

Focus

- key to happiness.

This past year has been detrimental for all of us, for some more than others, and we have all experienced this pandemic and lockdowns in different ways – from different perspectives. We all know that it has taken lives, it has been the financial ruin for many, and we are all struggling with the loss of what used to be. In a way we are all in mourning, constantly faced with the “picture” of our loss – painted across the media. We cannot escape and every conversation has a level of COVID-19 in it.

Nevertheless, no matter what the challenge or situation, we get to a point where we have to make a choice – to focus on what we actually can do instead of everything we can't do. Reviewing this past year, we have constantly been faced with restrictions and what we cannot do anymore, and our focus has much been drawn to all the negatives. Hence, focus is key here. If we would focus on what we actually can do instead of the opposite, it will do wonders for our wellbeing. I know, as I tried it and noticed the difference in my outlook on everyday life and the current situation in general. It made me smile and laugh more, and I slowly saw my old self surfacing again – from what I can only describe as a state of mindless drifting – moving from one day to another – not really seeing land for all the water.

We know that positivity and subjective well-being alone have a tremendous impact on us, and may lead to: *“Better health, Lower absenteeism, Greater self-regulation, Stronger motivation, Enhanced creativity, Positive relationships, Lower turnover”* (Tenney, et al., 2016). Another part of this equation is the environment, where environmental stress directly impacts workforce capacity and performance, motivation and the ability to meet targets, which again may amplify into reactions such as irritation, headaches and lack of focus (Lamb & Kwok, 2016). This is something I believe most of us can testify to, having been working from home for too long – e.g., moving from one digital meeting to another.

Hence, the environment plays a major part when looking at work performance, which is indirectly affected *“by reducing state variables, motivation, tiredness, and distractibility, which support high-functioning work performance”* (Lamb & Kwok, 2016). We know that environmental stress has a negative impact on individual resilience and the ability to multitask, meeting increasing demands, and as an indirect result work performance is reduced due to a decrease in wellbeing (Lamb & Kwok, 2016). This leads us to motivation, seemingly a dominating factor influencing work performance, which is a fluent and complex matter as it is experienced individually and may consist of both tangible and intangible incentives (Popa, 2016). This also applies to performance, which is influenced by incentives and the opportunities to “win”. If the chance of winning exceeds the ones of losing, people tend to make the right decisions more easily whereas seeing defeat. This is an emotional reaction to stress in context and is related to positive and negative stress (Savage & Torgler, 2012). All of this is connected to focus and is a result of what we focus on as individuals. When we can't see the path ahead of us for all the trees we lose focus – and motivation. Our focus drives behaviour and if we only focus on the negatives, we will often experience difficulties in coping with everyday life.

So, I will leave you with this – focus on what you can do instead of everything you can't do!

Sources

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