on finding a personal purpose or goal within the work that we do. Answering the questions:

- *What can I uniquely bring to this project which will improve it in some way?*
- *What can I focus on which will not only get the business/project results but will be personally fulfilling and rewarding for me also?*

Much research has now been conducted on the role of personal purpose and its impact on productivity and wellbeing.

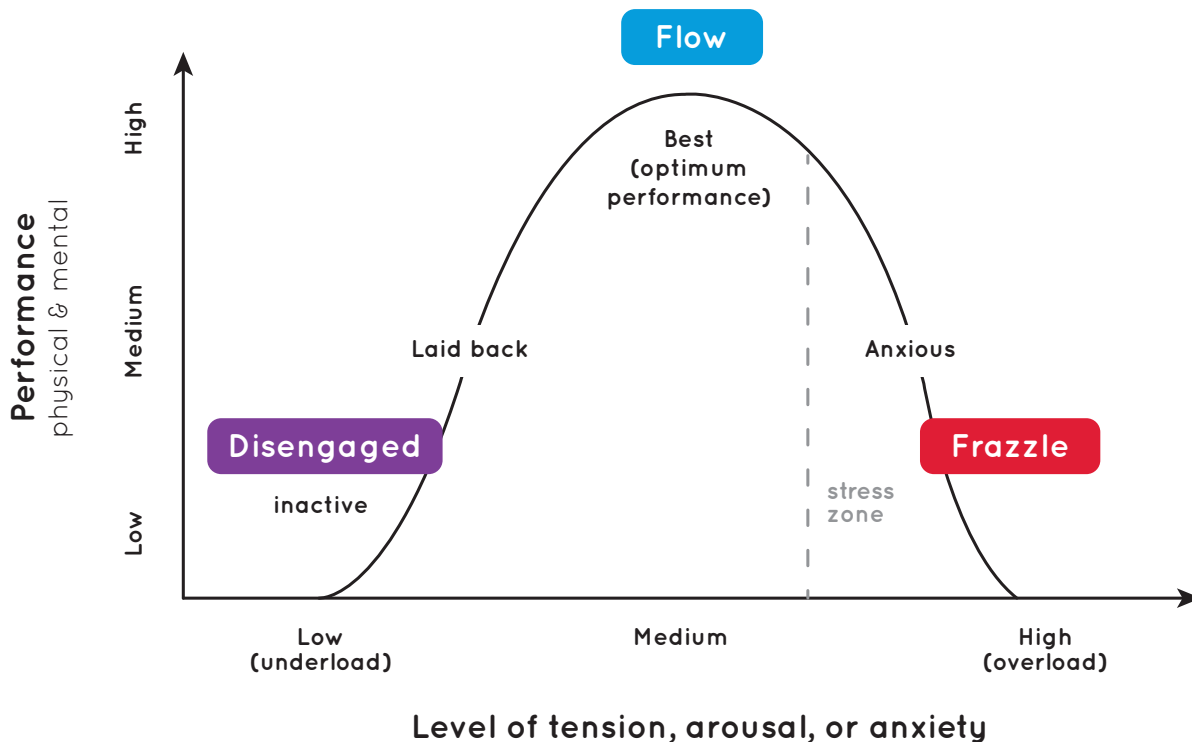
- Business experts make the case that purpose is a key to exceptional performance
- Psychologists describe it as the pathway to greater well-being
- Doctors have even found that people with purpose in their lives are less prone to disease

\*Source: May 2014 Harvard Business Review

Having a purpose within a project matters, having goals we are motivated behind matters.

A real life example of this has been tested within the ‘Results Only Work Environment’ (the ROWE), created by two American consultants, have been put into place at a dozen companies around North America. In a ROWE people don’t have schedules. They show up when they want. They just have to get their work done. How they do it, when they do it, where they do it, is totally up to them.

# Yerkes-Dodson Law: Frazzle



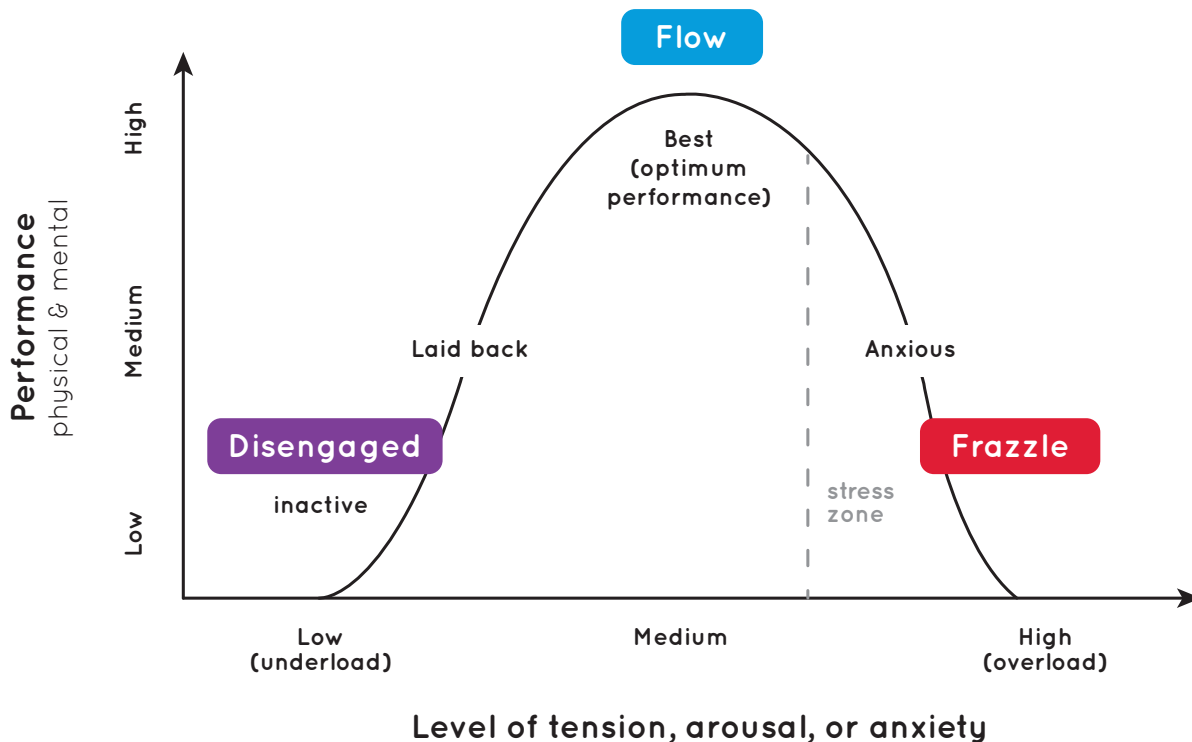
## What happens during 'frazzle'?

The neurobiology of frazzle reflects the body's default plan for emergency, the Amygdala Hijack.

When demands become too great for us to handle, when the pressure overwhelms us, when we have too much to do with too little time or support our brain secretes too many stress hormones which interfere with our ability to focus.

We shut down, we can no longer work well, learn, innovate, listen or plan effectively.

# Yerkes-Dodson Law: Flow



## What happens when we're in 'flow'

Where we want to be on the Yerkes-Dodson arc is the zone of optimal performance, known as **"flow."**

(Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, University of Chicago)

Flow represents a peak of self-regulation, the maximal harnessing of emotions in the service of performance or learning.

In flow we channel positive emotions in an energised pursuit of the task at hand. Our focus is undistracted, and we feel a spontaneous joy.

The chief characteristics of flow include unbreakable concentration; a nimble flexibility

in responding to changing challenges; executing at the top of your skill level; and taking pleasure in what you're doing — joy.

What makes flow a universal experience of happiness?

Full, sustained attention just feels more gratifying than fragmented attention.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes Flow as the state in which people are so immersed in what you're doing that your brain simply can't focus on anything else.

.....

“Mind-wandering is an excellent predictor of people’s happiness.

People spend 46.9 % of their waking hours thinking about something other than what they’re doing, and this mind-wandering typically makes them unhappy.”

“Many philosophical and religious traditions teach that happiness is to be found by living in the moment, and practitioners are trained to resist mind wandering and to ‘be here now,’”

“These traditions suggest that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind.”

Psychologists Matthew A. Killingsworth & Daniel T. Gilbert,  
Harvard University

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# External distractions and how to manage them

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## “Distraction is the new normal”

Daniel Goleman

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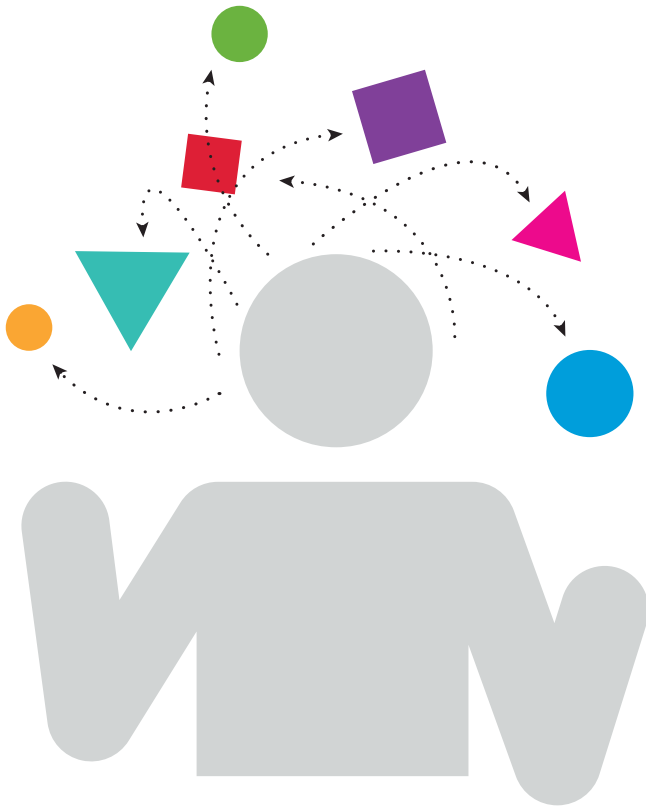
We live in an environment that is incredibly demanding of our attention. Our brain does its best to filter out what is irrelevant or unimportant. But depending on your emotional state, it can get it wrong.

Studies have shown that every time you get distracted it can take 10-15 minutes to get back on track. It's much more EFFICIENT to stay ON track in the first place.

It seems that attention is a skill we can develop, underpinned by how we respond to the multiple external distractions & our will power.



# The myth of multi-tasking



Focusing would be slightly easier if the modern world hadn't developed (and embraced) the habit of multi-tasking.

**When you are doing sequential tasks rapidly, you lose efficiency, you don't gain. It's not a skill and it's certainly not worth bragging about!**

When you consider that our brains are designed to respond to novelty it's not surprising we can get distracted.

It takes energy and will power to stay focused.

That's why many people respond well to a real deadline. **It actually helps to focus their attention.**

# The 3 costs of multi-tasking

.....

**“Heavy media multitaskers are more susceptible to interference from irrelevant environmental stimuli.”**

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

.....

**1**

## **Switching Costs**

Both time and mental resource

**2**

## **Resource Conflict**

Texting while driving is an iconic case of resource conflict. Both tasks compete over visual attention. They are impossible to do simultaneously. One of them you are doing POORLY – are you willing to chance your life on which one?

**3**

## **Will Power Fatigue**

Neuroscience shows that the more decisions we make (“should I work on this or that?”), the more our brain becomes fatigued. We use more glucose and deplete our will power too.



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# Stress Management Toolkit

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This 'toolkit' is intended for your reference to help better manage stress in your work and personal life. Over the next few pages you'll find simple exercises and tips for the following:

## In the moment



Dealing with pressure & stress in the moment, returning you to a calm and confident state

## At work



Helping you better organise, plan, and manage work & workload pressures

## At home



Reducing the likelihood of unnecessary stress in your personal life

---

# Tracking your stress response

One of the most important things to learn is how to recognise when you start feeling stressed. What does your body feel like? Where does the tension start? How do you behave when you're stressed? When you can recognise those, you can head off the ticking stress/anxiety bomb and not allow it to get the better of you.

Increasing your awareness to what happens to you internally when you're stressed, enables you to head

off the symptoms *before* you spiral into a typical stress response. When you're aware of it then you can do something about it.

So think of the last stressful situation you were in and answer the questions below. This will help you start recognising your typical stress responses so you can tune you into them and have a better chance of controlling your reaction.

**Briefly describe what happened**

**What sensations did you experience in your body? Where?**

**What thoughts did you have?**

**What did you do and has this happened before?**

**What can you do differently next time?**

# Stress Toolkit: In the moment

When you're feeling overwhelmed and need a mental break to reboot or refresh your brain or if you're feeling anxious, nervous or stressed about something or someone, consider these quick easy methods to get yourself back on track.



## In the moment

- **If you're in conflict with someone**, first, don't judge the other person because you don't know what else might be contributing to the tension outside of the situation. Next, take a deep breath and demonstrate openness by helping them verbalise their needs and encouraging them to share. You can ask questions like:

*"Where is your uncertainty coming from?"*

*"What can I do to help you right now?"*

*"Tell me more about why you're feeling that."*

Above all, *listen* to what they're saying instead of planning your response. You can and should also ask for the same courtesy when it's your turn to speak.

- **Breathing: 4-6-8 Technique.** First, breathe in and exhale through your mouth, making a whoosh sound. Next, inhale quietly through your nose for a count of 4. Hold your breath for a count of 6 then exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of 8. Repeat 5 times.
- **Walk away.** This doesn't mean *run* away or ignore the situation, this means give yourself at least 5 minutes to remove yourself from an escalating situation before it gets out of hand. If you are in an argument with someone, politely say you need X amount of time and you will promise to come back to them then.
- **The Silent Scream.** If you're in an anxious state (heart beating fast, shaking hands etc.) and you want to regain control, you need to release the adrenaline that's been building in your system. Find a private place (toilet stall usually works just fine!). Tense up all of your muscles, clench your fists and jaw, arm and leg muscles, scrunch your eyes closed, etc and scream - without sound (you can whisper your scream if you like)!

- **555.** Sit down and take a minute or two to observe your surroundings (indoors or outdoors). In your head, take note of: 5 visuals, 5 sounds, 5 feelings or sensations. Pause long enough to connect to each of the 5 visuals, sounds and feelings. Really absorb the senses and notice how the mind begins to settle in the present.

- **Ask yourself why.** Why exactly are you feeling stressed out? Have you done everything you could to help the situation? If the control of the situation is out of your hands, and you cannot do more, is there a reason for being stressed? If you need help, what specifically can someone help you with and do you know who you can ask for it?

Use the exercise on the previous page to record any stress responses you're having.

In nearly every second of every day we are bombarded with input from our external and internal worlds. We are forced to process and multitask at an alarming rate and are often attempting to put out fire after fire. While productivity is important, equally as important is the need to give your mind proper rest to recharge, recenter, and work out thoughts and ideas. The following are simple behaviour 'hacks' to help begin to manage and control your environment and thus your relationship with stress.



## At work

- 
- **Don't start the day with email**, instead check emails at 10am and use the time before to write down your 3 core objectives for the day and the plan to implement and work on them.
  - **Accept all meetings you are invited to** but only join the ones with clear objectives that you can actively contribute to. Don't shy away from asking for agenda and objectives and if you can share info via email instead, do that.
  - **Do not eat lunch at your desk**, if you do it should be an EXCEPTION (max. once per week). It's important to give yourself and your mind a rest. Even if it's just a short 30mins, sit or walk with a colleague to get lunch. This is not a marathon, you can take a break!
  - **When working on a project that requires deep concentration**, consider setting an out of office reply explaining that you're working on a big project and will only be checking emails at 10am and 2pm for the next X days. For anything urgent, refer them to your communication channel of choice. You may still get unnecessary messages, but at the very least people will think twice before contacting you!
  - **Break it down**. A project can seem overwhelming when looked at as a whole. Breaking it down and into milestones and manageable steps make it easier to reach your goals. Use post-its to map your project milestones out on your office wall!
  - **Delegate, postpone, eliminate**. Assess each task on your list by asking:
    - Is the task important to you/the business?
    - Will it relieve pressure?
    - Is it 'on strategy'?
    - Can it only be done by you?
    - Does it help you move forward?

If not, check if you can delegate, postpone or eliminate the task completely. See the table on the next page to help you.
  - **Remind yourself of the 'bigger picture'**. To ensure the greatest output of your energy, understand the bigger purpose of the task. It's easy to get tunnel vision and burn energy on small tasks but progress on things that do not ladder up to the bigger picture are just distractions. Always check in on how what you're about to do relates to the bigger picture.

Assessing Your Task List						
Task	Is it important to you or the business?	Will it relieve pressure?	Is it 'on strategy'?	Can it <u>only</u> be done by you?	Does it help you move forward?	Delegate, Postpone, or Eliminate?

Setting boundaries on your home or personal time is important. Work is only a part (albeit a big one) of the overall scheme of life and this is the space where you can explore and work on the *other* things that can bring great reward and satisfaction like your well-being and health, personal goals, family, interests, hobbies, etc.



## At home

- 
- **Mindfulness apps** improve your ability to remain calm under pressure. A daily 10 min practice can increase flexibility, adaptability, creativity, and focus. Suggested apps: Headspace & Calm
  - **Decide what time you officially go offline** and switch off ALL phone/messaging notifications on your phone. You should also let your colleagues know that after X time they should not expect a response. If you still get messages, ignore them, you need to protect this mental space for yourself.
  - **Do not send emails after 6pm or at the weekends.** Even if you have to work, keep your inbox set to 'offline' - sending emails might feel productive - but they could stress out others or signal that they can start emailing you. Set your boundaries and commit to them.
  - **Break the screen addiction.** Yes this is an obvious one, but also one that's so easy to get drawn into when you're "bored" waiting on line at the store, waking up in the morning or winding down after (or even during!) dinner. There are several apps to help fight, limit or block social media like Offtime, Moment, Flipd, or Space to name a few. If you prefer less involved methods:
    - Use airplane mode or turn off your notifications and put your phone in another room during important moments like dinner with your family.
    - Make it harder to access your phone and apps by setting an obnoxiously long unlock passcode.
    - Set a rule at home, no phones/screens between or after the hours of X - and stick to it!
  - **At minimum, don't use any form of technology at least 1 hour before sleep** - this will increase the quality of your night's rest.
  - **Don't charge your phone, laptop, or tablet in your bedroom.** You may be tempted to 'quickly check' your email or get sucked into an Instagram blackhole if your phone is within easy reach. If you use your phone for an alarm - buy an old fashioned alarm clock!
  - **Define your 'self-care strategy'.** Think about the following categories: Basic, Emotional, Relationships, and Physical. Use the table on the following page to write down things for each that help you relax and feel 'ok' again - this will be your go-to list for making sure you're taking care of your needs. When you start to feel stressed, refer to the list to choose an activity to help lower your stress levels.
 

For example:

Basic - eating a delicious meal, drinking enough water, getting 8hrs of uninterrupted sleep

Emotional - Writing in my journal

Relationships - weekly contact with mom (even if it's just a quick text), quiet dinner with my husband

Physical - time in nature, walking, yoga, listening to my favorite band

Use the template on the next page to define your self-care strategy.

My Self-care Strategy	
Basic	Emotional
Relationships	Physical



## Module 5

# Mindset

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<b>What is Mindset?</b>	<b>106</b>
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<b>Module 5 Exercises</b>	<b>142</b>



.....

Explore **4 different mindsets** you can leverage to your advantage and see where you sit on their ‘scales’

.....

**Learn how to change** from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset, from pessimist to optimist, from scarcity to abundance and from being tempted to quit to approaching your goals with ‘grit’ and determination

.....

Realise, that if you take two people, both of equal intelligence and ability, what will make one succeed and the other fail is their **attitude to hard work and their response to failure.**

.....

# What is Mindset?

## **Our environment, the world in which we live and work, is a mirror of our attitudes and expectations.**

Have you ever noticed how for some people things always seem to work out and for others, the opposite seems to be true?

Is there something special about the people who succeed or do they know something that their peers don't? Are they smarter or more talented? Better educated? Richer? Luckier?

The answer may surprise you.

Recent research shows that it's not simply genetics, talent or intelligence that set these people apart. Their long-term MINDSET plays a big part.

Mindsets are the frameworks people have in place that govern their experience of the world. They are formed from the attitudes and beliefs that shape your thought habits. They frame the running account that's taking place in people's heads and guide the whole interpretation process and influence the meaning they give to objects, events and situations.

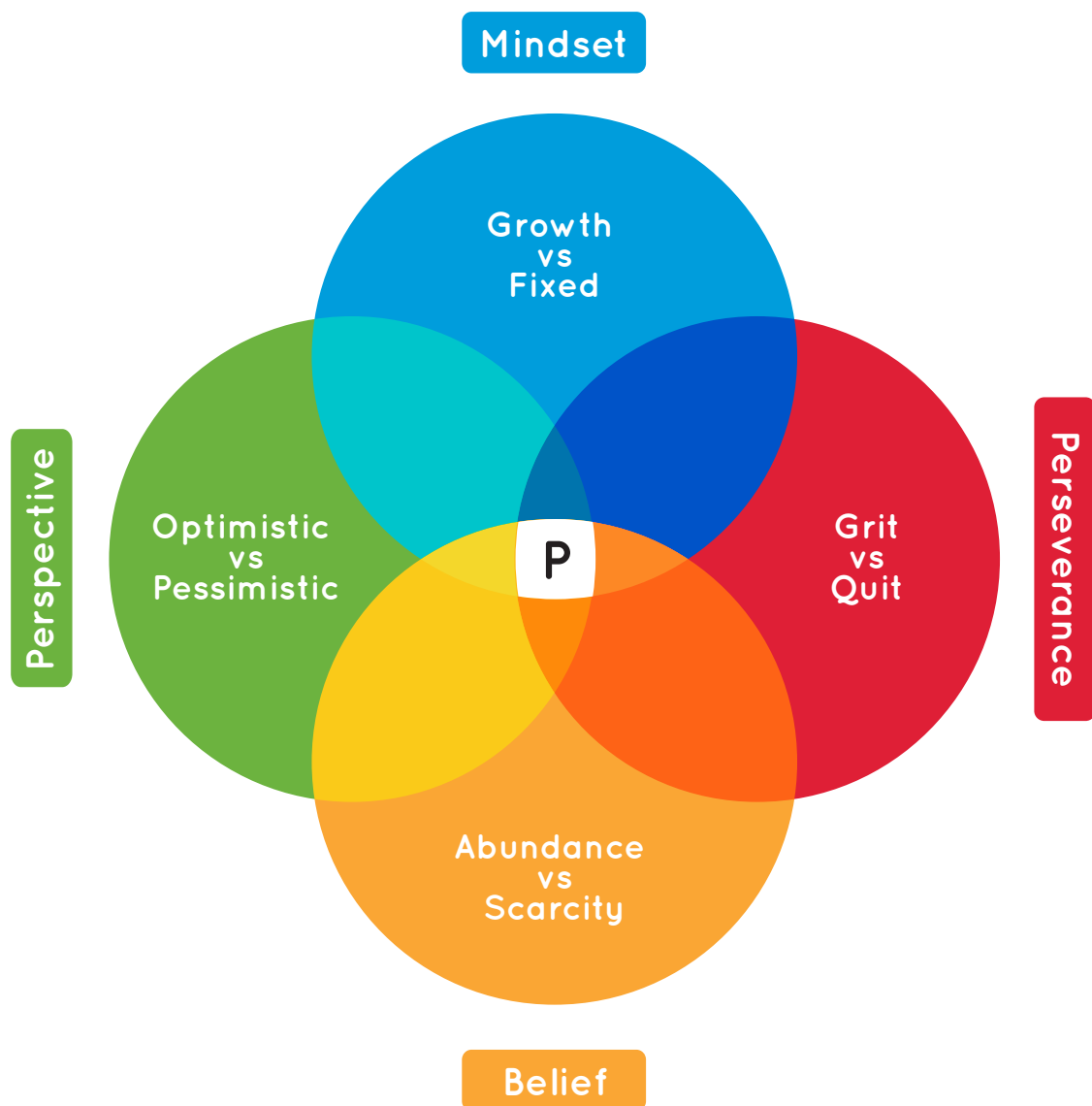
Your mindset impacts how you make sense of the world and how you make sense of YOU and determines what you think, feel and do with that information.

## **Your mindset heavily influences your performance and potential in life!**

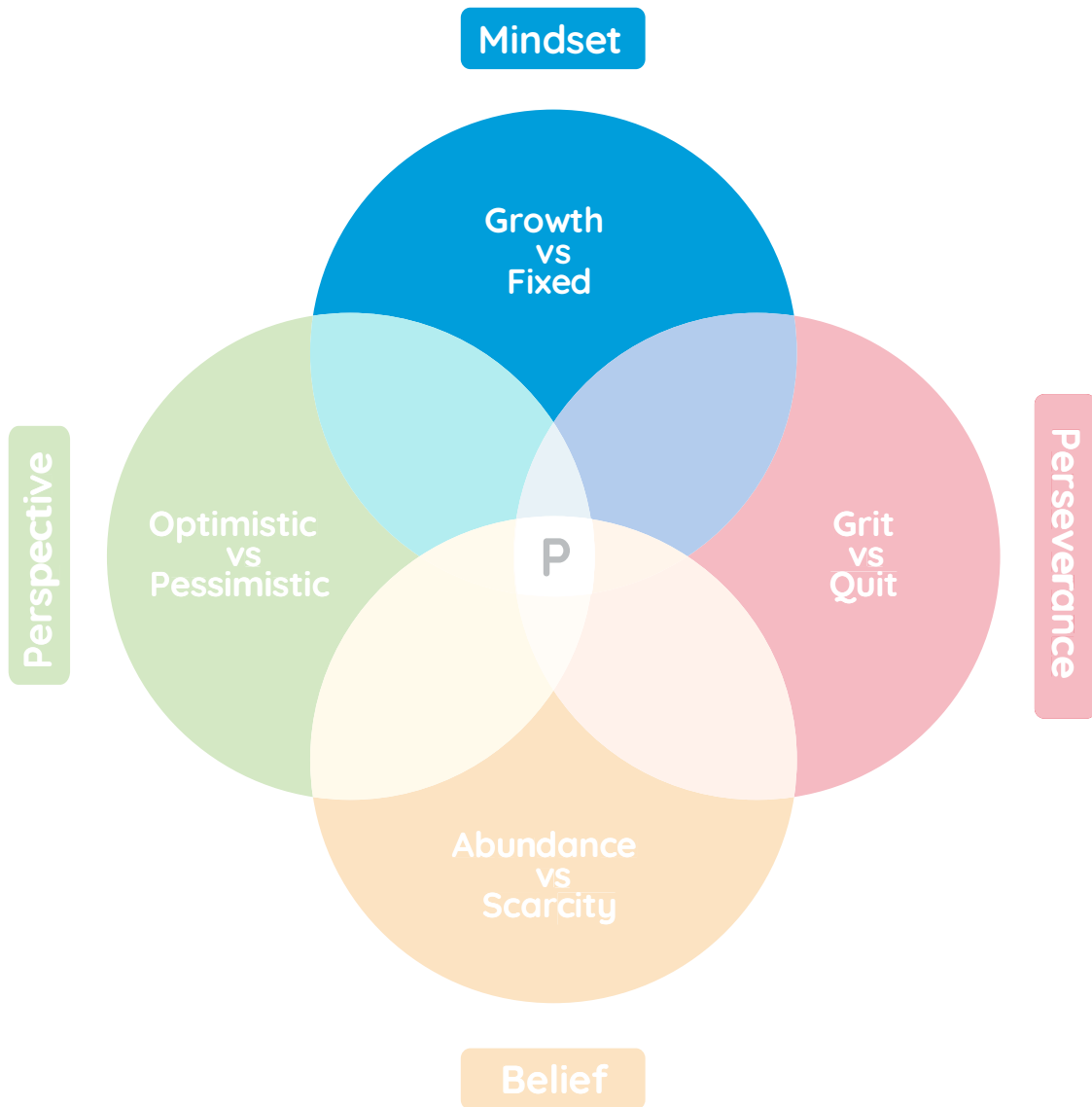
# The mindsets we'll explore

## P = Potential / Performance

The balance of these 4 mindset scales contribute to your overall potential/performance.  
By practicing how to stay in the positive poles of these mindsets, Optimism, Growth, Grit and Abundance thinking, you'll also be directly affecting your performance.



# Growth vs Fixed Mindset



**P = Potential / Performance**

# Growth mindset assessment



The following are a series of questions designed to assess where you sit on the Growth/Fixed mindset spectrum. When answering, please give your immediate response (don't overthink it!), as this will be the most accurate reflection of your current mindset.

Read each question carefully and select whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with each of the sample statements.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers!

---

## 1. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 2. Human beings are basically good, but sometimes make terrible decisions

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 3. Music talent can be learned by anyone

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 4. The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 5. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 6. All human beings without a brain injury or birth defect are capable of the same amount of learning

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 7. Some people are good and kind, and some are not – it's not often that people change

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

# Growth mindset assessment



---

**8. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**9. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**10. Trying new things is stressful for me and I try and avoid it**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**11. Only a few people will be truly good at sports – you have to be “born with it”**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**12. Truly smart people do not need to try hard**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**13. I often get frustrated when I get feedback about my performance**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**14. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

# Growth mindset assessment



## Calculating your score

**For questions 1 to 6, calculate your points as follows:**

Strongly Disagree: 0 points

Disagree: 1 point

Agree: 2 points

Strongly Agree: 3 points

**For questions 7 to 14, calculate your points as follows:**

Strongly Disagree: 3 points

Disagree: 2 point

Agree: 1 points

Strongly Agree: 0 points

**Add all your points to see where you are on the Growth/Fixed scale:**

0-14 points Strong Fixed Mindset

15-23 points Fixed Mindset with some Growth thinking

24-31 points Growth Mindset with some Fixed thinking

32-42 points: Strong Growth Mindset

## What does this mean?

In a growth mindset, people believe that abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point.

People who operate in this mindset generally have a love of learning and the drive to set big goals and achieve them. They understand that great things don't just happen, they require commitment, learning, and practise - even for "naturals" like Michael Jordan or Mozart.

In a fixed mindset, however, people tend to believe that everyone is born with a fixed set and amount of qualities and talent and nothing can change that.

Even if you fall more on the Fixed end of the spectrum, it's not impossible to develop your Growth side. Learning to have more of a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity in the worlds of business, education, and sports. It is a mindset that isn't deterred by setbacks, in fact, having a Growth mindset allows people to recognise there is always the opportunity to learn and improve, thus often leading them to thrive even during challenging times.

Practice growing your Growth mindset with the exercises and techniques on pages 40 to 47.

We always have a choice about what view we adopt for ourselves and it's never too late to change.

## The Growth mindset comes from the fundamental understanding that ability is not fixed and can change with effort.

**Fixed mindset** people are those who believe abilities are innate. You are just talented in an area or you're not. They typically worry about how they are judged / look. They believe effort is something that only people with low abilities need and setbacks means you've failed.

The fixed mindset creates an internal monologue that is focused on judging:

*"This means I'm a loser"*

*"This means I'm a better person than they are"*

*"This means I'm a bad husband"*

*"This means my partner is selfish."*

**Growth mindset** people are those who believe abilities are developed. You can learn and grow yourself. They worry about learning and see effort as the route to achievement. **They believe failure is not a permanent position and setbacks are part of growth.**

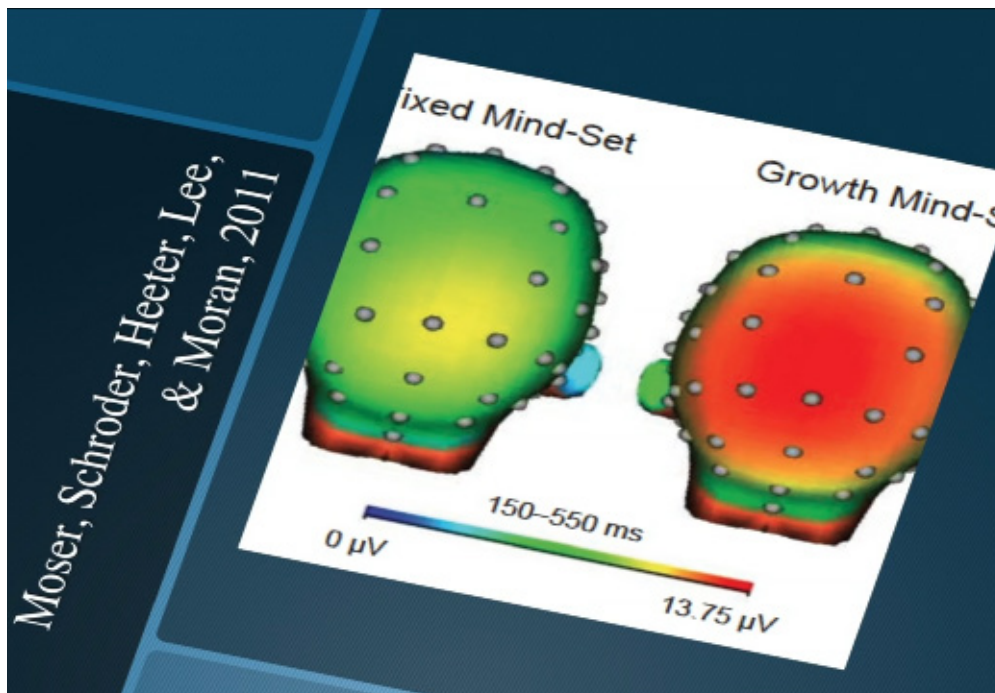
People with a growth mindset are also constantly monitoring what's going on, but they don't judge themselves. They're sensitive to positive and negative information, but they're attuned to its implications for learning and constructive action:

*"What can I learn from this?"*

*"How can I improve?"*

*"How can I help my partner do this better?"*





“Scientists measured the electrical activity from the brain as students confronted an error. On the left, you see the **fixed mindset** students. There’s hardly any activity. **They run from the error. They don’t engage with it.** But on the right, you have the students with the **growth mindset**, the idea that abilities can be developed. **They engage deeply. Their brain is on fire with it.** They engage deeply. They process the error. They learn from it and they correct it.”

Carol Dweck in TEDxTalk,  
The Power of Believing that You Can Improve

.....

“The moment we believe that success is determined by an ingrained level of ability as opposed to resilience and hard work, we will be brittle in the face of adversity.”

Joshua Waitzkin

.....

Joshua Waitzkin is an 8-time national chess champion with 21 national championship titles in addition to several world championship titles in martial arts. He took what he learned about ‘growth’ and applied it to marital arts.

**“Losing my first national chess championship was the best thing that ever happened to me because it meant I avoided the usual mental traps.”**

Whether they’re aware of it or not, all people keep a running account of what’s happening to them, what it means, and what they should do. In other words, our minds are constantly monitoring and interpreting. That’s just how we stay on track.

But sometimes the interpretation process goes awry. Some people put more extreme interpretations on things that happen—and then react with exaggerated feelings of **anxiety, depression, anger, or superiority**.

It's up to you!	<b>Growth Mindset</b> Belief that my intelligence, personality and character can be developed! A person's true potential is unknown.	<b>Fixed Mindset</b> Belief that my intelligence, personality and character are carved in stone; my potential is determined at birth.
Desire	Stretch myself, take risks and learn. Bring on the challenges!	To look smart in every situation and prove myself over and over again. Never fail!!
Evaluation of situations	Will this allow me to grow? Will this help me overcome some of my challenges?	Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb?
Dealing with setbacks	"I failed" (action) "I'll try harder next time"	"I'm a failure" (identity) "I'm an idiot"
Challenges	Embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks.	Avoid challenges, get defensive or give up easily.
Effort	Growth and learning require effort.	Why bother? It's not going to change anything.
Criticism	Learn from criticism. How can I improve?	Ignore constructive criticism.
Success of others	Finds lessons & inspiration in other people's success.	Feel threatened by the success of others. If you succeed, then I fail.
Result...	Reach ever-higher levels of achievement.	Plateau early, achieve less than my full potential.

Carol Dweck has proven that we can actually change mindsets. She has demonstrated a significant improvement in overall life performance in thousands of people.

“In one study, we taught them that every time they push out of their comfort zone to learn something new and difficult, **the neurons in their brain can form new, stronger connections, and over time they can get smarter.**”

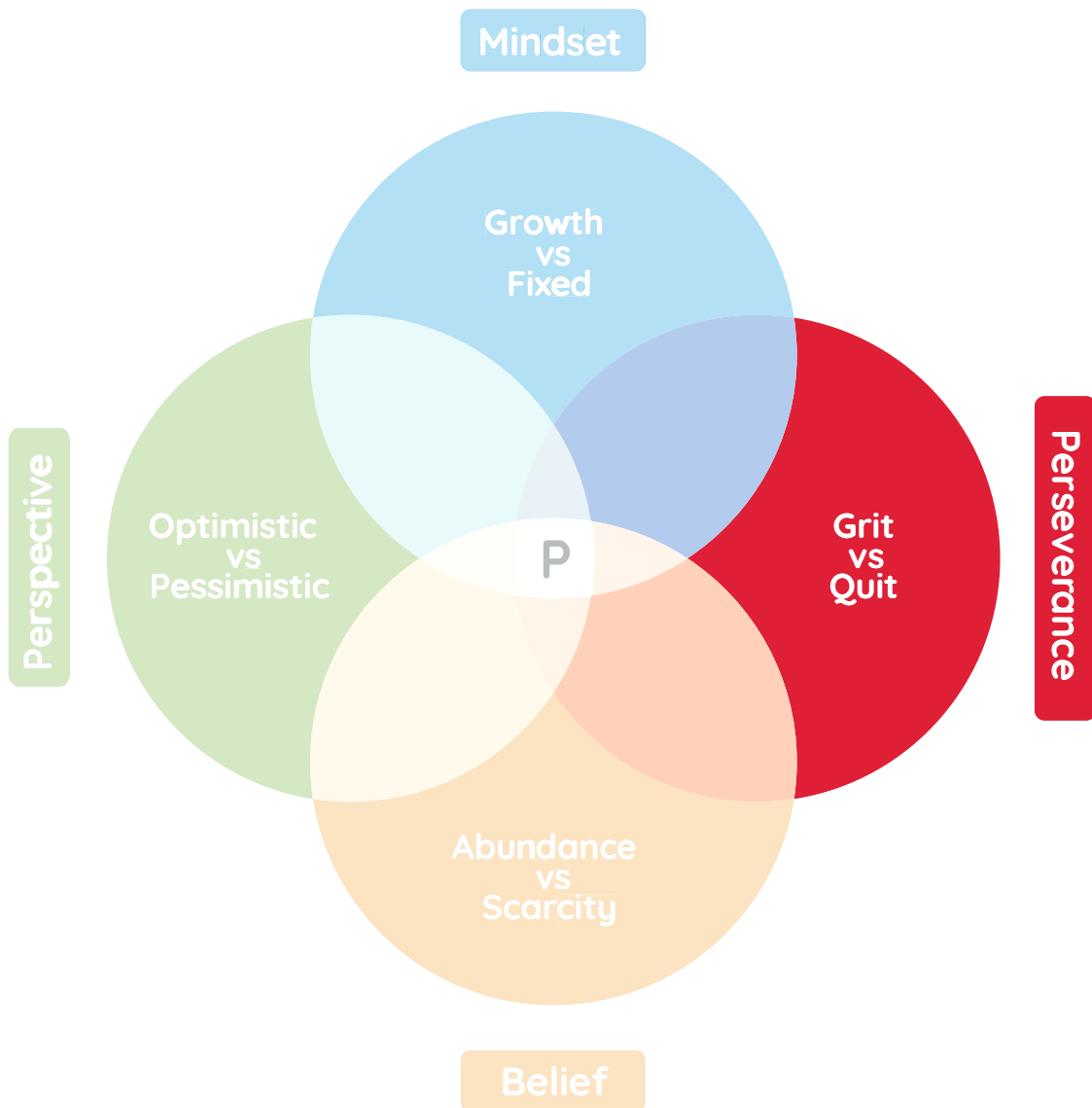
Students who were not taught this growth mindset continued to show declining grades over this difficult school transition, but those who were taught this lesson showed a sharp rebound in their grades.”

Simply **knowing** that your brain has the ability to adapt will have a **positive effect on outcome.**

The power of  
**YET**

Simply adding one word can change your mindset and challenge where you might be looking at something in a fixed way. And this isn't just empty words. Changing your language around a certain activity can actually change the way your brain responds to the task.

# Grit vs Quit Mindset



**P = Potential / Performance**

# Grit mindset assessment



The following are a series of questions designed to assess where you sit on the Grit/Quit mindset spectrum. When answering, please give your immediate response (don't overthink it!), as this will be the most accurate reflection of your current mindset.

Read each question carefully and select whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with each of the sample statements.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers!

---

## 1. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 2. Setbacks don't discourage me.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 3. I am a hard worker.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 4. I finish whatever I begin.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 5. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 6. I am diligent.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

## 7. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

# Grit mindset assessment



---

**8. My interests change from year to year.**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**9. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**10. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**11. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree

---

**12. I become interested in new pursuits every few months.**

☐ Strongly disagree      ☐ Disagree      ☐ Agree      ☐ Strongly agree



# Grit mindset assessment



## Calculating your score

**For questions 1 to 6, calculate your points as follows:**

Strongly Disagree: 0 points

Disagree: 1 point

Agree: 2 points

Strongly Agree: 3 points

**For questions 7 to 12, calculate your points as follows:**

Strongly Disagree: 3 points

Disagree: 2 point

Agree: 1 point

Strongly Agree: 0 points

**Add all your points to see where you are on the Grit/Quit scale:**

0 - 12 pts Strong Quit mindset

3 - 20 pts Quit mindset with some Grit thinking

21 - 26 pts Grit mindset with some Quit thinking

27 - 36 pts Strong Grit mindset

## What does this mean?

Your Grit score is an indicator for your perseverance and passion towards the realisation of long-term goals. Grit is usually unrelated to measures of talent or intelligence.

Grittier people are more likely to persevere in the face of adversity in order to accomplish their goals.

Are you approaching your goals with a sense of passion, perseverance and purpose, or do you tend to give up when things get tough?

**It's not talent but effort and perseverance that is the greatest predictor of achievement.**

The more willing you are to keep at it and work hard the more likely you are to be successful. **Yes, it's that simple.**

...

Malcolm Gladwell's book *Outliers* raised awareness to the 'Talent Myth'

In 1993 K. Anders Ericsson et al went to a music academy in Berlin, where the professors had divided violinists into three groups. The researchers interviewed all the students to determine how much they had practiced by the time they were 20:

- 1. Those with the potential to become world-class soloists (10,000 hrs)**
- 2. "Merely good" students who might play in orchestras professionally (8,000 hrs)**
- 3. Those who might be public school music teachers (4,000 hrs)**

What's interesting is in the study they couldn't find any 'naturals'.

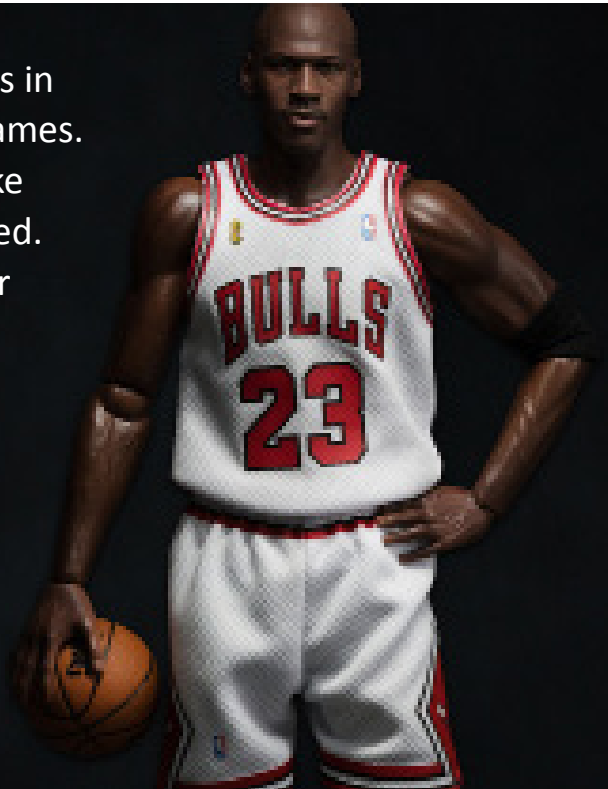
**"The thing that distinguishes one performer from another is how hard he or she works. The people at the very top don't just work much harder than anyone else, they work much, much harder."**

So hard work pays off, and there's evidence to prove it.

“I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life.

And that is why I succeed.”

**Michael Jordan**



...

Angela Duckworth defines grit as “sticking with things over the very long term until you master them.”

Intelligence “is probably the best-measured trait that there is in all of human psychology,” says Duckworth. But intelligence leaves a lot unexplained. There are smart people who aren’t high achievers, and there are people who achieve a lot without having the highest test scores.

In one study, Duckworth found that **smarter students actually had less grit than their peers who scored lower on an intelligence test.**

This finding suggests that, among the study participants – all students at an Ivy League school – **people who are not as bright as their peers “compensate by working harder and with more determination.”**

And their effort pays off: The grittiest students – not the smartest ones – had the highest GPAs.”

Kids are naturally gritty, as anyone who has ever watched a toddler learn to walk or pull away from mum or dad to conquer the stairs themselves, can agree. What happens then when we grow up? Why is grit so often stifled?

“... by the time they get to be adults, most kids have lost that capacity. They have become frightened of being wrong. And we run our companies like this. We stigmatise mistakes. And we’re now running national education systems where mistakes are the worst thing you can make.”

**Ken Robinson**

The ambition really is for us (and our children) to get comfortable with struggle so we see it as just a normal part of learning as we have seen in the growth mindset. Having a growth mindset makes us more likely to be ‘gritty’ and vice versa.

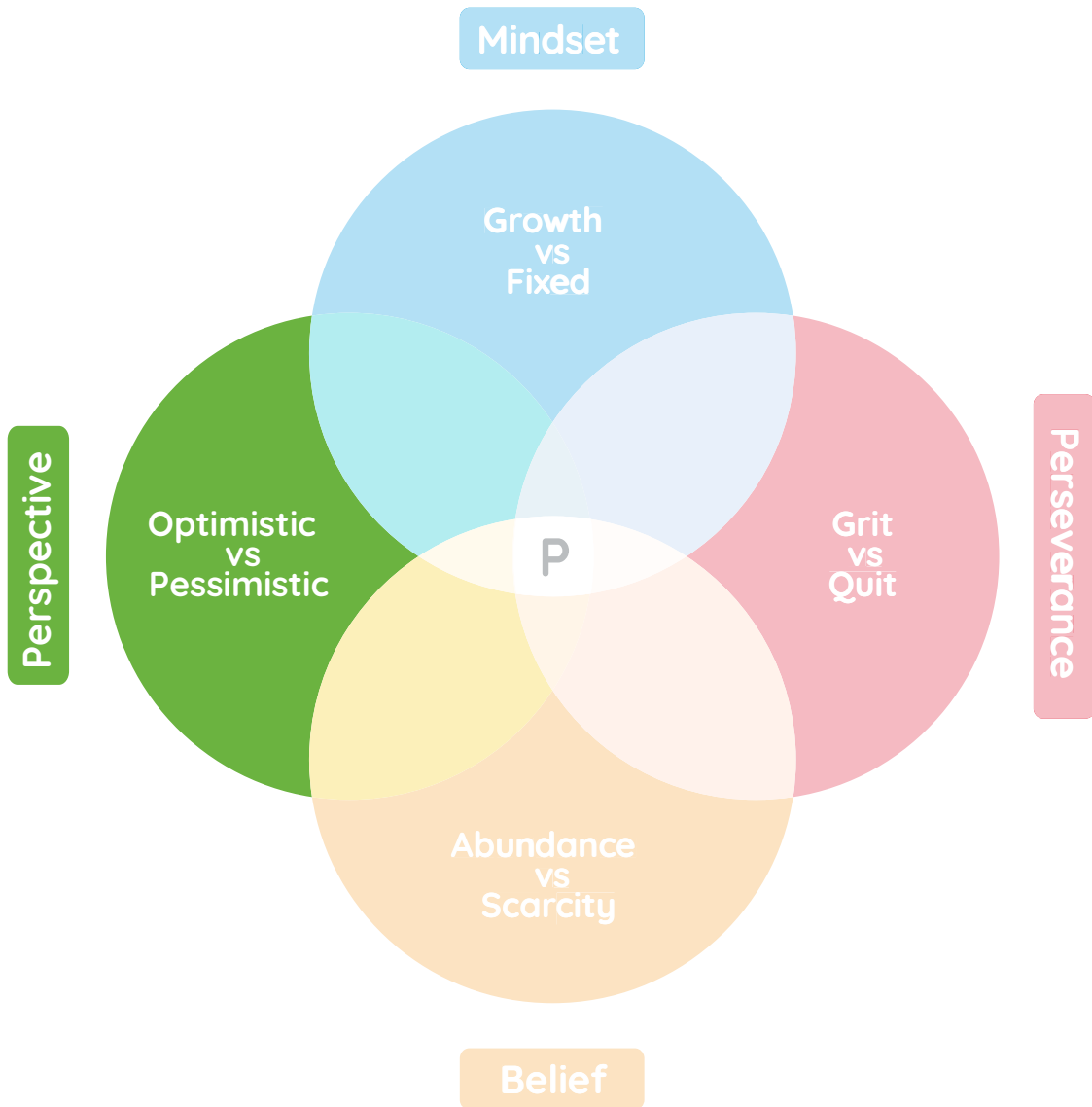
**Another important aspect of grit is connected to the notion of team and finding support even when you are already at the top of your game.**

## **Gritty people hang out with other gritty people.**

You’re defined by the company you keep. When Angela Duckworth was measuring grit in the cadets at West Point she found that their way of dealing with people with low grit scores is to room them with people with higher grit scores. What’s great about this is that grit is a contagious quality. Check out **Social Contagion Theory** for more info.

Get together and challenge each other on how you think and come up with better ideas.

# Optimistic vs Pessimistic Mindset



**P = Potential / Performance**

# Optimistic mindset assessment



The following questionnaire is designed to measure to what degree you adopt an Optimistic or Pessimistic mindset. Take as much time as you need to answer each of the questions. Read each situation statement and vividly imagine it happening to you, even if it's never actually happened. Then read the two accompanying statements as to why the situation happened and choose whether statement A or statement B is more likely to apply to you.

You may not like the way some of the responses sound, but don't choose what you think you *should* say or what would sound right to other people; choose the response you'd be likelier to have.

---

## 1. You prepare a meal for your family and no one appears to like it.

- ☐ A. I am not a very good cook ☐ B. I must have missed an ingredient or rushed the meal

---

## 2. You buy a sound system. You work on it and work on it but can't get it to work correctly.

- ☐ A. I am no good at technical things ☐ B. The owner's manual is written poorly

---

## 3. You've had some bad experiences telling jokes before, where all you get is a polite laugh. This time, you tell a joke and everyone laughs.

- ☐ A. It must truly be a good joke this time ☐ B. I happened to execute it just right, using the right timing and inflection

---

## 4. Your stocks are at an all time low.

- ☐ A. I did not pick good stocks ☐ B. I do not understand business

---

## 5. You're lost on your way to an important meeting, you pull over and ask for directions. You end up going the wrong direction for ten minutes before getting straightened out. You got further lost because:

- ☐ A. The man at the gas station did not give me clear directions ☐ B. I'm not very good with directions

---

## 6. You are asked to head up an important project.

- ☐ A. I am very good at what I do. When I try, I succeed. ☐ B. I just completed an initiative that got noticed

# Optimistic mindset assessment



## 7. You win a racquetball tournament.

- ☐ A. I spent a lot of time honing my skills and practicing      ☐ B. I do the best at everything I put my mind to
- 

## 8. You've been fighting a lot with your spouse or partner

- ☐ A. He/she has been very difficult to get along with      ☐ B. I have been under a lot of pressure lately
- 

## 9. You do a group exercise and perform poorly compared to others.

- ☐ A. I am not as talented as the others      ☐ B. I am not well rested and could not focus
- 

## 10. You have not had a sick day at work for two years.

- ☐ A. I ate well and made sure I was well rested      ☐ B. I have good genes
- 

## 11. Your doctor tells you that you have to stop eating so much sugar. Your reaction is:

- ☐ A. I've got to start being more disciplined about this      ☐ B. There is no way to avoid this. There is sugar in everything.
- 

## 12. You forgot your spouse or partner's birthday.

- ☐ A. I was too pre-occupied with other things at the moment      ☐ B. I'm not good at remembering dates
- 

## 13. You interviewed for a job and were "in the flow" with your answers, getting you a second interview as a finalist.

- ☐ A. I felt extremely confident in the interview      ☐ B. I interview well
- 

## 14. You are feeling run down lately.

- ☐ A. I was busier this week than normal      ☐ B. I never get a chance to relax
- 

## 15. When I'm honest with myself, the real reason the project I was in charge of succeeded was because:

- ☐ A. Everyone devoted a lot of time and energy to it      ☐ B. I kept a close watch over everyone's work and directed it

# Optimistic mindset assessment



## Calculating your score

Calculate your score based on your A or B selections as follows:

1. A = 0 points / B = 1 point
2. A = 0 points / B = 1 point
3. A = 0 points / B = 1 point
4. A = 1 point / B = 0 points
5. A = 1 point / B = 0 points
6. A = 1 point / B = 0 points
7. A = 0 points / B = 1 point
8. A = 1 point / B = 0 points
9. A = 0 points / B = 1 point
10. A = 1 point / B = 0 points
11. A = 1 point / B = 0 points
12. A = 1 point / B = 0 points
13. A = 0 points / B = 1 point
14. A = 1 point / B = 0 points
15. A = 0 points / B = 1 point

0-4 points: Strongly pessimistic

5-6 points: Pessimistic with some optimistic views

7-8 points: Average

9-12 points: Optimistic with some pessimistic views

13-15 points: Strongly optimistic

## What does this mean?

The main difference between optimists and pessimists is: pessimists tend to look at negative events as *permanent, universal, and internal* while optimists tend to look at negative events as *temporary, specific, and external*. Pessimistic people also tend to give universal explanations for their failures and give up when they experience a setback. Optimistic people give specific explanations, recover from setbacks far faster and carry on. They also tend to be more focused on problem solving and plan-oriented.

Practice growing your Optimistic mindset with the exercises and techniques on pages 48 to 54.



# Optimistic vs Pessimistic Mindset

Being optimistic is not just positive thinking or 'hoping for the best'.

**It's about how you cope with setbacks, not if but when they arise.**

Perspective is how you explain bad things when they happen to you. The meaning you give to events both past, present and future is pivotal - it's all in the framing.

Are you beating yourself up and selling yourself short? Or looking at things in a way that allows you to grow from the experience and keep moving forward?

A great deal of the literature on the drivers of success focuses on optimism. But this is insufficient if you assume that optimism is just looking on the bright side especially when describing the hard work and determination that success demands.

**Optimism is not just positive thinking.**

Martin Seligman (father of positive psychology) has identified that how **we interpret the events in our lives** is at the root of optimism.

At the core of **pessimism** is the feeling of **helplessness**. That nothing we do will make a difference. The feeling that you have no control of what happens to you.

**Optimists believe that you do have control.**

Life deals the optimist the same setbacks as the pessimist, but it is the optimist who tends to bounce back and recover from these situations more effectively. The pessimist is more inclined to ruminate, get depressed and perhaps give up altogether. Bouncing back from setbacks is exactly what determines whether you are currently an optimist or a pessimist.

# Optimistic vs Pessimistic Mindset

Our ability to bounce back is highly related to our explanatory style.

**Explanatory style** is a psychological attribute that indicates how people explain to themselves why they experience a particular event. They are the stories we tell ourselves.

Psychologists have identified three components in explanatory style:

## **Personal (internal vs external)**

People experiencing events may see themselves as the CAUSE; that is, they have internalised the cause of the event.

Example:

*"I always forget to make that turn" (internal) as opposed to "That turn can sure sneak up on you" (external).*

## **Permanent (fixed vs changeable)**

This involves how one explains the extent of the cause. People may see a situation as unchangeable.

Example:

*"I always lose my keys" or "I never forget a face".*

## **Pervasive (global vs local/specific)**

This involves how one explains the extent of the effects. People may see a situation as affecting all aspects of life.

Example:

*"I can't do anything right" as opposed to "This is one thing I find particularly challenging".*

# Optimistic vs Pessimistic Mindset



## Optimists believe good events are:

- Personal (due to you)
- Permanent (they always or mostly happen)
- Pervasive (happen in everything in your life)

## Optimists believe bad events are:

- Not personal (not your fault)
- Not permanent
- Not pervasive (happened because of special circumstances)



## Pessimists believe good events are:

- Not personal (not due to you)
- Not permanent (it won't last)
- Not pervasive (happened by chance)

## Pessimists believe bad events are:

- Personal (your fault)
- Permanent
- Pervasive (happen all the time and affects all aspects of life)

# The other facets of optimism

In a study conducted by Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub in 1989, results showed that optimists:

- Tend to be more **focused on problem solving and are plan-oriented**.
- Tend to **accept the reality of stressful events**.
- Try to **see the best** in bad situations.
- Try to learn something from them (**finding benefits in adversity**).

By comparison, pessimists tend to **disengage from the goals** when the situation becomes stressful.

Segerstrom's recent work, highlighted in her book *Breaking Murphy's Law* (2006):

- "Optimistic people **pursue their goals more doggedly**, leading them to build resources through goal pursuit or effective coping with stress."
- Optimists **invest in goal setting** and perseverance in attainment.

# Learned optimism

According to Martin Seligman, anyone can learn optimism. Whether currently an optimist or a pessimist, benefits can be gained from exposure to the process of learned optimism to improve response to both big and small adversities.

In an experiment he looked at students prone to depression, he discovered that they also tended to be pessimists. If something didn't work out or they experienced setbacks in life they'd say **"It's because of me and I'll always be this way"**.

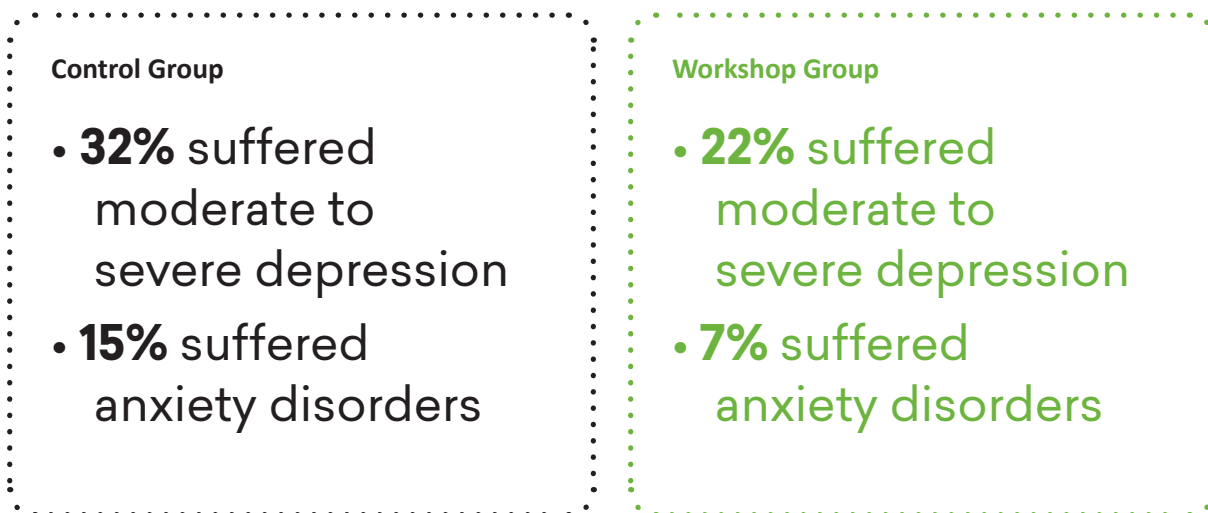
He taught them to think differently and trained them to be optimists, **"It's the circumstance, not me, circumstances can change and I can do something to change them"**.

**After about a year their thinking patterns had changed – but you have to keep at it.**

# What are the techniques?

Learned optimism techniques were found to significantly reduce depression in a class of college freshmen. As incoming students to the university, a survey determined the most pessimistic students and they were invited to participate in the study. Half were randomly assigned to attend a 16-hour workshop on the techniques of learning optimism, and half were the control group.

In the follow up:



Those who participated in the learned optimism workshop also reported having fewer health problems.

## Discovery Health 1997

# The benefits of optimism

From Seligman's book, *Learned Optimism*:

Hundreds of studies have shown the POSITIVE impact of being an optimist or a pessimist.

For example, optimists tend to:

- **Do much better in school**
- **Exceed the predictions of aptitude tests**
- **Have greater success when they run for office**
- **Show greater persistence when looking to achieve goals**
- **Age better**
- **Usually experience better health and may even live longer**

## **What is it about having an optimistic outlook that leads to such benefits?**

The first step in learning optimism is to realise that in your own life, every time a door closes, another door opens.

The skills of optimism can be learned and the key is how to frame or reframe our perceptions using a more encouraging viewpoint when we suffer a personal setback.

# Changing your explanatory style

When things go wrong or don't work we need to learn to reframe these experiences in a positive way.

The home of habits is a structure deep in the bottom of the brain called the *basal ganglia*. Our brain stores our habits there so we don't have to pay conscious attention to the countless good habits that keep us going – everything from how to brush our teeth to what not to say to your boss.

A core function of the *basal ganglia* is to help humans develop habits that eventually become automatic, including habits of thought and emotion. The first step in changing them has to be noticing them in the first place. That means not letting them just go by on automatic, but becoming mindful of them. You can do this in two ways:

**Getting familiar with the triggers that start the sequence and noticing the way the habit operates.**

To practice changing your explanatory style, see the exercise on page 48.



## **You may argue that supporting optimism means sacrificing realism.**

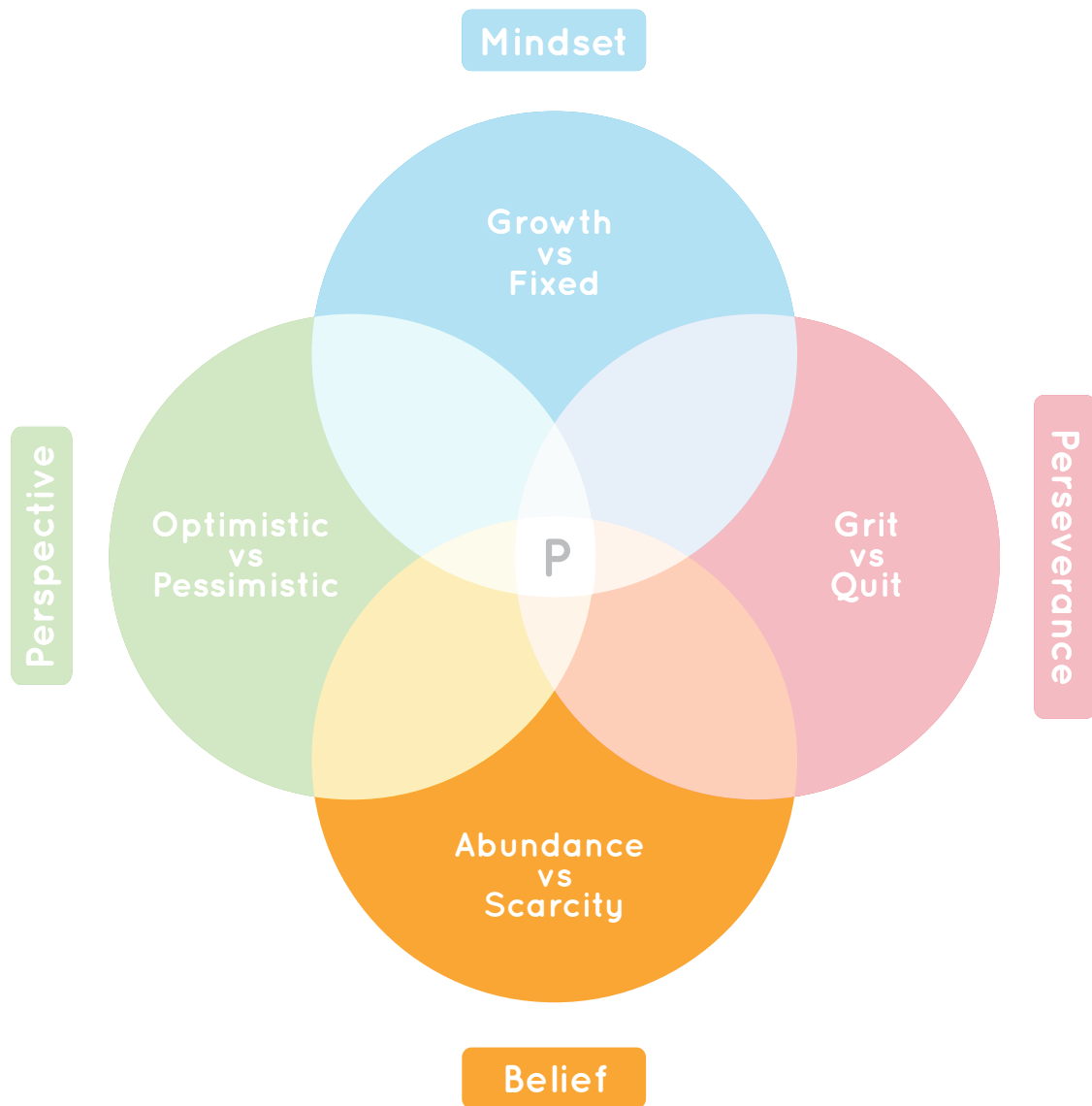
But remember to be flexible. We are not suggesting that absolute, unconditional optimism be applied blindly in all situations. This exercise simply aims to increase your control over the way you think about adversity.

Learned optimism is FLEXIBLE optimism.

## **If you want to change your view you need to accept that nothing is permanent and everything is changeable.**

Many people blame themselves far too often for bad events that occur in their lives, we are trying to move that from the extreme to the balanced. Sometimes, you *will* be the cause, in which case you need to take necessary action to resolve the situation. We are not advocating that everything is always external/someone else's fault. Emotional intelligence is required to ensure we take responsibility when we need to.

# Abundance vs Scarcity Mindset



**P = Potential / Performance**

# Abundance vs Scarcity Mindset

**Abundance is the viewpoint that there is *enough* for everybody and therefore it's not necessary to fight over the 'pieces'.**

When it comes to business, it's the belief that there are enough customers and enough clients, so you don't have to be precious or furiously competitive about how you approach your work.

Someone with an abundance attitude, would be even be quite willing to speak with those who are actually competition because they recognise there's a benefit in having a group of thinkers working together to push each other's creativity. The person with the abundant attitude wants other people to succeed just as they are succeeding.

Another distinctive quality of someone with an abundant mindset is the fact that they take responsibility for their actions in life, both the good and the bad whatever results happen, they know that ultimately it's down to them.

**Scarcity on the other hand is the sense that there's *not enough* (barely enough for me let alone other people).**

As a result of the scarcity mindset, your behaviour will be affected, you might be more ruthless when it comes to business because you're really worried about getting that 'last' client.

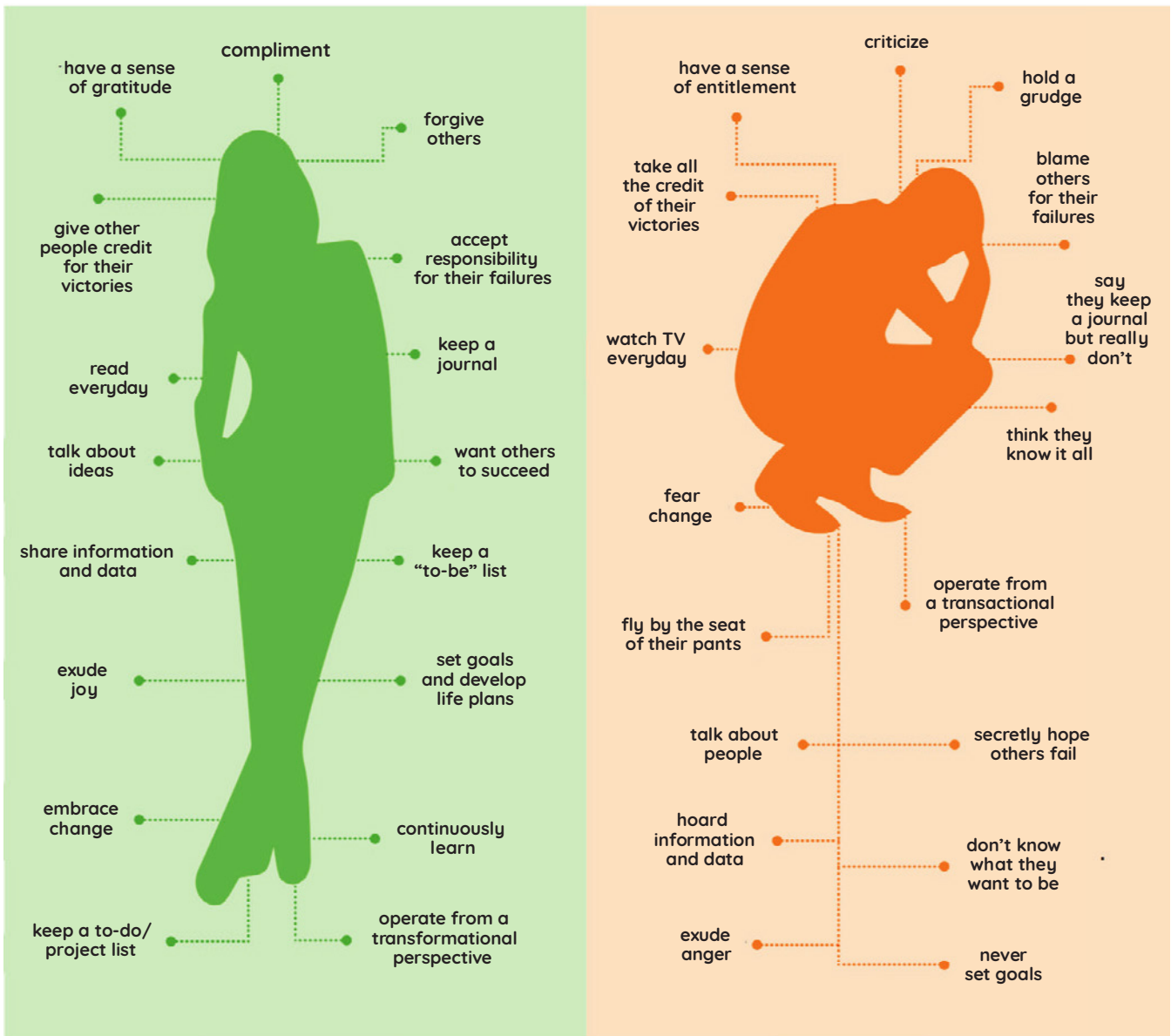
Those with a scarcity attitude may even want other people to fail because they believe the only way for them to succeed is to make sure that everyone else loses.

Those with the scarcity attitude also have a tendency to blame things, particularly bad outcomes, on others.

Have a look at the infographic on the next page, to easily see the differences between both of these groups.

# Abundance vs Scarcity Mindset

In the graphic below, you will likely be able to identify yourself and maybe even some other people that you know as well. If you put effort into changing your mindset for the positive (working towards Growth, Optimism and Grit), this will naturally move you into a more abundant attitude in life and in work.



.....

**1**

**Grit** – Perseverance and resilience for the attainment of long term goals (future)

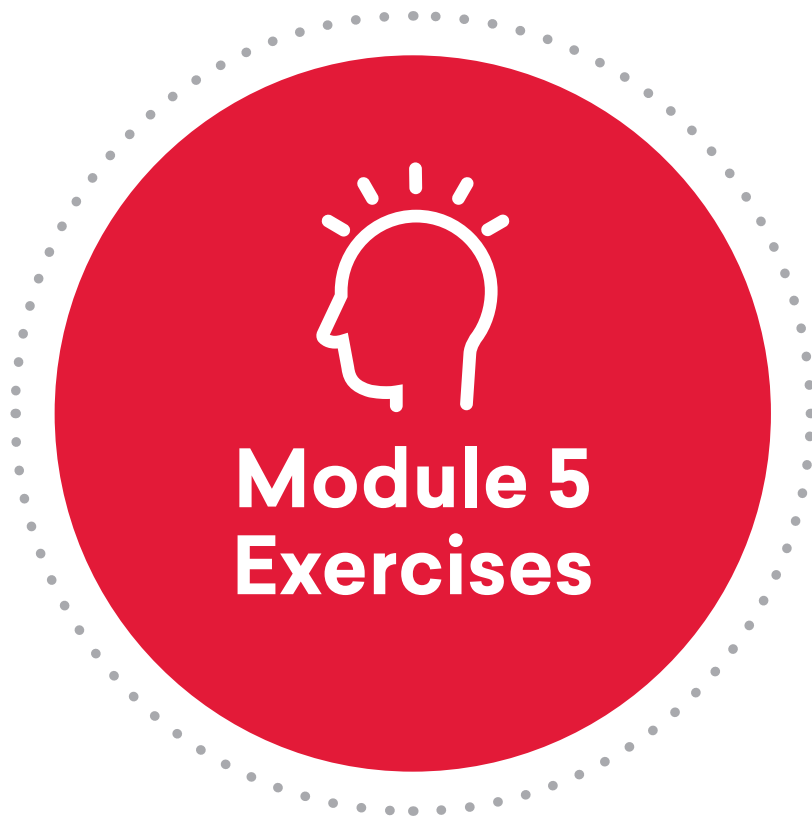
**2**

**Growth mindset** – Approach and attitude to challenging situations (present)

**3**

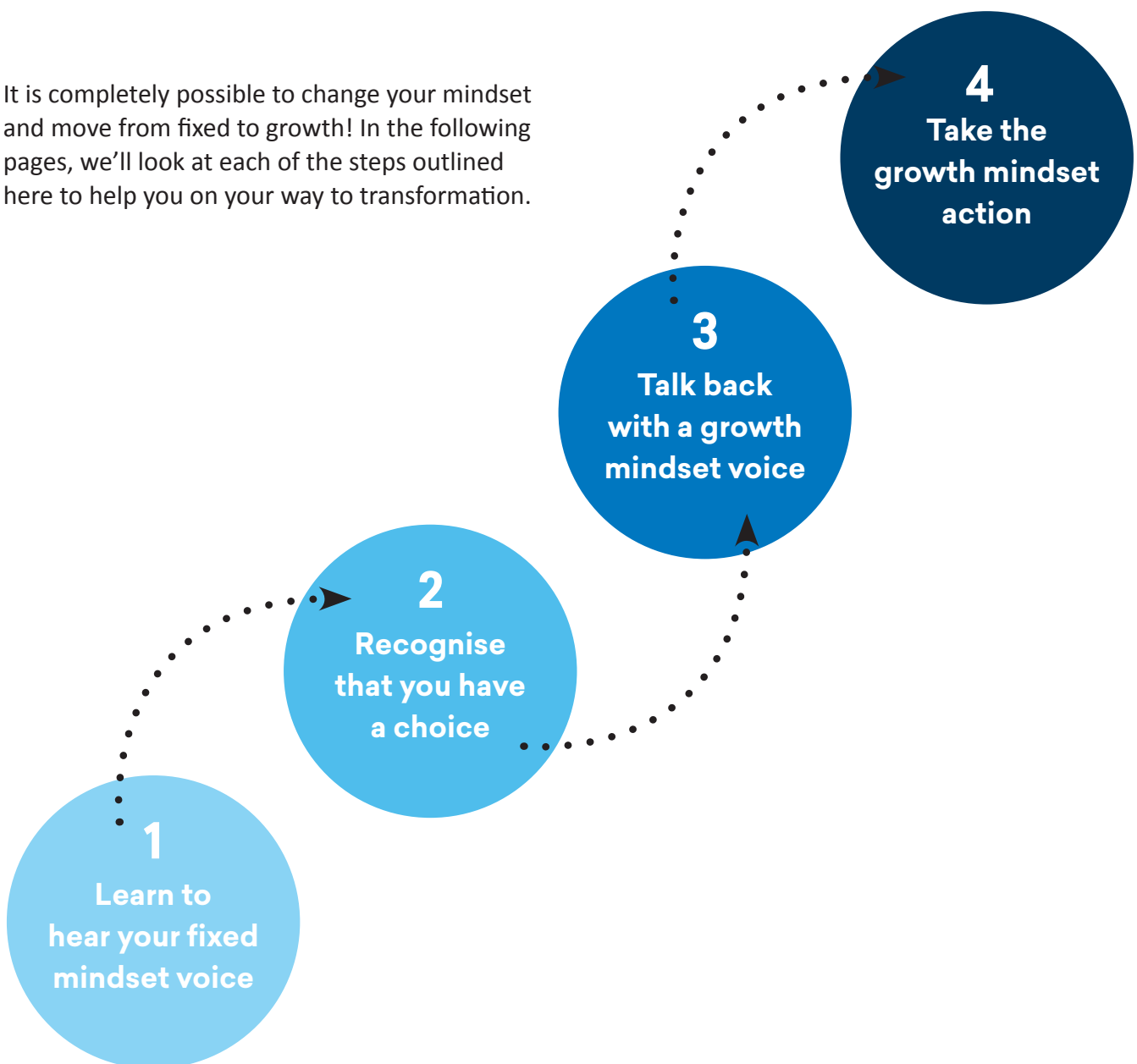
**Optimism** – Explanatory style to bounce back from setbacks (past)

.....



# Cultivating a growth mindset

It is completely possible to change your mindset and move from fixed to growth! In the following pages, we'll look at each of the steps outlined here to help you on your way to transformation.

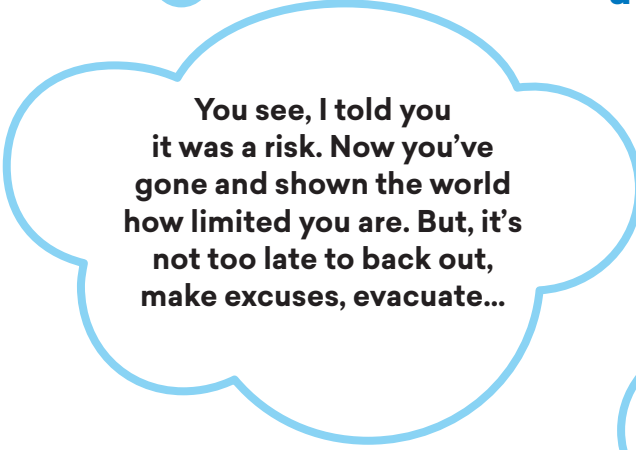


# Identifying your fixed mindset voice

Listen for when and where you hear your fixed mindset voice. Once you're able to recognise it as it's happening, you have the power to change it.

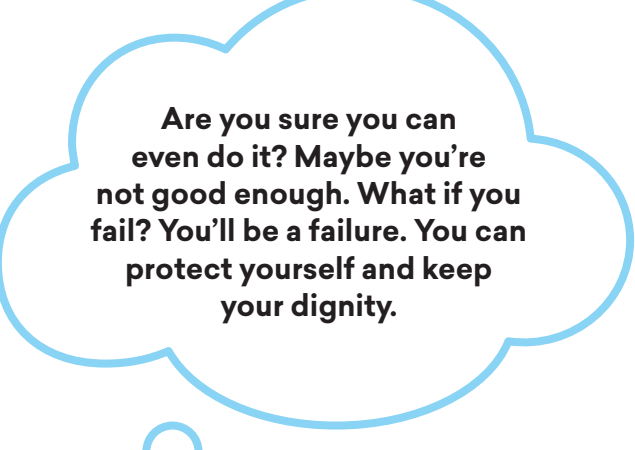
Have a look at some examples:

## Hitting a setback




**You see, I told you it was a risk. Now you've gone and shown the world how limited you are. But, it's not too late to back out, make excuses, evacuate...**

## Approaching a challenge



**Are you sure you can even do it? Maybe you're not good enough. What if you fail? You'll be a failure. You can protect yourself and keep your dignity.**



**It's not my fault. Who do they think they are? I'll put them in their place.**

## Facing criticism



# Recognise your choice

.....

How you interpret  
challenges, setbacks, and criticism  
is **your choice**.

You can interpret them in a fixed mindset as  
signs that your fixed talents or abilities are  
lacking OR in a growth mindset as signs  
that you need to ramp up your strategies  
and effort and stretch yourself.

**It's entirely up to you!**

.....

# Using the growth mindset voice

When you hear yourself using a fixed mindset voice, go ahead, talk back with a growth mindset one!

Have a look at some examples then try it for yourself on the next page:

Instead of:	Try thinking:
"I'm not that good at this."	"What am I missing?"
"I'm awesome at this."	"I'm on the right track."
"I give up."	"I'll use some of the strategies we've learned."
"This is too hard."	"This may take some time and effort."
"I can't make this any better."	"I can always improve so I'll keep trying."
"I just can't do maths."	"I'm going to train my brain in maths."
"I made a mistake."	"Mistakes help me learn better."
"She's so smart, I'll never be that smart."	"I'm going to figure out how she does it so I can try it."
"Plan A didn't work."	"Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters."
"It's good enough."	"Is it really my best work?"

# Using the growth mindset voice



What are the typical things that commonly come up for you? Write them in the chart below then replace any fixed mindset statements with a growth mindset reframe!

Instead of:	Try thinking:

# Taking the growth mindset action

---

**The voice you hear  
becomes your choice.**

**Practice hearing** both voices, and  
**practice acting** on the growth mindset.

Take on the challenge wholeheartedly,  
learn from your setbacks and try again,  
hear the criticism and act on it.

It is now in your hands.

---

# The Power of YET



Simply adding one word can change your mindset and challenge where you might be looking at something in a fixed way. Changing your language around a certain activity can actually change the way your brain responds to the task.

Make a list of the things you feel you are good at and some of the things you aren't; for each item, briefly explain why.

Things I'm good at:	Things I'm not good at:

# The Power of YET



Now pick some items from your “not good” list and complete the sentences below with what it would take for you to become better at each.

1. I’m not \_\_\_\_\_ **YET** but  
when I \_\_\_\_\_, I will certainly  
improve!

2. I’m not \_\_\_\_\_ **YET** but  
when I \_\_\_\_\_, I will certainly  
improve!

3. I’m not \_\_\_\_\_ **YET** but  
when I \_\_\_\_\_, I will certainly  
improve!

4. I’m not \_\_\_\_\_ **YET** but  
when I \_\_\_\_\_, I will certainly  
improve!

5. I’m not \_\_\_\_\_ **YET** but  
when I \_\_\_\_\_, I will certainly  
improve!

# Changing your explanatory style

When things go wrong or don't work, it is natural to have an immediate, negative reaction. We are always creating a narrative about our life, but what matters is that we create a helpful one that propels us forward, not one that holds us back. So it's in these moments we need to learn how to reframe our thinking into a positive (or at least a less negative) expression so our thoughts don't end up affecting us more than they should.

Founder of Positive Psychology, Martin Seligman's process of learning optimism consists of a simple training method to help you better respond to adversity, specifically, by learning to talk yourself through personal challenges. It's a simple and speedy exercise known as the "ABCDE Technique":

<b>A</b>	Adversity: What's the trigger or cause of the event?
<b>B</b>	Belief: What do you believe this means?
<b>C</b>	Consequence: What happens if you believe this?
<b>D</b>	Dispute: In what ways could A, B, or C be incorrect?
<b>E</b>	Exchange the belief: What would be a more useful belief?

Example 1: Someone cuts you off in traffic	
<b>Adversity</b> What's the trigger or cause of the event?	Someone cuts you off in traffic.
<b>Belief</b> What do you believe this means?	You think, "I can't believe that idiot was so rude and selfish!"
<b>Consequence</b> What happens if you believe this?	You are anxious and overcome with anger, yelling profanity at the other driver, in disbelief that someone could be so inconsiderate and reckless.
<b>Dispute</b> In what ways could A, B, or C be incorrect?	Maybe the guy was on the way to an urgent situation (something to do with his kids, the hospital etc.).
<b>Exchange the belief</b> What would be a more useful belief?	Perhaps he didn't intend to cut me off in his rush. Sometimes even I do it if I'm trying to get somewhere urgently.

Example 2: An economic crisis	
<b>Adversity</b> What's the trigger or cause of the event?	Economic crisis
<b>Belief</b> What do you believe this means?	I want to start a massage business but I'm afraid to because no one has any money to spend on such indulgences so it will never work.
<b>Consequence</b> What happens if you believe this?	This is my dream, but I need to rethink my business or take a more secure job even though I know it's not really what I want.
<b>Dispute</b> In what ways could A, B, or C be incorrect?	But if people can see the value in them beyond an unnecessary indulgence (e.g. sports/injured people, stress reliever, people who can't afford a holiday but still want to treat themselves, etc) they may still be likely to use the service.
<b>Exchange the belief</b> What would be a more useful belief?	If I can speak to the right audience in a meaningful way I can still have a healthy business and make this dream a reality.

# Changing your explanatory style

<p><b>Adversity</b> What's the trigger or cause of the event?</p>	
<p><b>Belief</b> What do you believe this means?</p>	
<p><b>Consequence</b> What happens if you believe this?</p>	
<p><b>Dispute</b> In what ways could A, B, or C be incorrect?</p>	
<p><b>Exchange the belief</b> What would be a more useful belief?</p>	



# Positive explanatory style

**The most important door that ever closed on me was:**

**The door that opened was:**

**A door that closed on me through bad luck or missed opportunity was:**

**The door that opened was:**

**A door that closed on me through loss, rejection, or death was:**

**The door that opened was:**

# 21-day Challenge: Learning optimism

## Is it possible to train your brain?

Yes it is! Working on your mental fitness is not so different from training for a marathon or lifting weights. With the right methods, commitment, and consistency, you can actually train your brain to think positively. Make no mistake, it's not about ignoring negative things, but rather not being held hostage by them and learning to prioritise and see the opportunity in them instead.

As we mentioned in Module 2: Thinking, research on neuroplasticity—the ability of the brain to change even in adulthood—reveals that as you develop new habits, you are effectively 'rewiring' the brain. So engaging in one brief positive exercise every day for as little as three weeks can actually have a lasting impact on you!

Below are examples of just a few quick positive things to easily work into your daily routine. After doing any of these for just 21 days, you'll start to notice a shift in your overall mindset\*. See pages 52-54 for specific instructions on these exercises.



### 1 Expressing appreciation

Send a positive message to someone – this could be a friend, colleague, family member, anyone you appreciate, even the stranger who helped you on the way to work this morning! Verbally, email, text message, phone call, whatever way you prefer as long as it gets to them quickly. They will feel great to receive your message, and you will feel great for giving it!

### 2 Personal gratitude

At the end of each day, on your way home from work, before going to sleep, or even in the shower, reflect on the day while it's still fresh in your head and write down 3 things that happened that you're grateful for (big or small!). Each day challenge yourself to identify a new set of 3 things.

### 3 Finding meaning

Set a timer and take 5 minutes to write down the most meaningful experience of the past 24 hours. Use the entire 5 minutes to answer the following:

- Why it was important?
- What did it make you feel?
- What learnings can you take for yourself moving forward?

Even if you think you have nothing more to say, challenge yourself to fill the 5 minutes.

### 4 Mindful breathing

This exercise, with regular practise, can help train your mind to focus and resist distractions over long periods of time.

- Find a quiet place and set an alarm for 3 minutes
- Close your eyes and focus on your breath for a count of 10
- Once you get to 10, count back to 1 then start counting up again to 10
- Every time you notice your mind has wandered simply bring it back to counting your breaths
- Repeat this until the alarm goes off

\*In research conducted with KPMG, Shawn Achor proved that doing just 1 of these exercises a day for 21 days shifted people's optimism levels significantly when compared with a control group where no exercises were done.

## 21-day Challenge: Expressing Appreciation

This one is a super quick, simple way to give someone else (and yourself) a positive boost. Don't overthink it, if you're paying attention, you'll start to notice small acts of kindness and service you experience on a daily basis. Or it could be as simple as thanking a good friend for just being them. It might feel weird at first, but the more you do it, the more you'll train your brain to lean towards the positives.

*Every day, strive to send a positive message to someone – this could be a friend, colleague, family member, anyone you appreciate, even the stranger who helped you on the way to work this morning!*

*Verbally, email, text message, phone call, whatever way you prefer as long as it gets to them quickly. They will feel great to receive your message, and you will feel great for giving it!*

.....

If you're struggling to find someone to send a message to, here are some ideas:

### At work

- Is there someone in work you can praise or thank for a piece of work they did?
- Did someone say something, do, something, or give you some of their time recently you can thank them for?
- Can you acknowledge someone going out of their way for you? Or having rearranged a meeting to accommodate you?
- Did someone get you something quicker than you expected/hoped?
- Someone on the team work late/over the weekend to help you meet a deadline?

### At home

- Perhaps your partner made you dinner?  
Did the grocery shopping when it was your turn?
- Did your son/daughter help with something and didn't need to be asked to do so?
- Did your friend travel an hour just to spend some time with you?
- Does your neighborhood barista make an effort to greet you by name?

# 21-day Challenge: Personal Gratitude

Think about 3 things that you're grateful for in the last 24 hours. Fill out the table below for each of those 3 things. Be as specific as possible and include situations both inside and outside of work.

*Ex: helping a friend or colleague, someone (friend or stranger) helped you out, witnessing a beautiful sunset, remembering to smile, tapping your foot to some funky music, controlling a situation instead of it getting the better of you.*

What happened?	Why was it a good thing?	Describe what you felt
<i>I found a parking space this morning</i>	<i>I found it quickly AND it was very close to my office!</i>	<i>Happy because it doesn't normally happen. It was a relaxing start to the day and the anxiety I normally feel in the morning was gone.</i>

## 21-day Challenge: Finding meaning

Set a timer and take 5 minutes to write down the most meaningful experience of the past 24 hours. Use the time to answer the following - even if you think you have nothing more to say, challenge yourself to write during full the 5 minutes.

What happened?	Why was it important?
What did it make you feel?	What learnings will you take moving forward?

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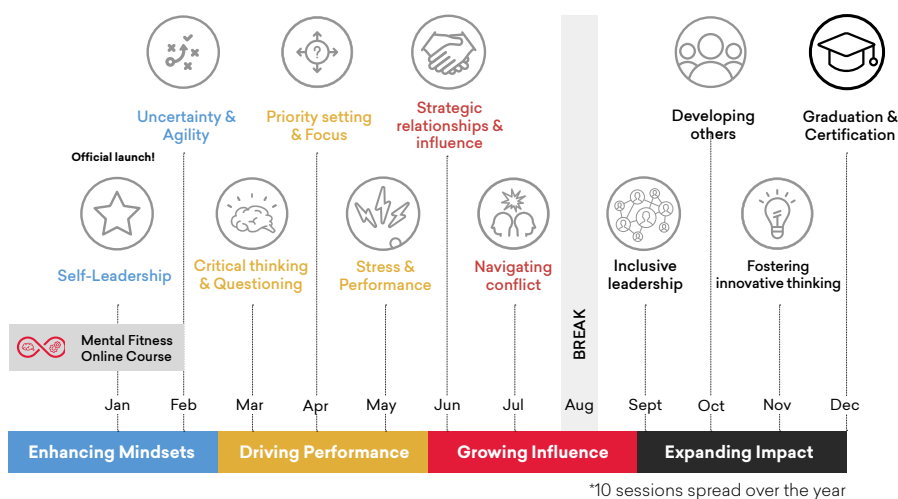
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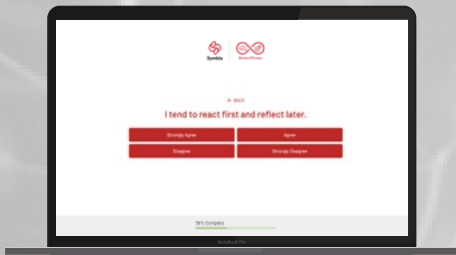
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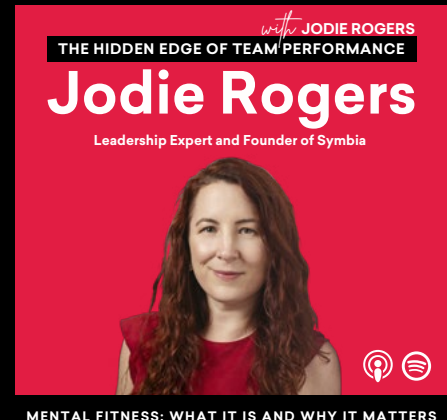


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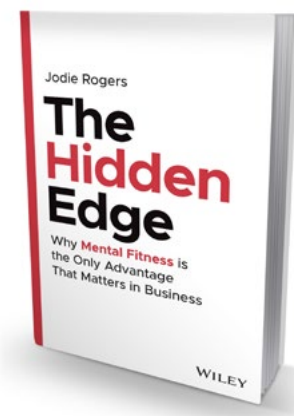


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