

Managing your Mood and Wellbeing

Moods are contagious! "Nothing helps a bad mood like spreading it around."

If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far. Daniel Goleman.

Reality Check

I am on track if:

- I recognise how my feelings affect me and my work performance, and I am conscious of how these can influence the way I behave with others
- I am able to keep bad moods, disruptive emotions and emotional impulses under control
- I can stay composed and positive even in trying moments, and I can think clearly and stay focused under pressure
- I adjust quickly to changing situations and try to overcome obstacles quickly
- I sense other people's feelings and emotions, understand their perspectives and their viewpoints and take an active interest in their concerns

Warning signs are if:

- I always seem to have too much to do and not enough time
- My negative moods are impacting those around me
- I or others around me quickly knock down the ideas of those I am working with

What the experts say about moods...

Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis have been exploring the concept of **contagion of mood** as part of their

Mood is contagious
Your mood shapes the mood of your team

Both good moods and bad moods are contagious
But good moods are more contagious

research into social neuroscience. Moods in the workplace are extremely contagious...and the mood of the leader has the potential to have a significant influence on their team.

Things I can do to improve my self awareness and manage my mood:

- **Recognise the signs in yourself.** Check your mood. What has provoked this reaction? Is it an appropriate reaction? Does the evidence support my mood?
- Be aware of **your impact** on others. Is it appropriate to share this mood with the team? How are you contributing to the situation?
- **Take time out.** Go for a walk. Talk to a trusted colleague to process what is going on. Take time for reflection. Apply some of the techniques suggested below; such as the 'resilience lenses'.
- Deliberately make an effort to **reframe your mood.**
 - Take time out to look for what is **positive** in the situation
 - Pause for reflection and **make sense** of what is going on
 - Identify **options** to change things
 - Take **action**
- If possible, **remove yourself from the negativity.** Negativity spreads. Surround yourself with more positive people.

What is my mood?
What has provoked this reaction?

Is it an appropriate reaction?
Does the evidence support my mood?

Is it appropriate to share this mood with my team?
How can I reframe this mood?

On the following pages, we have included some recent research and suggestions into how to manage your mood, mindset and wellbeing. Have a read of them all and see what most resonates with you...

Things for your 'tool kit'

Positive Intelligence

Positive Intelligence, Shawn Achor, HBR Jan – Feb 2012

Shawn Achor has been researching 'happiness' and the impact on individuals in the workplace. His research shows that when people work with a positive mind-set, performance on nearly every level—productivity, creativity, engagement—improves.

His research suggests that engaging in one brief positive exercise every day for as little as three weeks can have a lasting impact. He suggests to do (at least) one of the following everyday:



Develop New Habits

Pick one and do it everyday for 3 weeks

1. Jot down three things you are were grateful for
2. Write a positive message to someone in your social support network
3. Meditate at your desk for two minutes
4. Exercise for 10 minutes
5. Take two minutes to describe in a journal the most meaningful experience of the past 24 hours

He also suggests the following actions will also have a positive impact on your mood:

Help Your Co-workers

Keep up contact and support each other

- His research has shown that strong social support correlates with an astonishing number of desirable outcomes, especially during times of stress

Change your relationship with Stress

Try to have a more positive attitude to stress

- Shawn's research suggests that your *attitude* to stress can dramatically change how it affects you.

- He suggests that if you feel overwhelmed, make a list of stresses that you can control and those you can't. Pick one you can and come up with a small concrete way to address it. Help nudge you brain back into a more positive mindset!

Manage your energy, Not just your time

Manage your Energy, Not Your Time, HBR October 2007, Schwartz & McCarthy

Physical Energy

Emotional Energy

This article in Harvard Business Review identifies 4 different well springs which all contribute to your overall wellbeing. These are a summary of the suggestions for how to manage your physical energy, emotional energy, mind energy and your spirit...



Mind Energy

Human Spirit

To manage your **PHYSICAL** energy:

- Enhance **sleep** with earlier bedtime and reducing alcohol use
- Reduce **stress** with cardio activity 3 times a week and strength training once a week
- Eat smaller lighter meals and have **snacks** every 3 hours
- Learn to notice **symptoms** of energy depletion (restlessness, yawning, hunger, difficulty concentrating)
- Take brief regular **breaks** at 90-120 min intervals (length is less important, quality is – need to disengage from work)

To manage your **EMOTIONAL** energy: (The quality of energy)

- Defuse **negative** emotions (irritability, impatience, anxiety, insecurity) through deep abdominal breathing
- Fuel **positive** emotions in yourself and others by regularly expressing appreciation (calls, emails, notes, chats – the more detailed, the better the impact)
- Set time aside for **mentoring**
- **Change the stories you tell yourself about the events in your life.** Be aware of the difference between the facts of the situation and the way you have interpreted those facts. Look at upsetting situations through new **lenses**
 - **Reverse Lens** - What would the other person in this interchange say and in what ways might that be true?
 - **Long lens** - How will I most likely view this situation in six months?
 - **Wide lens** - Regardless of the outcome of this issue, how can I grow and learn from it?



By reflecting in this way, you can intentionally cultivate more positive emotions. You can *choose* how to interpret the facts.

To manage your **MIND** energy: (The focus of energy)

- Minimise your switching time – a temporary shift in attention can increase the time to complete something by up to 25%
- **Reduce interruptions** by performing high concentration tasks away from phones and email

- **Respond to emails** at designated times of the day (you may need to manage expectations around responsiveness)
- At the end of each day, identify the most **important challenge** for the next day, then make it your **first priority**

Also consider

- **Keeping a time log** to help you identify your most / least effective times in the day / the nature of your interruptions, possible time ‘wasters’
- **Improving your planning and prioritisation skills** – brainstorm all the different tasks and activities you are responsible for
- Keeping a **prioritised ‘to do’ list**
- Overcoming **procrastination!**
- Removing **distractions** – or move yourself to a quiet place where you can focus

To manage your **SPIRIT**: (The energy of purpose and meaning)

- Identify your **‘sweet spots’** – the things that give you feelings of effectiveness and fulfillment
- Find ways to do **more** of them if you can
- Consciously **allocate time** and energy to areas of your life that are most important to you
- Live your **core values** in your daily behaviours (eg if you hate people being late, don’t be late yourself)

● Workplace Negativity: Your job as a leader

It is one thing to manage your own mood, attitude and wellbeing, but as a leader you also need to tune in to what is going on within your team.

Workplace Negativity: What can this look like?

- People being 'short' with each other – answers and communications are brief
- Positive ideas and problem solving attempts are quickly knocked down
- Management may be referred to as 'management' or in discussion as 'us and them'
- Comments such as 'we have tried that before', 'they don't listen' and 'why bother' can be heard when discussing areas for improvement or opportunities for change
- Whinging, complaining or derogatory comments from team members about others – generally behind the scenes
- Refusal to do what is asked or expected (insolence)

Where does this negativity come from?

- People don't set out to be negative. It is usually a reaction to a:
 - Loss of confidence
 - Loss of control
 - Loss of 'community'
 - Not feeling valued or recognised
 - Destruction of trust
 - Lack of communication

What can you do about it?

- **'Call it out'** – some people may not realise they are being negative until 'they look in the mirror'.
- Open up the **lines of communication** – make sure you give people to chance to ask questions; talk about what they see to be going on; express their feelings.
- Deal with the **'trouble makers'** quickly. Negativity is infectious.
- **Lead by example.** Actively demonstrate the positive behaviours you expect from others.
- **Reward the positive behaviour** you see around you.