



Are You
Thriving
At Work?

THEWELLBEINGLAB

A MICHELLEMCQUAID PROGRAM

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“When you were made a leader you weren’t given a crown,
you were given the responsibility to bring out the best in others.”

Jack Welch

Some leaders are able to dramatically expand their people’s – and their own – capacity for excellence. And they accomplish it without enormous resources or huge heroic gestures, but by seeing the power of possibilities and taking small actions that bring out the best in themselves, their people and their organizations. When it comes to their work, these leaders are thriving in every sense (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014).

As a result a growing body of evidence from researchers around the world is finding that thriving leaders produce results that exceed normal or expected performance. Not only do their practices bring improvements in organizational engagement, productivity, profitability, innovation and customer loyalty, but also in terms of individual physiological health, psychological resilience, brain functioning, interpersonal relationships and learning (Cameron, 2012).

Where's the roadmap for thriving leaders?

This is an area of research still being hotly contested, but one of the most popular theories to guide our practices is that proposed by Professor Martin Seligman (2012) who suggests our ability to thrive relies on us feeling good and functioning effectively as we navigate the natural highs and lows of work and life. In a word, he believes people who thrive have wellbeing.

Studies are finding wellbeing can be cultivated by:

- **Positive emotions:** experiencing positive feelings such as joy, calmness, and happiness.
- **Engagement:** being interested and involved in life.

- **Relationships:** feeling loved, valued, and connected with other people.
- **Meaning:** feeling that our lives are valuable and worthwhile, and connecting to something bigger than ourselves.
- **Accomplishment:** the belief and ability to do things that matter most to us, achieving goals, and having a sense of mastery.

We (and many others) believe that physical health is also a key part of wellbeing. So, we refer to this model as “PERMAH.”

Can anybody thrive?

Researchers have found we each have a built-in range for wellbeing. Just like maintaining your optimal weight by eating well and exercising, you can live at the peak of this range by investing energy and effort into activities that boost your ability to thrive mentally, emotionally, physically and socially.

What works best?

From using your strengths, to performing acts of kindness and cultivating your grit there are many tested, practical interventions you can try. Just make sure they are a good fit for the motivations, values and resources you, your team and your organization have to invest. Don't use these approaches like blunt instruments. Even the best research only tells us what works for some of the people, some of the time. Instead become an intelligent consumer of leadership wellbeing and find the approaches that suit you best.



01 Positive Emotion

The presence of heartfelt positivity.

03 Relationships

The opportunity for genuine connection.

05 Accomplishment

The ability to achieve the things that matter.

02 Engagement

The development of our strengths.

(Seligman, 2011)

04 Meaning

The chance to make a positive difference.

06 Health

Moving, sleeping and eating well.

Are You Thriving At Work?

Think about your experiences and feelings at work over the last week.

How often has each of the following occurred? 0 = Never, 5 = half the time, 10 = all the time

PILLAR	DEFINITION	SCORE
POSITIVE EMOTION	I felt positive at work.	
ENGAGEMENT	I was interested and deeply engaged in my work.	
RELATIONSHIPS	I felt respected and appreciated by my co-workers.	
MEANING	I felt that the work I did was valuable and worthwhile.	
ACCOMPLISHMENT	I made progress towards reaching my work-related goals.	
HEALTH	Physically, I felt strong and healthy.	



Nurture Positive Emotions

Positivity is a choice—a choice we all need to
make again and again, day after day.

Professor Barbara Fredrickson

What Good Are Positive Emotions?



Dial Up Positivity

Positive emotions open our hearts and our minds, making us more receptive, creative and connected.

(Fredrickson, 2009; Kashdan & Biswas-Deiner, 2014)



Navigate Negativity

It's not the absence of negative emotions, it's how you deal with them that matters.



Be Mindful

Each emotion carries a message that we need to hear in order to move forward appropriately.

“20 – 30% of business performance is determined by the mood of employees.”

Dr. Daniel Goleman

Researchers have found that the experience of heartfelt positive emotions - like joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe and love - can make you more optimistic, more resilient, more open, more accepting, and more driven by purpose (Green, et al., 2009).

How? Studies by Professor Barbara Fredrickson from the University of North Carolina have repeatedly demonstrated that positive emotions help you to broaden and build the way your brain responds to opportunities and challenges. For example, it appears that when you experience positive emotions they:

- Help you see new opportunities by expanding your field of peripheral vision.
- Improve your ability to think innovatively by flooding your brain with the feel-good chemicals of dopamine and serotonin.
- Encourage collaboration by making your brain feel safe, so you think more about 'we' and less about 'me'.

As positive emotions accrue, they also build up your psychological, intellectual, social, and physical resources leaving you more resilient (Fredrickson, 2009).

It appears positivity may also obey a tipping point. Some research has found people who experience at least three heartfelt, positive emotional experiences that uplift them, for every one heart-straining, negative emotional experience, are more likely to flourish and feel alive, creative and resilient (Fredrickson, 2013).

You can increase your positivity by:

You can increase heartfelt positivity by: getting out and exercising; meditating regularly; spending time with good friends; connecting with nature; giving yourself permission to play; practicing acts of kindness; counting your blessings each day; savoring goodness; using your strengths in a new way; injecting jolts of joy – like a favorite song – into your day; and re-framing unpleasant circumstances in a positive way, even if it's simply “this too shall pass” (Fredrickson, 2009).

You can decrease your negativity by:

You can decrease your negativity – without trying to eliminate healthy growth experiences – by: disputing negative thinking by asking “is this true?”; breaking the grip of rumination by distracting yourself in healthy ways; becoming more mindful; defusing your negativity landmines by avoiding or carefully navigating bad experiences; assessing your media diet and how it's shaping your thinking; finding substitutes for gossip and sarcasm; and modifying the way you deal with negative people by changing the situation, attending differently or changing the meanings you take from these encounters (Fredrickson, 2009).

You can short-circuit a downward spiral by:

When negative emotions aren't serving you well, it appears you can put the breaks on your downward spiral by injecting a small jolt of joy. Try listening to a favorite song, taking a walk outside, genuinely connecting with someone, or anything that helps you smile.

“There is no coming to consciousness without pain.”

C.F. Jung

It is important to also remember that people who consistently thrive also experience negative emotions. In a world where rejection, failure, self-doubt, hypocrisy, loss, boredom, and annoying and obnoxious people are inevitable, you can't really be connected and grounded to life without encountering difficulties, challenges, and pain from time to time. While it can be tempting to ignore, suppress, or distract yourself from feelings of apprehension, anger, or sadness, these emotions can also offer important emotional, mental, and social learning opportunities.

For example, studies have found that:

- The right amount of anxiety can help you discover and shape solutions for risky situations or goals.
- A moderate degree of apprehension improves performance. An absence of anxiety results in apathy; too much can be paralyzing.
- Guilt can alert you to the hurt you have caused someone and motivate you to be more socially sensitive and caring.
- Anger can increase your optimism and creativity, and give you the energy to take action and do what counts.
- Sadness is a natural response to pain—in ourselves or others.

Rather than trying to avoid the discomfort these emotions can bring, researchers suggest your goal should be to feel robust enough to withstand emotional distress by being able to realize that these emotions are simply signs that something is not going right, to take the required actions, and to let the emotion pass. After all, emotions themselves are neither good nor bad; it's what you do with them that really matters.

Getting comfortable with being uncomfortable

Rather than trying to avoid this discomfort, aim to feel robust enough to withstand the emotional distress by choosing how much attention you give these emotions. Instead of dismissing them or judging them, simply observe your difficult emotions and remind yourself they are transient emotions that come and go. When you act as an observer as separate from the pain, studies suggest you become better at tolerating it.

Leaning into negative emotions

Instead of labeling emotions exclusively as negative or positive, look for what is helpful or unhelpful in a given situation. Emotions such as anxiety, guilt, and anger can be helpful signs that something important to you isn't going right and needs your attention. For example, just the right amount of anxiety can help you discover and share solutions for risky situations. Guilt can alert you that you have hurt someone, and motivate you to be more socially sensitive and caring. And anger can increase your optimism, creativity, and give you the energy to take action on what matters.

Control the controllables

Reflect on a challenging situation that's consistently causing you to experience some negative emotions. Make a list of what you can control and then identify the actions on which you want to focus your attention, energy and efforts.

“Control your emotions, not your employees.”

Sonia Maymin

Germes and colds aren't the only things we spread in the workplace. Your emotions, both positive and negative, are just as contagious because we're wired to mimic the facial expressions and moods of the people we come into contact with. Professor Sigal Barsade at the Wharton School of Business suggests that it takes only one group member out of five to 'infect' the rest of the group with a positive or negative mood (Barsade, 2002).

And the more power you have, the faster it appears your mood may spread. Researchers have found that a leader's positive or negative mood can spread in a little as seven minutes and can impact a team's performance. For example, in a study of 358 managers at Johnson and Johnson, researchers found that the managers who had the highest performance had significantly more emotional competence such as self-awareness, self-management and social skills. And in a study of 53 sales managers, leaders in a more positive mood had greater sales (Greenberg & Maymin, 2013).

Does this mean you should always be upbeat? No. Faking positive emotions is not good for you or your team, as it creates additional stress and undermines authenticity and trust. What's important is that as a leader you are aware of how mood impacts your own performance and that of your team. Think about the work you need people to do and how you'd ideally like their brains to be attuned. What mood will serve your team best? As the leader, what can you do to help cultivate that mood? Notice what works - and what doesn't - and adapt your approach accordingly.

Make meetings uplifting

Researchers estimate we spend 37% of our time in meetings at work and that 50% of this time is completely wasted. Aside from practicing basic meeting etiquette try: starting with sizzle and inject some positivity by asking people to share "what's working well?"; every action we take is preceded by a question so plan your agenda not around the tasks that have to be done but by the conversations people need to have; your memories of events are shaped by endings, so ensure you leave enough time to finish on a positive note (Greenberg & Maymin, 2013). How can you make your meetings more positive?

Deal with bad news quickly

Behavioral economists have found that losses are more painful than gains are enjoyable. For this reason if you have good news spread it out over a day or a week, but if you have bad news aggregate it all at once so that it's not as painful to hear (Tversky & Kahneman, 1992). How can you better communicate good and bad news?

Don't be a control freak

Over 30 years of research has repeatedly shown a strong correlation between how much control you feel at work and your performance, effort, motivation, satisfaction and resilience. What gets in the way of most of us feeling like we have a sense of control over our work is often our manager (Spector, et al., 2002). How can you re-frame your leadership responsibilities from simply 'getting the work done' to 'training and coaching others in doing the work'?

Do You Have A Mood Strategy?



If there was one small action you'd like to prioritize to dial up your levels of heartfelt positivity most work days, what would it be? How could you consistently nudge this into happening?



What can you put in place to help you be more mindful of your mood and what your emotions are trying to tell you?



If there was one consistent nudge you introduced to improve the mood of your team, what would you most like to try?

Positive Emotion Nudges

Dialing Up Positivity

Jolts Of Joy

Reach for a favorite song, a funny video, or anything/ anyone that makes you smile.

Hunt & Gather

Create a portfolio of meaningful letters, photos, quotes, objects to savor positivity.

Connect With Nature

Get out regularly in nature and drink in the wonder and timelessness of the world.

Measure Your Positivity

Take the free survey at positivityratio.com to discover what creates positivity for you.

Savoring The Good

Immerse Yourself

Each day try to immerse all your senses in a pleasurable experience as it unfolds.

Re-live Peak Moments

Write about a treasured memory for 5 – 15 minutes and really re-live the feelings.

Savor Your Stories

Share a story of something good that's happened with someone you care about.

What Went Well

On your way home reflect on what went well today and what made this possible.

Dialing Down Negativity

Healthy Distractions

Create a list of healthy distractions you can reach for to short-circuit negativity.

Disrupt Rumination

Each day write down a negative thought and prove why this is not 100% true.

Navigate Landmines

What activities or people trigger negativity? How can you better prepare for them?

Limit Media

Tune into how media or social media leaves you feeling. Adjust your diet as needed.

Being Comfortably Uncomfortable

Name Your Emotions

When you feel uncomfortable name the emotions you're feeling and breathe slowly.

Slow Down Responses

When you experience strong emotions, breathe deeply, slow down and then respond.

Control Controllables

Make a list of what's in your control and focus attention, energy and action here.

Get Into Your Body

Each morning tune into how your body feels and notice any negative emotions being held.

Short-Circuiting Stress

Decode Stress

What is at stake that matters to you? Leverage this motivation to take action.

Harness Adversity

What have you learned from stressful situations in the past? How can you use this now?

Set Stretch Goals

Do one thing each day that scares you to build up your stress muscles.

Re-Frame Stress

Place a star next to your most stressful task today. How do you want to approach this?



Build Engagement

What lit you up last week? What are you looking forward to this week?

What help do you need to continue developing your strengths?

Michelle McQuaid

Can You Use Your Strengths Intelligently?



Do What You Do Best

You use your strengths when you're engaged, energized + enjoying what you're doing.



Dial Strengths Up

You underplay your strengths when you lack confidence and/or procrastinate.



Dial Strengths Down

You overplay your strengths when you're trying your best but things aren't working.

(Linley, 2008; McQuaid & Lawn, 2014)

“Emphasis on strengths has been found to lead to a 36% improvement in performance.”

Corporate Leadership Council

At some point each of us has experienced what using a strength – those things you’re good at and actually enjoy doing - can feel like. They’re the moments at work that you find yourself looking forward to, which completely absorb you, and leave you feeling more confident, energized and satisfied.

Your strengths may comprise your:

- **Character strengths** - your positive personality traits that lead to benefits for yourself and others e.g. gratitude, perseverance, hope and creativity. Aligned to your values they generally represent how you like to work, and are the things you'll do whether anyone pays you or recognizes you for them. You can discover your character strengths with the free ten-minute survey at www.viacharacter.org.
- **Talents** - strengths that are innate and have a strong biological loading e.g. spatial reasoning, musical ability, interpersonal ability and so on. Generally aligned to what you like to do at work, your talents are skills you want to be paid for. You can discover your talents with the paid twenty-minute survey at gallupstrengthscentre.com.

Why do strengths matter at work?

You see a strength is a strength, because it represents the way your brain is wired to perform at its best. Over time you’ve spent so much time practicing these particular thoughts, feelings and behaviors that you’ve built up neural pathways through your brain that make it easy, effective and enjoyable to show up at work in these ways (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

As a result, studies have found that people who regularly use their strengths: experience more confidence and less stress, enjoy more energy and are happier, and are more creative, engaged and satisfied at work. Not only is developing your strengths good for your wellbeing and performance, but studies suggest that teams where most people have a chance to do what they do best each day are more productive, and have happier customers and lower turnover (McQuaid & Lawn, 2014).

What does this mean for your weaknesses?

In most workplaces researchers estimate we spend about 80% of our time focused on fixing weaknesses, and only 20% on building on strengths. This is because our brains are wired with a negativity bias that trains us to spot what's going wrong and feel an evolutionary pull to fix it. To capitalize on how your brain is wired to perform at its best, however, researchers recommend that you try to flip this equation and spend at least 80% of your time building on your strengths (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011).

This doesn't mean that you ignore your weaknesses. It does mean you should be realistic about the time, effort and commitment it takes to really rewire your brain and turn a weakness into a strength. When it comes to improving your performance at work, first see if there is a strength you can build upon that might create the changes you're seeking. If there's not, then be willing to go at the weakness head on, but ensure you have the support you need to deliver the outcomes you want.

“The key is to know how much of any strength to use at any given time.”

Dr. Alex Linley

While a decade ago researchers thought the best way to put your strengths to work was to figure out what they were and then just apply them more often, this advice - though well intentioned - was the equivalent of giving people a blunt instrument. As we've come to understand people's strengths better we've found it's not enough to just use your strengths more; instead, your goal should be to develop your strengths so you can discover how different strengths, in different amounts, might serve you best in different situations (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, & Minhas, 2011).

When do you underplay your strengths?

Underplaying your strengths at work generally appears as a lack of confidence. This is often due to blindness about particular strengths you have to offer or uncertainty about how to apply them in ways that will be valued at work. As a result you might have noticed at times you're holding yourself back, dimming yourself down, procrastinating or disengaging from certain situations and people for fear of ridicule or failure. Try to dial your strengths up in these moments.

For example, people often say they don't feel like they can use the character strength of Love at work for fear they'll be seen as 'too nice' or 'too soft'. Yet thriving at work is less about how we perform the assigned tasks and more about being able to express who we are through the work we do so it feels engaging and meaningful.

When do you overplay your strengths?

When you overplay your strengths, you may feel like everything should

be going to plan - your strengths are a great match for the work you're doing - but things keep going wrong, people aren't as appreciative of your efforts, or you feel on the verge of burning yourself out. And in my experience if you scratch the surface of most of the feedback you've ever been given about your weaknesses, you'll find it's a strength being overplayed. Try to dial your strengths down in these moments.

For example, while your strength of Honesty may mean you like your communication straight up and to the point, when overplayed your bluntness may be costing your relationships. Or while your strength of Kindness may mean you like to help others whenever you can, when overplayed it you may be struggling to deliver on your own responsibilities.

Can you find the golden mean of your strengths?

The good news is when you get your strengths just right for the situation you're in and the results you want to achieve, you hit the golden mean of your strengths. It's at this moment you enter the state psychologists call flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). This is the feeling of being 'in the zone' or 'one with the music' when you're completely absorbed in what you're doing, often losing all track of time but afterwards having a real sense of satisfaction about what you've accomplished.

The art of developing your strengths lies in finding this golden mean more frequently at work. Try to notice the moments when you're in flow, and find ways to cultivate more of these at work.

“Your job comprises a set of building blocks that you can reconfigure around your strengths.”

Professor Amy Wrzesniewski

The chances are good that at some point, you have changed an aspect of your job so that it better suited you. Whether you took a different approach to a task you were responsible for, changed an interaction pattern, or refined how you thought about the job in a more general sense, you were job crafting.

Research (Wrzesniewski, 2003) with a range of organizations—from Fortune 500 companies to small nonprofits—indicates that employees (at all levels, in all kinds of occupations) who try job crafting often end up more engaged and satisfied with their work lives, achieve higher levels of performance in their organizations, and report greater personal resilience. And by empowering employees to become “job entrepreneurs”, job crafting has been found to give companies a different way to motivate and retain their most talented employees and even help to transform poor performers.

You see your job comprises a set of building blocks that you can reconfigure around your strengths to create more engaging and fulfilling experiences at work. These include:

- **Your Tasks** - You can change the boundaries of your job by taking on more or fewer tasks, expanding or diminishing their scope, or changing how they are performed.
- **Your Relationships** - You can change the nature or extent of your interactions with other people. A managing director, for example, might create mentoring relationships with young associates as a way to connect with and teach those who represent the future of the firm.
- **Your Perceptions** - You can change how you think about the purpose of certain aspects of your job; or you can reframe the job as a whole.

For example, you can turn your daily ‘to-dos’ into ‘tah-dahs’ by creating small strength surges about **how** you do your work, **why** you do your work and **who** you do it with by:

- Grab your ‘to do’ list or daily planner and look for tasks that might benefit from a strengths surge, especially the ones you may have been avoiding!
- Which strengths could you draw upon to make make this task more engaging and energizing for you? Note this next to the task.
- Ask yourself: “Why does this task matter?” and “Who might it help?”, and look for ways you can draw on your strengths to make the task more meaningful.
- Finally, see who you can do this task with that will magnify, stretch or compliment your strengths. Working alongside people who inspire you to use your strengths to complete particular tasks can be an incredibly effective way of creating the strengths surge needed to get the job done

Then take a moment at the end of each day to notice if your strengths surges are positively impacting your ability to get through your daily tasks in a more engaging and enjoyable way and keep looking for new ways to align your strengths to the work you are expected to complete each day.

“The deepest craving of human nature is to be appreciated.”

William James

The 2015 Strengths@Work Survey found that:

- Employees believe that only 34% of their managers can name their top five strengths.
- Yet when managers have a meaningful discussion about an employee's strengths 78% of employees report feeling engaged and energized and that what they're doing is making a difference and is appreciated. These employees are the most likely to describe themselves as “flourishing” at work.
- Unfortunately, 68% of managers fail to have meaningful discussions with their employees about their strengths, and instead simply pat people on the back and saying they're doing okay, say nothing, or point out their faults without guidance of improvements.
- Employees who least looking forward to going to work each day are those with managers who point out their weaknesses (69%) and those with managers who ignore them (68%).

This is despite well-published findings from numerous sources like Gallup Research who have found that managers who focused on their employees' weaknesses cut active disengagement to 22% (indicating that even negative attention is better than none), while managers who focused on their employees' strengths cut active disengagement to 1%. In addition, top-performing managers were more likely to spend time with high producers, match strengths to tasks, and emphasize individual strengths versus seniority in making personnel decisions. As a result, strengths-based approach managers nearly doubled their likelihood of success, and they were 86% more likely to achieve above average performance levels.

Map your team's strengths

If you can't name your employees' top five strengths, ask them to take the free 10-minute VIA Survey (www.viacharacter.org). Have a conversation about their results and how they use these strengths at work. Then map their results on the chart provided and put this somewhere you can see them regularly to help you think about how to help this employee do what they do best more frequently at work.

Hold a weekly strengths check-in

Research into the practices of the best team leaders reveals that they conduct regular check-ins with each team member about near-term work. These brief conversations allow leaders to set expectations for the upcoming week, review priorities, comment on recent work, and provide course correction, coaching, or important new information. Try asking questions such as: What lit you up last week? Which of your strengths did this draw on? What are you looking forward to this week? Which strengths will this help you develop? Is there anything I can do to help?

Give strengths-based feedback

Researchers have found that highlighting an employee's strengths can increase people's happiness at work in general and is tied to cultural and business results, such as job satisfaction and retention. When you offer someone strengths-based feedback try to mention the strengths you saw then drawing upon, the effort you saw being made, and how they can continue building on it. This type of feedback can be used for strengths that are being used well, as well as those being overplayed or underplayed.

How Do You Use Your Strengths?



What lit you up last week? What are you looking forward to this week?
What support do you need to continue developing your strengths?



Which strength could you draw upon today to turn a to-do task you're not looking forward to into a tah-dah task that draws on your strengths?



Can your team name each other's strengths? Do you give each other strengths-based feedback regularly?

Enhancing Engagement

Discover Your Strengths

Name Your Strengths

Take the free survey at viacharacter.org to discover your strengths.

Reflected Best Self

Ask 5 people to share a story of one of your best moments and the strengths they saw.

Strengths Reflection

At the end of each day take a few minutes to reflect on how you've used your strengths.

Strengths Habit

Create a small daily habit to practice using one of your strengths at work.

Creating Moments of Flow

Meet Your Best Self

Write about what might be possible if you were using your strengths each day at work.

Craft Your Job

Mix up the type of tasks and who you spend time with to create strength opportunities.

Create A ROAD MAP

Track how strengths are used in your workplace. What can you see popping up?

Finding Flow

When you plan your week create opportunities to put your strengths to work.

Developing Your Strengths

New Strength Uses

. Each day pick one task on your to-do list to use a strength in a new way.

Strength Moments

When you're procrastinating and putting things off reach for a strength to help you.

Take A Strengths Pause

Between activities, pause, take a deep breath, ask which strength will I use next?

Dial Strengths Down

When things don't go to plan, pause and think about which strengths you're overplaying.

Spotting Strengths In Others

Look For Strengths

Look for where people light up – eyes sparkle, body language and voice is more animated.

Give Feedback

Let people know when you've valued their strengths and the difference it's made to you.

Do A Strengths Check-In

Ask people: What lit you up last week? What are you looking forward to this week?

Be A Strengths Coach

When someone is underplaying or overplaying their strengths, let them know.

Build Strong Teams

Map Strengths

Map your teams strengths and discover reflect on how to use your strengths intelligently.

Assign Strengths

Try to assign work assignments that align with people's strengths.

Talk Strengths

As a team talk about what's working well, and how you can build on your strengths.

Avoid Collisions

Look for potential strength clashes in your most challenging relationships.



Invest In Relationships

Don't puff up. Don't shrink down. Just stand tall and
make space for others to belong.

Professor Brene Brown

Are You An Effective Giver?



Be Generous

What if people are doing the best they can with what they have right now?



Be Curious & Kind

Choose curiosity over judgement, and courage over comfort, rather than stewing or seething with resentment.



Be An Effective Giver

While *givers* look for ways to help others, *matchers* look to trade favors, and *takers* focus on getting as much as possible

“Our relationships with other people matter, and matter more than anything else in the world.”

Dr. George Vaillant

The one consistent finding to date when it comes to improving your wellbeing is that: 'other people matter'. In fact, more than what we're doing in our jobs, research suggests it's who we're doing it with that ultimately determines our level of engagement and wellbeing (Rath, Harter & Harter, 2010).

This is because you have a biological need for social support and each time you joyfully connect with another person, the pleasure-inducing hormone oxytocin is released into your bloodstream, immediately reducing anxiety and improving concentration and focus. This is why when employees report that their immediate boss cares about them, employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity are higher and so is profitability (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

New research (Fredrickson, 2013b) has found it takes just a micro-moment to genuinely connect with another person. You can do this by:

- Sharing one or more positive emotions between you and another person;
- Synchronizing your biochemistry and behaviors (by looking into their eyes, mirroring their body language, or matching their vocal tone);
- Embracing the feelings of mutual care that arise.

Researchers describe this process of connection between people as 'positivity resonance' and have found it results in an upward spiral of warmth and trust (Kok & Fredrickson, 2010).

Ask appreciative questions

We each share the same deep psychological need to be respected, valued and appreciated (James, 1985). By looking for the true, the good, and the possible in people you can meet this need. Try asking appreciative questions as you positively resonate with others. For example: “What's working well at the moment?”, “What's been the highlight of your week?”, or “What are you looking forward to in the coming months?”.

Respond actively and constructively

Researchers have found that when you take the time to respond actively and constructively to someone's good news by asking questions that appreciate and validate their good fortune, it's a positivity boost for you and them. For example: “The promotion sounds so exciting, how did you find out? When will you start? What are you most looking forward to?”. It turns out when we take delight in other people's windfalls or successes, we feel understood and cared for, and as a result our feelings of commitment and satisfaction in the relationship are enhanced (Gable, et al., 2004).

Show appreciation

Practicing appreciation and gratitude is a kind of mega strategy to improve your wellbeing and your relationships. Studies have found it opens your heart and urges you to give back – to do something good in return – helping to nurture new relationships and improve existing ones (Waters, 2012). Try to take the time to genuinely thank one person each day and be specific about what they did you valued.

“Psychological safety describes a work environment where people are not tied up in interpersonal knots.”

Professor Amy Edmondson

The one consistent finding to date when it comes to improving your wellbeing is that: 'other people matter'. This isn't just because human survival depends on others, but because the primary goal of most of our behavior is to feel like we belong and that we matter in the eyes of others. In fact, William James, the father of modern psychology, suggested that the deepest principle in human nature is the need to be appreciated.

The truth is that we have a basic need to feel responded to, respected and important to others, and conversely to avoid rejection, insignificance, and disconnection, that shapes a great deal of our behavior. This is why studies have found that having a sense of belonging correlates with a range of positive outcomes, including higher self-esteem, greater life satisfaction, faster recovery from disease, lower levels of stress, less mental illness and a longer life.

For example, if you have a best friend at work, you're seven times more likely to be engaged in your job, produce higher quality work, have higher levels of wellbeing and are less likely to be injured on the job. And when employees report that their immediate boss cares about them, employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity are higher and so is profitability.

Unfortunately, in an increasingly busy, technologically focused and diverse world Professor Gervase Bushe has found (2010) that often our ability to connect with each other gets bogged down in “interpersonal mush” – the largely unfavorable conclusions we tend to leap to about what others are thinking, feeling and doing – which leads to distrust among team members, spotty implementation, an inability to learn together, and results in higher levels of anxiety and burn out.

Thus it's not surprising that an extensive two-year study at Google found that their highest performing teams all had one thing in common – high levels of psychological safety (Delizonna, 2017). Professor Amy Edmondson at Harvard Business School explains that psychological safety exists when team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable with each other by speaking up and offering new ideas, asking questions, valuing different opinions, and being willing and able to learn from their mistakes (Edmondson, 1999).

Researchers suggest you can improve psychological safety by:

- **Replacing blame with curiosity** - If team members sense that you're trying to blame them for something, you become their saber-toothed tiger. The alternative to judgment and blame is curiosity. If you believe you already know what the other person is thinking, then you're not ready to have a conversation. Instead, adopt a learning mindset, knowing you don't have all the facts and remember that generally people are doing the best they can with what they have in any given moment.
- **Approaching conflict as a collaborator, not an adversary** - True success is a win-win outcome, so when conflicts come up, avoid triggering a fight-or-flight reaction by asking, “How could we achieve a mutually desirable outcome?”
- **Accepting that failure can lead to growth** – We're all failing some of the time, the only question is whether we are learning from these experiences. Make it safe to take smart risks by normalizing failure and struggle as part of the learning process. Talk openly and with curiosity about what's not working, encourage and reward people's willingness to ask for help or mentoring, and share and celebrate the lessons being learned.

“Givers succeed in a way that creates a ripple effect for everyone around them.”

Professor Adam Grant

When it comes to your interactions with others at work, are you a giver, taker, or matcher? In giver mode, you look for ways to be helpful to others; in matcher mode, you trade evenly with others; and in taker mode, you focus on getting as much as you can. You can test your relationships style at www.giveandtake.com.

These preferences aren't about money, but about the attitudes and actions that shape your interactions with others. And Professor Adam Grant at Wharton Business School has found (2013) that these preferences play as much of a role in your success as hard work, talent, and luck.

For example, Adam's research suggests that people tend to envy successful takers and look for ways to knock them down a notch. Matchers are so busy exchanging favors no-one ever really gets ahead. Selfless givers who say “yes” to every request often suffer generosity burn out. But, self-protective givers look for high-impact, low-cost, sustainable ways to give that creates value and enhances the success of others, wind up with people rooting for them and supporting their success.

Self-protective givers achieve this by doing three things differently:

- They set boundaries around when, how, and to whom they give, so that they don't burn themselves out.
- They are willing to ask for help when they need it, rather than worrying about imposing on others.
- They look for win-win-win outcomes that grow the pie for everybody, rather than being so ready to give that they end up wasting resources.

Invest in five-minute favors

Spend five minutes each day helping someone else in your network. For example, experts often share knowledge, coaches teach skills, mentors give advice and guidance, connectors make introductions, extra-milers show up early, stay late, and volunteer for extra work and helpers provide hands-on task support and emotional support.

Habits of highly effective givers

Grant and Rebele (2017) suggest you can also try to:

- Prioritize the help requests that come your way — say yes when it matters most and no when you need to.
- Give in ways that play to your interests and strengths to preserve your energy and provide greater value.
- Distribute the giving load more evenly — refer requests to others when you don't have the time or skills, and be careful not to reinforce gender biases about who helps and how.
- Secure your oxygen mask first — you'll help others more effectively if you don't neglect your own needs.
- Amplify your impact by looking for ways to help multiple people with a single act of generosity.
- Chunk your giving into dedicated days or blocks of time rather than sprinkling it throughout the week. You'll be more effective — and more focused.
- Learn to spot takers, and steer clear of them. They're a drain on your energy, not to mention a performance hazard.

“Clear is kind. Unclear is not”

Professor Brene Brown

Why are feedback conversations at work so often viewed as ‘hard’, ‘tough’ or ‘courageous’? Because they require us to care enough to get uncomfortable with each other in order to be honest about what’s not working as well as it could. They require generosity, rather than judgment, if we are to feel safe enough to really talk and listen to each other. And they require us to be vulnerable with each other, if they are to be collaborative rather than combative.

Unfortunately, being uncomfortable, generous and vulnerable with each other are often skills many of us have not yet mastered. And that’s what makes these conversations risky. But is there really anything safe about letting an issue with a colleague fester away? Wouldn’t it be kinder to speak up quickly so you can both learn from the experience and find a better way to support each other?

The truth is, if you really respect and value other people, then biting your tongue, fixing things for them, or moaning behind their back are not kind acts. It robs other people of the chance for learning and growth and implies that you don’t think they are capable enough to even be worth a conversation – even if it might be awkward.

In contrast, if you truly respect and value someone then the kind thing to do is to embrace the suck and be willing to get uncomfortable with them if that is what is required. It is to remember that we are each wired to be perfectly imperfect and that missteps and mistakes are just part of the learning process and what matters most is what we choose to do next. It is the willingness to talk with someone clearly and directly about what is not working and to ask them:

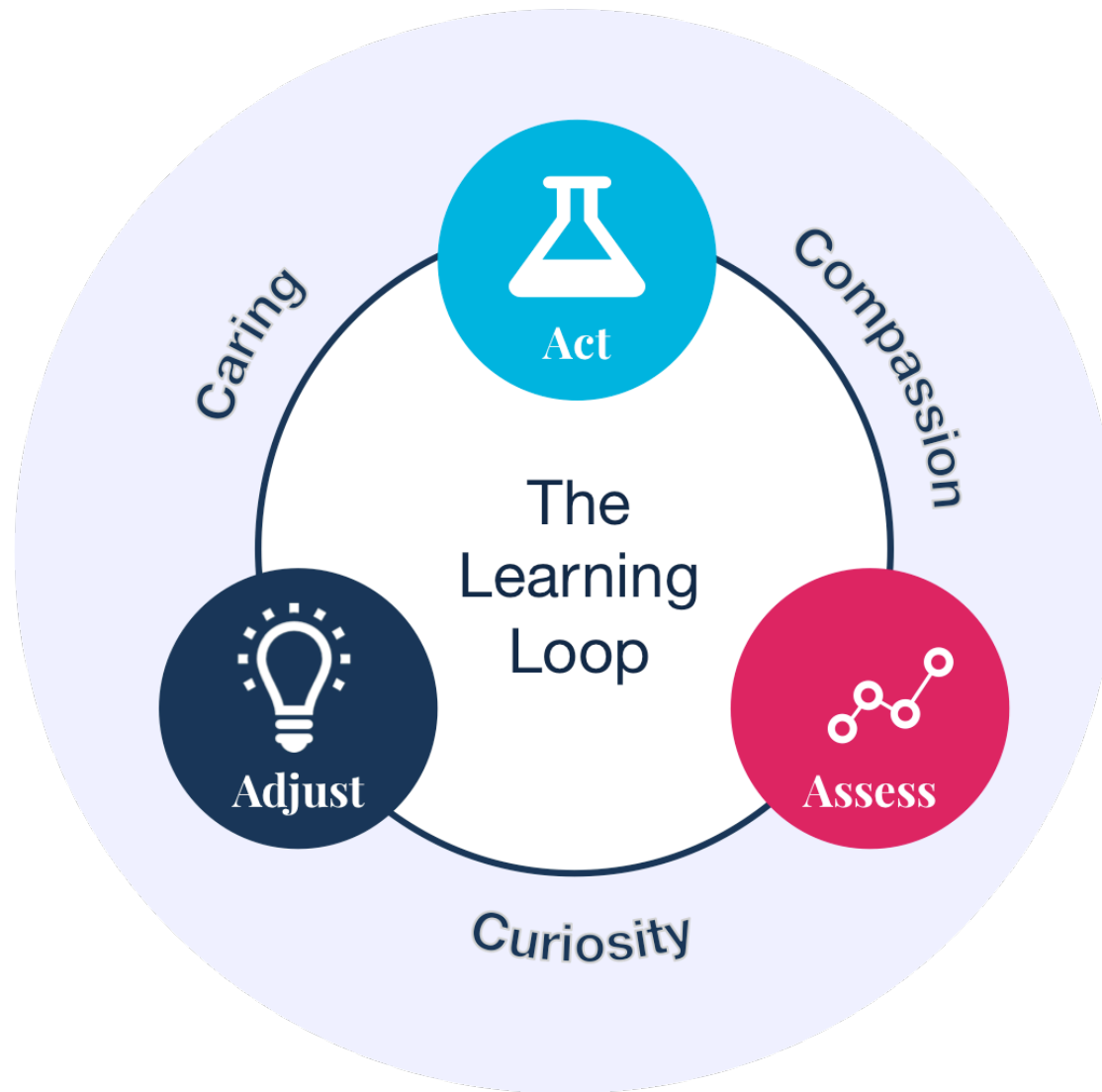
- How do you feel things are going?
- What’s working well from your perspective?
- Where do you feel like you’re struggling?
- What can we learn from this experience?
- What support do you need?

Kind conversations are sliding door moments in our relationships with each other. They build trust, psychological safety, and connection like few other interactions ever do between us.

To prepare for a kind conversations first check in on these tips from Professor Brene Brown (2018) for knowing when you’re ready to give feedback:

- I’m ready to sit next to you rather than across from you.
- I’m willing to put the problem in front of us rather than between us (or sliding it toward you).
- I’m ready to listen, ask questions, and accept that I may not fully understand the issue.
- I recognize your strengths and how you can use them to address your challenges.
- I can hold you accountable without shaming or blaming.
- I’m open to owning my part.
- I can model the vulnerability and openness I expect to see from you.

Kind Coaching Conversations



Can You Build Psychological Safety?



Are you generally more of a giver, matcher or taker at work most days?



If there was five minute favor you could do for one person in the next 48 hours, who would you start with (tip – try someone you might need to be a little more generous towards)? What would you do for them?



Does your team have a more giving, matching or taking culture? How does this impact the levels of psychological safety in your team?

Investing In Relationships

Being Compassionate

Be Available

Try to make yourself physically, mentally and emotionally available to others.

Listen Empathetically

Try to be aware, non-judgmental and curious when people are sharing stories.

Make Time To Connect

Invest in small moments of positivity resonance by sharing heartfelt positive emotions.

Offer Micro-Moves

Small actions or gestures can make a huge difference in helping someone feel seen.

Investing In Trust

Map Your Trust Bank

Map all the people who trust you and what you're doing to maintain these relationships.

Give Away Control

Every day try to delegate one thing to others to convey your trust in them.

Ask For Input

Seek the input of others to demonstrate your trust in their knowledge and skills.

Communicate Openly

Be open and honest with others. Quickly have kind conversations when needed.

Giving Effectively

Do A 5 Minute Favor

. Each day take 5 minutes to help someone in your network.

Be Powerless

Create win-win conversations by asking questions and giving everyone a chance to speak.

Chunk Your Giving

Align what you're giving with your strengths and the needs you can see around you.

Build Psychological Safety

Value Conflict

Look for ways to create win-win outcomes when people's opinions and hopes differ.

Speak Human

Recognize people's need for respect, competence, social status, and autonomy.

Be Generous

Remember most people are doing the best they can right now when you give feedback.

Treat People Like Adults

Rather than judging or resenting people, have kind conversations when needed.

Navigating Incivility

Value Civility

Take the civility quiz at christineporath.com and see how well you're doing.

Take Control

You can visit pity city, but you can't live there. Find ways to re-focus your attention.

Gain Clarity

Will you lift people up today or bring them down? Who do you want to be?



Foster Meaning

When people have more than one passion in their life,
studies find they are much better off.

Professor Robert Vallerand

Is Your Passion Harmonious?



Find The Difference

The single strongest predictor of meaningfulness is the belief that our jobs have a positive impact on others.



Keep Passion Harmonious

A passion is harmonious when you feel in control of what you love doing.



Manage Obsessive Sprints

When your passion takes control and makes it difficult to engage in other things or with other people, it has become obsessive.

“I put my heart and my soul into my work, and have lost my mind in the process.”

Vincent Van Gogh

While studies have found that finding meaning in your work brings many benefits Professor Robert Vallerand (2003) also suggests that when it comes to finding meaning and purpose in our work, we can have too much of a good thing. His studies have found that:

- Harmonious passion occurs when we engage in our work because it brings us intrinsic joy, we feel we have a sense of control and our work is in harmony with other activities in life. We also know when to disengage and are able to turn off the work switch when engagement becomes too risky or we wish to enjoy other activities in our life. As a result harmonious passion is associated with higher levels of physical health, psychological wellbeing, self-esteem, positive emotions, creativity, concentration, and work satisfaction.
- Obsessive passion occurs when we also perceive our work as important and highly valued, but we have an uncontrollable urge to engage in it and feel compelled to undertake it. We find it hard to stop thinking about our work, get frustrated when prevented from working, and persist even when it's risky to do so because our sense of identity and self-worth is heavily tied to our work. As a result we feel conflicted between our passion and other areas of our life, leading to higher levels of negative affect over time and a risk of burning out.

If you think your level of obsessive passion might be too high, Scott Kauffman of the Imagination Institute suggests (2011) you might try:

Scheduling real breaks

Force yourself to get out by scheduling other activities during the course of the day (like lunch with a friend, or a break to hit the gym) and time after work or on weekends for family, friends, and activities you enjoy.

Don't bring work home

If you can afford to, make it completely impossible to access your work once you leave work. Don't bring home your laptop. Leave those files on your desk. Keep separate email accounts for home and work, and don't check your work email when you're at home (put up an out-of-office message if you have to).

Changing your thought patterns when you work

Fake the mindset of the harmoniously passionate person until you make it. For instance, convert thoughts of 'must' and 'need' to 'want' and 'desire'. At first, this may feel awkward, but eventually the obsessively passionate mindset will dissipate, and so will the behaviors associated with it.

Committing to a new hobby

Often, investing too much self in one project is an indication of a negative core self. The more additional things outside of work contribute to a positive sense of self, the less space your work performance will take up in your ego, and the smaller your chances of burnout.

“The biggest predictor of meaningfulness in our work is the belief that what we do has a positive impact.”

Professor Adam Grant

Researchers have found that people struggle to find meaning in their work when they lack autonomy, variety, challenge and performance feedback, and, most importantly, the chance to be of service to others. In fact a comprehensive analysis of data from more than 11,000 employees across different industries has found that the single strongest predictor of meaningfulness was the belief that the job had a positive impact on others (Humphrey, et al., 2007).

The good news is that in most cases our jobs do have a positive impact; however, often we're too far away from the people who use our products or services to really understand how what we do benefits others. For example, sitting in a university call center asking alumni for donations is repetitive work, with very low autonomy and plenty of rude customers. As a result people don't generally stay in these roles for very long.

While most managers assume employees are ultimately self-interested, and offer the callers performance incentives like pay increases, promotions, and bonuses – none of which made the work any more enjoyable or the callers more productive - Professor Adam Grant took a different approach. He discovered (Grant, et al., 2007) that a 5 minute conversation with a student who had received a scholarship from some of the money raised by the university call center staff was enough to create a sense of purpose in their otherwise tedious work. Having seen the potential positive impact they could have, on average callers doubled their number of calls and weekly revenue increased from \$411 to \$2083 (more than 400%).

Adam (2014) suggests there are three basic mechanisms leaders should leverage when it comes to creating more meaningful work for their teams:

Show your people how their work benefits others

Try to connect your team with end-users of your services or products so they can experience first-hand the positive impact their work has on others. For example, Facebook invite software developers to hear from users who have found long-lost friends and family members thanks to the site. When was the last time your team actually heard how what they did benefited the people you serve?

Share how others appreciate your people's work

We all share the same deep psychological need to be respected, valued, and appreciated. When the Olive Garden shares customers' letters describing how they chose to celebrate a meaningful event at their restaurants, staff members are reminded of the value of their work. When was the last time you shared feedback with your team about the positive impact their efforts had for others?

Develop a deeper understanding of your customers' needs

Microsoft have found that after meeting end-users face-to-face, developers better empathize with the challenges they face and are more motivated to design software with users in mind. When was the last time your team talked with your customers or end-users and had the opportunity to ask how their work could be of better service?

Can You Keep Your Passion Harmonious?



Think of yourself as a pie. How big a slice does work take up for you right now?



Does this suggest your passion for work right now veers more towards harmonious or obsessive? What impact does this have for you and your team?



Generally, does your team veer towards more harmonious or obsessive passion at work?
How can you help them keep their passion harmonious?

Foster Meaning

Investing In Belonging

Give At Work

Join your workplace giving program or create opportunities to volunteer.

Find Your Tribe

Reach out to others to find like-minded people you enjoy spending time with.

See Others

Look people in the eye, smile and genuinely say hello when you walk past them.

Create Coffee Dates

Each week invite one person you don't know well for a coffee and catch up.

Creating Purpose

For The Sake Of What?

What are you willing to get out of your comfort-zone for? Take one step towards this.

Re-Frame Mundane

Write down a task you dread? What's its purpose? Who does it serve?

Outsource Inspiration

Connect to the people impacted by the work you do. What difference do you make?

Adopt A Service Mindset

What's one thing you could do today to make a positive difference for others?

Practicing Story-Telling

Uncover Your Story

. Each day take 5 minutes to journal about what's happened and why it matters to you.

Be A Journalist

Look at events as though you are a journalist. What's the turning point in this story?

Release Your Lost Self

If life had unfolded as you wished what would have been? Own what you've lost.

Invest In Job Crafting

Optimize Your Job

Look for ways to spend more time in the tasks you find meaningful at work.

Queue It Up

Reorder tasks and interactions so you can start your day with meaningful tasks.

Making Passion Harmonious

Restore Balance

A short sprint of obsessive passion is ok, but when will you restore balance?

Alternative Passions

What would you like to pursue purely for the joy of the activity? Make this happen.

Set Boundaries

We all need time to rest and recover. Set boundaries to look after your wellbeing.



Grow Accomplishment

Authentic grit is the passionate pursuit of hard goals that cause you to emotionally flourish, take positive risks, live without regret and inspire others.

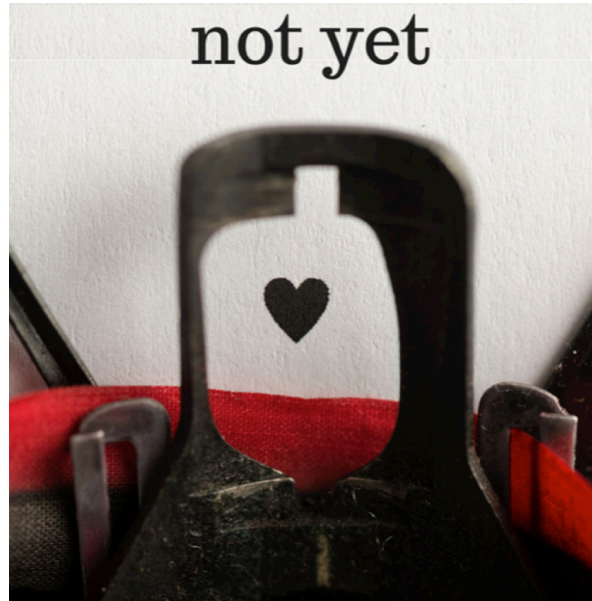
Caroline Adams Miller

Can You Cultivate Grit?



Set Stretch Goals

The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset.



Acknowledge 'Not Yet'

When you hear 'not yet' you understand you're on a learning curve. It gives you a path into the future.



Practice Self-Compassion

Self-compassion can help you to break the entrenched patterns of self-criticism, whilst still being honest about your fears.

“Grit is living life like it's a marathon, rather than a sprint.”

Professor Angela Duckworth

Are you gritty enough to achieve what matters most to you and others? When it comes to tackling our goals at work or in life, for many of us Professor Angela Duckworth (2016) suggests that: enthusiasm is common but endurance is rare. Let's face it, being gritty enough to see things through can be hard work, and yet, researchers have suggested that grit is a key predictor of success.

Grit is the combined passion and perseverance for the pursuit of long-term goals. It's the ability to stick with working toward something for years, in the face of setbacks, disappointments, and plateaus in your progress. As the Japanese proverb suggests it's the ability to fall down seven times, and stand up eight. Studies suggest that it is associated with your levels of achievement, resilience, and wellbeing.

Researchers are still learning how grit is cultivated. To date they have found that it can help to:

- **Set meaningful goals** to guide and prioritize their efforts.
- **Cultivate hope** through the stories you tell yourself and focusing on what is within your control.
- **Practice a growth mindset** and self-compassion to give themselves permission to learn.
- **Engage in both deliberate practice and moments of flow** to build the knowledge and skills they need to have the best chance of producing the desired results.
- **Surround yourself with other gritty people** who encourage you to stick to your goals.

Professor David DeSteno (2018), has also found that self-control and grit can be enhanced by harnessing the social emotions – gratitude, compassion and authentic pride – that are evoked when we help others. Given that self-control has evolved from our need to co-operate with each other, he notes that the experience of social emotions has been found to help people to be more future-orientated in their choices, to willingly acquire new skills, and to persevere in the face of difficulty, so they can achieve outcomes that benefit themselves and others in the long run. Thus you may be able to boost your grit levels by:

- **Practicing gratitude** by focusing on the people who have helped you each day.
- **Building compassion** by finding links of connection – i.e. shared interests, background, experiences, hopes - with other people.
- **Leveraging authentic pride** by humbly developing the skills that people around you value and keeping track of progress.

It's also worth remembering that being gritty doesn't mean you never give up. It means using your passions to guide and prioritize your efforts, so you know when to persist and when to look for viable alternatives. Instead researcher and coach Caroline Adams-Miller (2017) believes the key is to pursue *authentic grit* – the passionate pursuit of hard goals that cause you to emotionally flourish, take positive risks, live without regret, and inspire others.

You can take her free grit challenge here: www.carolinemiller.com/grit.



To Be Impressive

Fixed Mindset
Fear Based

- I'm not really good enough
- Negative feedback wounds
- Failure feels fatal
- Need to be in control
- Success plateaus

(Dweck, 2006)

To Learn & Grow

Growth Mindset
Confidence Based

- With learning + effort I'll improve
- Negative feedback sparks learning
- Failure teaches
- Need to show up
- Success grows

“I didn't fail. I just found 10,000 ways the light bulb didn't work.”

Thomas Edison

Do you fear failure? The truth is, we all fail at something some of the time; the only question is whether we are learning from these experiences or missing out on some of life's best lessons because it feels too painful to admit we were wrong or didn't measure up.

Professor Carol Dweck (2008) has found this response is often the result of a **“fixed mindset”** that is underpinned by the belief that you are born with a certain amount of talent and intelligence and that's your lot in life. People adopting a fixed mindset perceive outcomes as the ultimate measure of what people are capable of achieving—you're clever or dumb, good at sports or clumsy, musical or tone deaf. They also experience a heightened fear of criticism and perceive failure as a signal that they have reached the limits of their potential.

In contrast, people with a **“growth mindset”** believe that while you're born with a certain amount of talent and intelligence, with learning and effort you can always improve—and neuroscience now validates this belief. As a result, instead of just the outcomes, people adopting a growth mindset also value the learning and effort and are prepared to meet the challenges. This lowers their levels of stress and anxiety and gives them the confidence to reframe failure and criticisms as teachable moments that are as important to success as perfect outcomes.

It's important to note that we each have the capacity to sit in either of these mindsets—no one practices a growth mindset all the time. For example, you might have a growth mindset around growing and learning in sport, but are convinced that you have no musical ability at all. Your mindset impacts how motivated you are to pursue different goals and whether or not you are willing to be open and flexible in your approach.

Studies have found that a growth mindset makes it easier to set yourself stretch goals, to ask for help as you go, and to feel motivated to achieve the things that matter to you most. It sparks hope by helping you feel like you have nothing to lose and everything to gain if you step outside your comfort zone. It appears to help you move beyond your present limitations and to achieve your true potential.

You can practice a growth mindset by:

Setting learning goals

Each week, set at least one learning goal to build your competence in something. It might be a skill you want to gain, a task you want to master, or simply the desire to understand something better. Notice what happens as you practice, make mistakes, make adjustments, and eventually start to do better in the competence you're building. As you tackle this goal, practice letting go of the outcome, embracing your mistakes, and identifying the processes and efforts you can build upon to keep improving.

Getting comfortable with failure

Write down the three biggest mistakes or errors you've made at work in the last year. Next to each one, list the lessons or insights you gained from making these mistakes. Put the list somewhere handy so you can reread it when you need a reminder that mistakes can sometimes offer the best opportunities for learning and growth. When you fail, remind yourself that you're “not there yet” and set a new learning goal to build the skills you need to get closer to the outcomes you want.

“Why waste time proving over and over how great you are, when you could be getting better?”

Professor Carol Dweck

Professor Carol Dweck also suggests (2016) that when organizations measure us:

- Only by our outcomes this creates a fixed mindset culture, where being smart and talented is prized above all other behaviors. When we're worried that the outcome is all that matters, it seems we'll do whatever it takes to deliver a result including hoarding resources (even from our teammates), lying to our colleagues and clients, and blaming others when then things don't go right. But perhaps the biggest risk in these cultures is that we tend to ignore, avoid or abandon the potentially valuable learning opportunities that enable our growth and innovation.
- By the efforts that we make this creates a growth mindset culture of development, where the willingness to put in our best effort and to learn and grow is what's valued the most. When we feel confident that giving things our best shot and learning from the experience is what really counts, it seems we're more willing to collaborate with others, to innovate and learn from our successes and our failures, and to behave ethically. Perhaps most importantly we're equipped to deal with setbacks and seek out opportunities for growth and innovation.

For example, Carol's research has found that employees in growth mindset workplaces are:

- 47% likelier to say that their colleagues are trustworthy
- 34% likelier to feel a strong sense of ownership and commitment to the company
- 65% likelier to say that the company supports risk taking
- 49% likelier to say that the company fosters innovation

Leaders with a growth mindset see talent and intelligence as just the starting point, and instead are interested in cultivating people's effort and willingness to learn. Here are three ways they achieve this:

Set moonshot goals

They go after grandiose ambitious goals, with the understanding that while some are going to hit the moon and catapult their organization into the future, others may not, but still can provide valuable learning and development opportunities. For example, Microsoft's holographic project began as a moonshot goal and while team members knew that there was a strong likelihood the project could fail, they welcomed the chance to learn and develop insights that could drive the business forward.

They understand that failure can lead to growth

They find ways to make failure and struggle the norm, are prepared for multiple attempts to get the result they're looking for, share their struggles with others, and seek help or mentoring when they need it. For example, some of the organizations Carol works with reward fabulous struggles or failures - unsuccessful projects that are milked for every ounce of learning, and where the lessons are incredibly valuable for the organization.

They reward effort not outcomes

They give feedback and show appreciation for the efforts and learning they can see unfolding, rather than just the outcomes being achieved. They give effort-based praise, reflecting the learning and progress they can see being made.

“Unlike self-criticism which asks if you're good enough, self compassion asks what's good for you.”

Professor Kristin Neff

Do you ever hear a little voice chattering away in your head that fills you with self-doubt? Perhaps you've heard it saying: “You're not good enough”, “You're so lazy”, or even “You're such an idiot.” It's that voice of self-criticism that says things you would never dare say to anyone else in an effort to drive you forward or keep you safe. But does it really work?

Researchers suggest probably not. Neuroscientists have found (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006) self-criticism actually shifts the brain into a state of self-inhibition and self-punishment that causes you to disengage from your goals. Leaving you feeling threatened and demoralized, it seems to put the brakes on you taking action, and over time is likely to leave you stuck in a cycle of rumination, procrastination and self-loathing.

So what's the alternative? Professor Kristin Neff and her colleagues suggest (2015) that tapping into your self-compassion can help you to break your entrenched patterns of self-criticism, while still allowing you to be honest about your fears. Think of your self-compassionate voice as a wise and supportive mentor who's encouraging you to see things in a more clear and balanced way, to remember that no-one is perfect and to be kind, understanding, and accountable to yourself.

Instead of taming, shaming, or blaming these voices for undermining your confidence, self-compassion has been found to help reduce our levels of stress, anxiety and self-doubt by allowing you to see them for what they are – just stories about the things you fear, and not the truth about who you are or what you're capable of. It helps to activate our

brain's care-giving and self-awareness systems making it easier to believe that you are capable and worthy, making you less self-conscious, less likely to compare yourself to others, and less likely to feel insecure. And far from being self-indulgent or 'soft', the deliberate use of self-compassionate talk has been found to be an effective means of enhancing your motivation, your performance, and your resilience. You can practice self-compassion by:

Talking to yourself like a wise friend

Instead of beating yourself up, next time you make a mistake, face failure, or just lack the motivation to get something done, try talking to yourself like a wise and kind friend or mentor would in this moment. What might they ask you? What advice might they give you? What strengths might they point you towards?

Watching your language

You may be so used to criticizing yourself that you don't even realize you're doing it. Try to pay particular attention to the words you use when you speak to yourself. If you wouldn't say the same things to someone you care about, then you're being self-critical.

Comforting yourself with a physical gesture

Kind physical gestures have an immediate effect on our bodies, activating the soothing parasympathetic system. To get away from the stories in your head and drop into your body, try putting your hands over your heart or simply placing one hand over the top other in a comforting way.

Can You Cultivate Grit?



Being completely honest with yourself, when you think about taking on new challenges or dealing with failure or negative feedback, do you sit more towards a fixed or growth mindset?



How could you remind yourself to set goals around learning? How could you get comfortable with failure and negative feedback? What impact might this have for you at work?



How could you reach for more self-compassion and speak to yourself like a wise and kind coach who expects the best of you but doesn't need to beat you up if order to help you achieve what you're capable of?

Amplifying Accomplishment

Practicing A Growth Mindset

Set Learning Goals

Each week set a learning goal to build your competence in something and stretch.

Embrace Failure

Write down 3 of your biggest failures at work and what you learned from these moments.

Tune In

Tune into the stories your fixed mindset tells and talk back in a growth mindset voice.

Reflect On Learning

At the end of each day ask what did I learn today? What did I try hard at?

Setting Goals That Work

Know What You Want

Write down all your goals and circle the 3 you really, really want and prioritize them.

Audit Your Time

At the end of the week write down how you spent your time. Is this what you want?

Set Weekly Goals

When you plan your week make sure there is at least one want-to goal on the list.

Invest In Small Wins

If there was one small step you could take towards your goal today what would it be?

Developing Grit

Draw A Grit Map

On a page map your 1st, 2nd and 3rd level goals so you know what to say “yes” to.

Ask For Help

Ask other gritty people to hold you accountable to your goals and help you persevere.

Do Deliberate Practice

Intentionally work to build a skill by doing it again and again until you have mastered it.

Accept “Not Yet”

When you fail remind yourself that you’re just “not there yet” and it needs more practice.

Being Self-Compassionate

Create A Mantra

What would a wise and kind coach say to you in the moments you fall short?

Write A Letter

In the midst of failure or frustration write yourself a letter from a wise and kind friend.

Soothe Your Pain

Place one hand over the opposite wrist and breathe deeply and slowly.

Improving Your Resilience

Challenge Beliefs

Challenge the beliefs that hold you back by asking: Is this story really true?

Lean Into The Suck

Lean into the fear and pain of adversity and notice how these emotions do pass.

Ban “Always”

The words “always” and “never” are signs that your stories have gotten stuck.

Flex Your Mindset

Stress is neither good or bad, it's how we respond that impacts the results you get.



Health

Heighten Health

Sleep well, eat wisely, move regularly and make time to mindfully restore.

"Losing 90 minutes of sleep is likely to reduce your daytime alertness by nearly one-third."

Tom Rath

Unfortunately, researchers (Rath, 2013) suggest that we tend to be lousy judges of how much looking after our body impacts our performance and our wellbeing. "Like a drunk," Harvard sleep expert, Charles Czeisler, wrote, "a person who is sleep deprived has no idea how functionally impaired he or she truly is. Most of us have forgotten what it really feels like to be awake."

For example, one study found that losing ninety minutes of sleep is likely to reduce your daytime alertness by nearly one-third. And according to another researcher, four hours of sleep loss produced the same level of impairment as drinking a six-pack of beer before work (Rath, 2013). And if you do sleep, is it restful? When we sleep, we move through multiple cycles of REM (rapid eye movement), shallow, and deep sleep. It's the deep sleep stage where recovery and restoration really occurs.

Think about your computer. If you keep it on for days on end, working with lots of programs, problems start to arise. It needs a reboot—shutting down completely, clearing things out, and starting again. The deep sleep stage is like rebooting your mind. But when you are sleep deprived, you spend most of your time in REM or shallow sleep, not reaching the restorative deep sleep stage. The effects of this build up cumulatively over time, ultimately affecting your energy levels, mental health, cognitive functioning, work performance, and physical health (McQuaid & Kern, 2017).

With roughly two-thirds of people reporting they don't get enough sleep each night, Tom Rath, author of "Eat, Move, Sleep" suggests trying the following approaches:

Stick to a schedule

Maintain a consistent schedule of sleeping and waking, even on the weekend. Resist the urge to sleep in until noon, and instead, treat yourself instead to a one hour or less afternoon nana nap. At night, set an alarm to tell you it's time to get ready for bed. Keep in mind that your body has a tendency to push later and later if given the chance, so you need to get to bed before you hit your second wind.

Create a bedtime routine

Give yourself at least twenty minutes to wind down before bed with clear nighttime cues to help your body relax. Dim the lights. Lower the temperature by two to four degrees. Turn off electronics (smart phones, iPads, computers, and TVs or anything with blue LED light as it impacts your sleep hormones). Write down what's on your mind—especially unfinished to-do's or issues. Try some restorative yoga or meditate or read a book.

Don't worry if you wake in the middle of the night

It appears that waking in the middle night is perfectly natural, given we've evolved to have what researchers call segregated sleeping, a first sleep and a second sleep with a short waking period in between. Rather than lying there anxiously watching the minutes tick by, try some slow breathing or meditation. If you need to sit up for twenty minutes, keep the lights low and read or listen to some relaxing music before heading back to bed. Studies have found this time can be the most relaxing time of your day, provided you're not worried about sleeping!

“Is what you're about to eat a net gain or a net loss for your energy?”

Tom Rath

Is the food you're eating serving you well? While there's a lot of conflicting advice about what we should and shouldn't be eating and drinking, it's clear that no one advocates that you should intentionally consume more refined sugars or fried foods. Researchers suggest that it may be helpful to start thinking about food not as calories, but as energy (Rath, 2013).

You see scientists have found that just about everything we eat is converted by our body into glucose, which provides the energy our bodies and brains need to stay alert and productive. When we're running low on glucose, we have a tough time staying focused, our attentions drifts and our bodies become sluggish. This helps explain why it's hard to do anything very productive on an empty stomach.

But as Social Psychologist Ron Friedman (2014) explains, the part we rarely consider is that our bodies don't process all foods at the same rate. For example, foods like pasta, bread, cereal, and soda release their glucose quickly, leading to a burst of energy followed by a slump. Other food, like high-fat meals (think cheeseburgers), can provide more sustained energy, but require our digestive system to work harder, reducing oxygen levels in the brain and making us groggy.

Studies have found that eating well not only bolsters your health in the short and long-term, but it can also improve your physical appearance and mood, keep your energy levels high and improve your productivity. Fortunately, the trick to eating right is not learning to resist temptation. It's making healthy eating the easiest possible option. Here are three approaches researchers suggest trying:

Plan your diet

Studies show that you'll do a lot better at resisting salt, calories, and unhealthy fats in the future than in the present moment. Think about the meals and snacks you will have access to and be able to control this week. Try to set your sights on foods that are good for your short-term energy and long-term health.

Eat small meals frequently

The body's metabolism is meant to process energy on a regular basis. Spikes and drops in blood sugar are bad for your productivity, your brain, and your body. Smaller, more frequent meals maintain your glucose at a more consistent level than relying on a midday meal or big evening feast. Start your day right with a high protein breakfast, then note where your natural energy slumps occur and stop to eat something nourishing and reflect on your water consumption (we often mistake thirst for hunger).

Track and adjust

There are a few good and a few bad ingredients in most meals. No matter how hard you try, you will eat some foods that are not ideal. So do a little accounting in your head, on a piece of paper, or with an app so you can keep track of what you consume. Ask yourself if what you are about to eat is a net gain or a net loss for your energy, based on what you know about all the ingredients. Then, keep servings small and indulgences rare (pick the moments you can afford the energy slumps), and you're likely to have less guilt, more enjoyment, and better health.

“Sitting is the most underrated health threat of our time.”

Tom Rath

We thought exercising three times a week would have us covered when it came to moving regularly, only to discover that this probably isn't enough to counter all the hours we spend sitting in our jobs. Declared the most underrated health threat of our time (Hellmich, 2012), it turns out that on average most of us sit for around nine hours a day—yes, we spend more time sitting than sleeping.

Frighteningly researchers have found that inactivity is now killing more people than smoking, with more than six hours of sitting a day greatly increasing our risk of an early death. In fact, every hour we spend on our rear ends saps our energy and ruins our health.

It turns out that the problem with sitting is that it takes an immediate toll on our health (Rath, 2013). As soon as our bottoms find a comfortable place to land, the electrical activity in our leg muscles shut down, the number of calories we're burning, the enzymes that help break down fat and our good cholesterol all drop considerably. And just to add insult to injury, the act of sitting for long periods literally makes our backsides bigger, with long periods of pressure on our cells found to make our fat tissue expand.

Yet for most of us sitting for several hours a day is an inevitable part of our jobs. The key to countering this seems to be increasing our activity as much as possible. Every extra opportunity you have to move counts so try these steps:

Every 20 minutes move for 2 minutes

When you have no choice but to sit for several hours a day, at least break it up. Even two minutes of leisurely walking every twenty minutes is enough to stabilize your blood sugar levels and taking regular breaks has been found to improve your creativity, and productivity.

Exercise early

Just twenty minutes of moderate activity could significantly improve your mood for the next twelve hours. So, while working out in the evening is better than no activity at all, you essentially sleep through and miss most of the boost to your mood. Exercising at the beginning of the day kick-starts your metabolism, helping you burn additional fat and improve your glucose tolerance. As the day wears on, it's also easier to create more excuses. Begin your day with a brisk walk, a stop at the local gym, or a twenty-minute yoga session at home.

Measure your steps

Get a Fitbit or download a free app to your smartphone to start measuring the number of steps you take each day. Start small—aim for 5,000 steps, and work your way up to 10,000 steps per day (if you're doing other forms of exercise, most apps have ways to convert it into steps). Upload your report and track your steps online, which can show you your progress over time, and how you compare to others. Don't beat yourself up if you miss the goal—some days will be easier to get steps in than others; instead, think about how you can add a few more steps tomorrow.

Looking For More Health Resources?

[Eat, Move, Sleep](#) - Tom Rath's website gives you a free 30 day wellbeing plan tailored to your needs and has an app to track it at

[SleepCycle](#) - This app tracks and analyzes your sleep patterns. Choose your wake up time, and the app will gently stir you from your slumber during your lightest phase of sleep to ensure that you wake up feeling rested, refreshed, and ready for the day ahead.

[Moment](#) - Can lock your technology devices at the times you choose to help your wind down at night.

[Swap It Don't Stop It](#) - shows you how to make smarter food choices from swapping sweets for nuts, to getting more exercise in your day, along with ways to shop smart, save calories and even how to join local exercise classes. You can track your progress and set alerts to be remind you when its time to make a swap.

[Green Smoothies](#) – lots of good green smoothie recipes you can use to get all the good foods you need in a day.

[iStepLog](#) - This app is like having a mini pedometer in your pocket. Launched by Australian charity 10,000 Steps, it keeps a tally of how much you move each day which you can sync to the website to keep track of your progress.

[7 Minute Work Out](#) – Scientifically-tested, high intensity work out with no equipment needed. Even seven minutes help but you can do multiple rounds for a more effective work out.

[From Couch to 5k](#) – Get your running shoes on! Over six weeks this app gets you running a little bit more every few days. An easy way to create a running habit.

[Map My Run](#) – Map how far you're running and track your times. Add coaching support to set goals around time, distance, and speed.

[PocketYoga HD](#) - Simple-to-follow illustrations to guide you through the yogi moves. Select from 27 different sessions, including various yoga practices. And don't miss the session that shows you how to burn fat while keeping your mind at rest.

[Headspace](#) – An introduction to meditation featuring a 10 session, 10 minute class. Includes progress reports, reminders and rewards. Introductory features are free.

[Insight Timer](#) - This app features more than 4,000 guided meditations from over 1,000 teachers—on topics like self-compassion, nature, and stress—plus talks and podcasts.

[Breathe 2 Relax](#) - Teaches you how to use your breath to fight stress, tension, and anxiety through belly breathing or diaphragmatic breathing. You rate stress levels before and after the exercises. It's free.

[Muse Headband](#) - This brain sensing headband gently guides your meditation through changing sounds of weather based on the real-time state of your brain. This allows you to obtain a deeper sense of focus and motivates you to build a highly rewarding practice.

Heightening Health

Sleeping Well

Forgo Sleep Ins

Try to maintain a consistent schedule of sleeping and waking each day.

Create Bedtime Routines

Give yourself 30 – 45 minutes to wind down before bed each night with a regular routine.

Toss The Turnings

Don't worry if you wake in the middle of the night, just rest quietly and breathe deeply.

Turn Down The Heat

Your bedroom should be 2 – 3 degrees cooler than the rest of your house for sleep.

Eating Wisely

Plan Your Diet

Make eating decisions before you get hungry by having good food choices on hand.

Eat Small + Often

Your body needs to process energy on a regular basis, so eat small and often.

Track + Adjust

Is what your eating a net gain or a net loss when it comes to your health?

Eat Lunch

At lunch time get up and move away from your desk and take 10 minutes to eat.

Moving Regularly

Count Your Steps

Grab an app or pedometer and try to complete 10,000 steps each day.

Get Up Regularly

Every 60 – 90 minutes try to get up and move for at least two minutes.

Start Early

20 minutes of moderate activity in the morning improves mood for 12 hours.

Move At Home

Finding a way to exercise at home, is likely to help you sustain an exercise program.

Mindfully Restore

Just Be

Each time you go to the bathroom take a moment to just breathe and be.

Mindfully Meditate

Start each day with two minutes of mindfully watching your breath.

Create A Third Space

As you go home reflect on what you learned, breathe and set your intention for home.

Mindful Breaks

When your energy wanes, take a few minutes to stretch, breath and restore yourself.

“In order to change your behavior, the first thing you need to do is change your mind.”

Professor James Prochaska

Professor James Prochaska and his colleagues (2016) have found that there are three common factors that put the brakes on the changes we want to create and slow us down: "I don't really want to," "I don't know how," and "I don't think I can."

Don't Really Want To

If you don't want to embrace a challenge or honour a hope because it doesn't feel meaningful for you or it conflicts with other things you value, then change never really gets started. Yes, it might be something you "should do," is "expected of you," or "have to do," but until you "want to" create change, there will be no real forward movement, regardless of how good the change might be for you or others. You need to have the freedom to choose goals that express who you are, rather than impress others if you are to have the confidence and commitment to realize your goals.

Equally, if the changes you want to create are in conflict with other things you value, you'll also find yourself taking the "I don't really want to" detour. Most of us try to tackle far too many changes simultaneously, many of which pull us in different directions and cause us to leak energy and effort as we worry about why and we're not making any progress. Instead of digging deeper and trying to think your way out of this conflict, researchers suggest that it's better to stop pushing and beating yourself up and instead give yourself a break from this conflict for a few days. Then try to commit to one very small action to move your goal forward, see how this works, and what impacts it has. If the change continues to be something you "want to do", rather than something you "should do", then try the next small action, reassess, and so on.

Don't Know How

Our need to be certain about our choices can cause us to get stuck in doubt and delays, but sharing the changes you're contemplating with others and any uncertainty or experiences of getting stuck can be a great way to surface the support you need. Be it talking with a close friend or family member, a trusted colleague, a coach or mentor, or a support group of some kind who are tackling similar changes, by going public about the changes you want to make studies have found you increase your levels of commitment, improve your self-regulation, and are more likely to gain access to the knowledge, tools, and help you need to move past the don't know how to detour.

Don't Think I Can

We've all experienced the disappointment of trying to create changes that don't work or are never fully realized. And it leaves us feeling demoralized and defeated. Failing to create the changes we want can leave us stuck in stories of "I'm not good enough," "I have no willpower," and "I don't have what I need to pull that off."

Hoping to make a change can be a frightening proposition for many of us. But researchers have found that when we set learning goals, rather than just performance goals, it helps us to realize that success is not just about achieving outcomes but realising our potential for growth. Whether you succeed, bomb out, or fall anywhere in between on your path towards change you will learn and grow as a result of your efforts. The only way to truly fail is never to attempt the changes you want.

“Rather than waiting for the world to give them what they want, people can become more proactive in making things happen for themselves.”

Professor Edward Deci

Over thirty years of research led by Professors Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (2017) has found that there are three key methods that help us to create the motivation and energy for sustained learning and change. They are:

The need for autonomy

Autonomy ensures we have the freedom to make choices that are aligned with our values, that draw on our talents and abilities, and that leaves us feeling energised and satisfied. When it comes to creating change in our life, making "have to choices," "should do choices" or "expected of us choices" doesn't help us generate the motivation and energy we need to see it through.

It's important that we **set want-to-goals**.

The need for competence

Create opportunities for competence – through learning, progress, and growth – enables us to find joy and satisfaction in improving ourselves and the world around us. When we have the opportunity to get curious about what how we can improve, to play with different approaches, to create feedback loops that help us to learn what works, and to enjoy and savour the results, not only do we maximise our energy in the process but we improve our wellbeing and outcomes as we go.

It's important that we create learning loops that help us to **track our progress** so we can assess what's working, where we're struggling, and what impact our actions are having.

The need for relatedness (through social support)

Relatedness gives us the chance to feel cared for and to care about others. We are wired to be social creatures – no matter how introverted we are – and researchers have found that one of the main goals of almost anything we do is to feel like we belong and that we matter to others. This is why studies have found that one of the most effective ways to start and stick with creating changes in our behaviour is to make sure we have the social support of people who can encourage us, hold us accountable, and celebrate our successes.

It's important that we **buddy up** with others to provide the social support and accountability that makes change easier.

Richard and Edward recommend that metaphorically we think of making changes that support our wellbeing like a three-legged stool — pull out any one of the needs and the stool will fall.

What Change Will You Prioritize?

If there was one small change you could make over the next week to help you thrive more consistently at work:

	My Commitment...
What WANT-TO GOAL would you like to set?	
How will you TRACK YOUR PROGRESS?	
Who can you BUDDY UP with?	

With *heartfelt* thanks



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