

WHY DO I BEHAVE LIKE THAT?



How our Thoughts and Emotions affect our behaviour?

If you look at 50 years of performance literature, the one thing we know is that the two greatest influencers on performance are the thoughts we think and the emotions we feel. Lets look at how we can use these for good!

Thoughts

We have 65,000 thoughts a day it is estimated that only 1% of those thoughts are positive or beneficial. So often we waste our mental space and focus on thoughts and events that do not matter, or we worry about things that haven't even happened yet.

To get greater performance and happiness we need to be aware of the conversation we have with ourselves. In terms of this conversation there are two main areas we need to be aware of:

Explanation Styles and Thinking Traps.

OPTIMISTS SELL MORE INSURANCE THAN PESSIMISTS!!

Studies in the Life Insurance Industry have shown that insurance sales people who have an Optimistic explanation style sell 88% more insurance than people with a Pessimistic explanation style. Also Pessimists were 3 times more likely to quit than optimists. The research in this area is so strong that some companies such as Met Life replaced all their psychometric tests with a single test that measured a person's level of Optimism. From this they started to hire Optimists. Not only did they see an increase in profit but also they greatly reduced staff turn over and recruitment costs.

What is an Explanation Style?

With the introduction of positive thinking, the theory was that if we think it enough and recite affirmations enough we would be happy. A new theory (with actual science behind it) has shown that healthy thinking is all about our explanation style and how we explain set backs, victories and daily events in our head. Success, happiness and resilience is all about how we explain the world to ourselves. However studies have shown that the majority of people in today's society have a tendency towards a thinking style that is **pessimistic, inaccurate, and unrealistic**.

Positive psychology guides people into an explanation style that is:

Accurate

Realistic

Optimistic

Unfortunately very few people monitor or reflect on their explanation style.

Our Explanation style determines if we are an Optimist or a Pessimist.

When we experience events in our day, we explain them to ourselves in our heads. Specifically we explain events on 3 levels.

1. How **Permanent** it is - how often that event occurs.
2. How **Pervasive** it is - how much of our life does that event affect.
3. How **Personal** it is - Who's actions caused the event to occur.

Level of Permanence

We can describe events as being Permanent or Temporary



This Always Happens
It is Permanent

This Rarely Happens
It is Temporary

Level of Pervasiveness

How much of my life does it affect. It can be Global or Specific



This Affects my whole life
It is Global

This Affects very little of my life
It is Specific

Level of Personalisation

Who caused this event to happen. Is it External or Internal



This was due to me
It is Internal

This was due to others
It is External

In other words when an event occurs to us we explain it by saying:

Does this always happen to me or does this rarely happen?

Does this affects every area of my life, or affects only a small part of my life?

Is this due to my actions or the actions of others?

When we have challenging events happen to us we can fall into the trap of going to either extreme such as making things permanent or global when they are not. For example we can say after an argument with our partner, “We always fight and this relationship is a disaster”. Also we can make things our fault or someone else’s fault when it is not that black and white.

OPTIMISTIC PEOPLE WHEN THEY HAVE A “GOOD” EVENT SAY:

This Always happens to me – so they make it permanent.

Eg. I always do great presentations, I always convert my sales opportunities, I always lead my team well.

This affects every part of my life – optimists take success in one part of their life and make it pervade into every other part of their life, in other words they make it global.

Eg. If they have a great round of golf they say – “I am very athletic”, if they do well on a project they say – “I am great at my job”. If their marriage is going well they say – “I manage relationships really well”.

It was due to my actions – optimists look at their own actions as leading to the success.

They make success personal/internal.

Eg. If their team does a great job on a project they say – “I did a great job of leading my team, I really motivated them and got them together”.

OPTIMISTIC PEOPLE WHEN THEY HAVE A “BAD” EVENT SAY:

This Rarely happens to me – so they make it Temporary.

Eg. That presentation didn’t go very well but the next one will be great. I had a bad round of golf that is rare for me.

This affects very little of my life – optimists take failure and keep it very contained to only a small part of their life, in other words they make failure very specific.

Eg. If they have an argument with a person they say – “I am not getting along with that person”, rather than saying “I am not great at relating to people”. If they get turned down in a sales situation they say – “I called at the wrong time”, rather than saying this product is no good.

It was not my fault – optimists tend to externalise bad events and say that it was not their fault.

Eg. When they do a bad presentation they say that the problem was the audience or the set up of the room. When their team underperforms on a project they tend to blame the team rather than their leadership.

PESSIMISTIC PEOPLE WHEN THEY HAVE A “GOOD” EVENT THEY SAY:

This Rarely happens to me – so they make it temporary.

Eg. I got lucky, I bet it wont go that well next time.

This affects very little of my life – pessimists take success in one part of their life and contain it. They don't let that success spread into other areas of their life. They make success specific.

Eg. Yeah I had a good day, but the company is struggling at the moment and the economy is slow so I may lose my job.

It was not due to my actions – Pessimists attribute their success to others. They make success External.

Eg. You really helped me with that project, it was a team effort.

PESSIMISTIC PEOPLE WHEN THEY HAVE A “BAD” EVENT THEY SAY:

This Always happens to me – so they make it Permanent.

Eg. I always make mistakes, I am constantly screwing up, I never get along with my co-workers.

This affects everything in my life – pessimists take failure and let it spread into all of their life, in other words they make failure very global.

Eg. If they have an argument with a person they say – “I am terrible at relationships”, if they fail at a task they say, “I am not very smart”.

It was not my fault – Pessimists tend to internalise bad events and say that it was their entire fault.

Eg. When they do a bad presentation they say that the problem was they are a terrible public speaker. When their team underperforms on a project they blame it on their leadership.

When explaining events to ourselves we need to ensure that our thoughts are:

Accurate

Realistic

Optimistic

Start to watch your thinking style!

NOTE: WHERE OPTIMISTS HAVE TO BE CAREFUL IS THAT THEY NEED TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN FAILURE AND NOT JUST BLAME THOSE AROUND THEM.

2. Toxic Thoughts:

The second thought challenge we face is do we fall into Toxic Thought patterns. This is a thinking style that leads to poor performance, conflict in relationships and pessimism. When you find yourself experiencing negative emotion and pessimistic thoughts ask your self am I falling into Toxic Thoughts (common ones are outlined below). If you catch yourself falling into a Toxic Thoughts see if you can overcome it by challenging it.

Toxic Thoughts	How to challenge them
Predicting Disaster (where you predict outcomes and events in the future)	Is there strong evidence to support this; what are the chances of this occurring
Inflexible Thinking (where you see only one way to do things, where the world has to work in a very set fashion)	How reasonable are my thoughts, what will happen if things are done differently, is this really the best way to do things
Closed Minded (Where you are not open to change in any way, change within your environment, change within your self)	Be open to new ideas, constantly look for new ways to do things

Toxic Thoughts	How to challenge them
<p>Filtering (only seeing part of the evidence, just looking at part of the situation)</p>	<p>Look at the big picture, take time to accumulate all the evidence</p>
<p>Personalising (where you make everything about you, eg if someone is in a bad mood you think what did I do)</p>	<p>Focus on role of others, realise that it is not always about you</p>
<p>Judging/ Blaming (this is where you unfairly blame and judge other people and yourself)</p>	<p>Treat people and yourself with unconditional respect. Look for the good and potential in people</p>
<p>Labeling (We often label other people and ourselves inaccurately)</p>	<p>Check for accuracy, ensure that we haven't labelled someone and are closed minded to changing that label</p>
<p>Mind reading (where events occur and rather than checking in with people on why they did it we make the story up in our head)</p>	<p>Communicate with people and ask for reasons motive and express your concerns</p>
<p>Comparing (Where we compare ourselves to others)</p>	<p>Focus on your own goals and what you are trying to achieve</p>

Mental toughness is a key to high performance. Mental toughness is the ability to regulate the conversation between our ears, by regulating our explanation style and making sure we don't fall into toxic thinking patterns

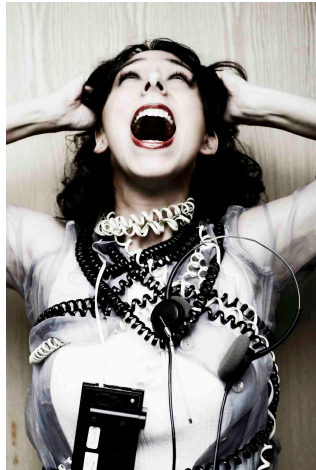
EMOTIONS

The emotions we feel in a day drive our behaviour. Top sales people often say, **“logic makes them think, but emotion makes them act”**.

We buy products we join social networks because of the emotional kick back we get.

An executive from Harley-Davidson once said

“THE COMPANY DOESN'T SELL MOTORCYCLES: 'WHAT WE SELL IS THE ABILITY FOR A 43-YEAR-OLD ACCOUNTANT TO DRESS IN BLACK LEATHER, RIDE THROUGH SMALL TOWNS AND HAVE PEOPLE BE AFRAID OF HIM.'”



Why do they buy a Harley, because of how it makes them feel!

What is the emotional capital in your teams?

How engaged your team is depends on what emotions they feel in relation to the work they do and the people they work with.

As a leader we need to be able to manage and influence the emotional state of the people in our organisation.

The days of command and control are over, true leadership is about engagement, empathy and understanding.

New research shows that leaders who are emotionally intelligent have more successful teams, have low staff turnover, and produce more revenue.

Emotional Intelligence is essentially about regulating emotions to achieve a desired outcome.

Emotional intelligence has been shown to be far more important than traditional IQ in terms of success and leadership.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

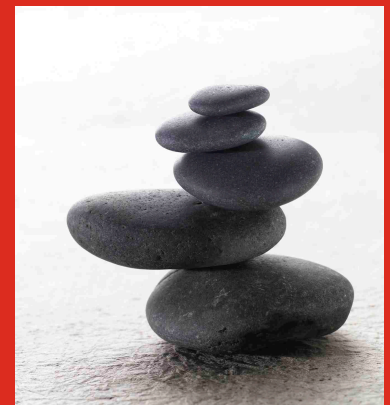
Emotional intelligence is made up of 4 main areas.

1. Awareness of the emotions we feel

2. Regulations of our emotional state

3. Awareness of the emotional state of others

4. Influence over other people's emotional state



SELF AWARENESS

Specifically can you be aware of the emotions you feel in a day?

If we are not aware of the emotions we feel in a day how can we regulate them? Often people feel an emotion and that turns into a mood, and then the mood turns into a temperament.

There are 413 emotions, the 6 primary ones are:

Happy

Sad

Angry

Fear

Disgust

Surprise

SELF CONTROL

Once we are aware of our emotional state can we choose more functional emotions that will help us achieve more happiness and performance in our lives?

When an emotion is not serving us well or it is an emotion that wont help us achieve the outcome we want, can we replace it with an emotion that will.

This is called an emotional FLIP, where we FLIP the emotion around.

For example:

If we are angry at someone at work and anger will not help the situation, can we FLIP the emotion to have compassion for that person?

If we feel sadness can we FLIP that to feel joy?

If we feel contempt can we have respect?

If we have apathy can we have passion?

Emotional FLIPPING is where you "Choose your Mood", and choose an emotion that serves you and the situation better.

AWARENESS OF OTHERS

Empathy is the ability to put your place in other people's shoes. To understand how they are feeling. Great leaders exercise empathy, they understand the pressures and emotional state of the people they manage.

When a large group of Gen Y's were surveyed 75% of them said that their number one complaint at work was that their managers did not listen or understand them.

Great leaders are aware of the emotional state of their team.

INFLUENCE

Do we positively influence the emotional state of our team? Harvard University has shown that leaders who can cause their team to feel positive emotions (happiness, joy, enthusiasm, passion) achieve far more success. Even leaders who can make their team laugh have been shown to generate more profit than leaders who do not. When we interact with our team do we lift them up or pull them down?