

---

Happy & Engaged



Office Wellness

Empowerment & Resilience



---

Happy & Engaged – Creating healthy, happy and productive workplaces

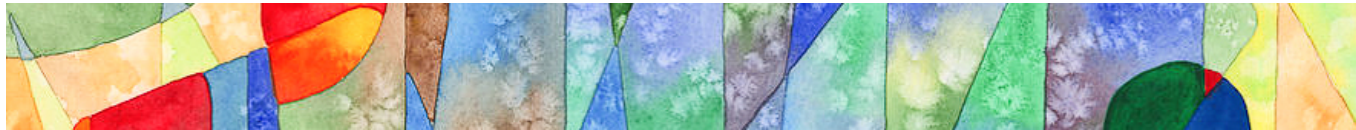
Michael Auden

[www.MichaelAuden.com.au](http://www.MichaelAuden.com.au)

[Michael@michaelauden.com.au](mailto:Michael@michaelauden.com.au)

1 Wedge Court

Glen Waverley Victoria 3150



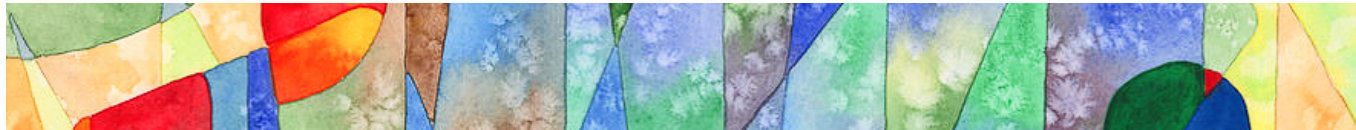
## **Office Wellness**

### **Make this your Office Wellness month**

Undertake a module or reflection each day during the month with your office team to build their workplace resilience.

**The theme for the Office Wellness Month is Empowerment and Resilience in the office.**

Equip your staff to be self-coaching and to develop resilience awareness and skills. Have your staff share in supportive and empowering activities that will build morale and team spirit in your office.



## **Know yourself**

What strengths do you already have?

In Australia we tend to be quick at seeing our weaknesses. Seeing our strengths is more difficult.

## **Giving yourself thinking time**

Impulse control is being able to stop, think through options and consequences and choose what is best.

## **Empathy**

Empathy is the understanding of what it is like being in someone else's shoes. It is an important part of strong relationships.

---

### **Believing in your ability**

Do we believe we can tackle most things head on and bounce back when things get tough? It is the belief that what we do does make a difference.

### **Recognizing your feelings**

Being aware of your feelings is vital, because strong feelings of anxiety or sadness can make you feel powerless. Once you name the feeling, you have more chance of controlling it.

### **Reaching out**

Reaching out has two parts. It is the ability to take on life's opportunities and not fear failure. It is also about being willing to ask for help. Some people see asking for help as a weakness. It is a strength acknowledging that we all need support at times and that it is ok to ask for help.

---

### **Staying hopeful (optimistic)**

Can we see things as they are and make the best out of any given situation? This does not ignore difficult things, but not getting locked into negativity. It's being able to be hopeful.

### **Analyzing the cause of problems**

Analyzing the cause of problems Do we accurately decide the cause of problems? The word accurate is crucial. What we think about stressful events or problems affects how we feel and what we do.

### **Building on your strengths**

Self-knowledge is a good tool to help us see our strengths. We all have examples of when we use our strengths well. Not over reacting to critics, thinking through what went wrong in a situation, believing you will do better next time. Even if you are not as strong you would like in any of these abilities, you can strengthen them.

---

As you go through these 7 abilities that support resilience, ask yourself these questions:

- Which would I be stronger in?
- Which would be challenging?

1. Recognising your feelings

2. Giving yourself thinking time

3. Thinking through the cause of problems

4. Staying hopeful (optimistic)

5. Having empathy for others

6. Believing in our abilities

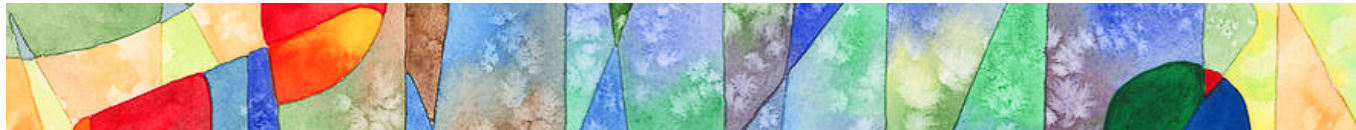
7. Reaching out

---

***Write down two you see more as strengths. Write down two you would not be as strong in. Which one of these seven abilities would you like to be stronger in?***

After you have worked through the rest of this workbook, look back over these seven abilities and go through these questions again. If you keep working on these skills, putting in the effort and learning from experience, change is always possible!





### **Beliefs - What are your unhelpful core beliefs and unhelpful rules?**

Read through the following examples of common beliefs and rules. Which of these contribute to the way you think? Do they work for you? How do they affect your relationships and daily living?

#### **What are your core beliefs and unhelpful rules? Are they working for you?**

I am not ok - I have little control over what happens to me  
People can't be trusted - The world is dangerous

Never ask for help. It is a sign of weakness - It's easier to avoid difficulties rather than do something about them

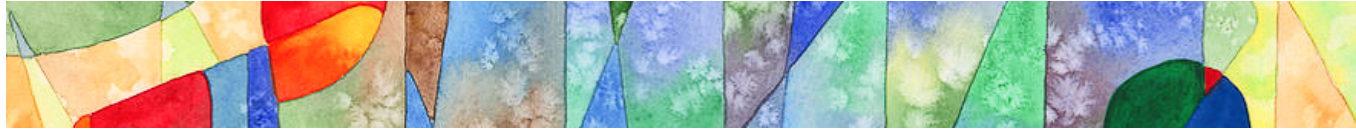
I must be liked by everyone - I must do everything perfectly  
Things should be fair - When things don't go the way I want it's terrible  
What other beliefs are disrupting your thinking?

---

## **Understanding what your core beliefs and rules mean to you**

While recognizing unhelpful core beliefs can be a difficult skill, it can be the most powerful you could learn. Take each belief. Ask yourself:

- What does it mean to me?
- Is it working for me?
- Is there another way to see this? Asking these questions one by one helps us chip away at the frozen, inflexible beliefs that keep us stuck. They help us see beneath the surface of our reactions. It may not be useful to use the extreme opposite about your belief. Just like a well trodden path in the woods, starting a new one will not be easy. At first the new path can feel awkward. With consistent effort it can become familiar and even automatic. Just start chipping away with thoughts like, it's not 100% true. Generate arguments about the belief if it is not working for you. Is it too rigid, extreme or illogical? Is it a belief you would want your child or friend to have?



## **Support**

### **Building Support**

#### **Why should we ask for help?**

Have you ever heard a problem shared is a problem halved? Being able to ask for help strengthens our belief that we are not alone and that someone cares.

Some peoples' core beliefs make asking for help difficult.

- Keep things to yourself
- People should be independent
- People will think less of me if I ask for help

How can someone ask for help if they deep down believe only weak people ask for help?

---

If you don't value yourself, you may think, "I don't want to bother anyone." Another way to look at asking for help is to ask yourself this: How do I feel when someone turns to me for help? Do I feel valued? Is my opinion important? Asking for help is a way to make others feel valued as well as gaining support for ourselves. Young men, in particular often have difficulty asking for help. Fathers have an important role to teach this skill by example. Being able to ask for help can be seen as strength. This sends out a powerful message. When faced with a problem, it's ok to ask for help. Some kinds of help are easier to ask for than others. To ask someone to help move a cabinet is often easier than wanting to talk because we are hurt, sad or angry. Building your supports involves not only being open to ask for help, but also being willing to give it.

**Up for discussion:**

When did I ask for help and found that help really useful? What type of help do I find easier to ask for? What type of help do I find more difficult to ask for? Why is that? How do I feel when someone asks me for help? What are the benefits of being able to ask for help?

Supportive relationships are a strength that helps build resilience. Who are the important

---

people in your life you feel able to talk to or ask for help from?

Make a list of people who are supportive and in what way.

Write your name inside the circle below. Next, use the list you have just made to draw other circles representing each person in your life. As you draw each circle, write the name of the person in it. Draw circles of those you consider most supportive nearest to you and people less supportive further away from you. Add more lines if you need to.

**Some questions to ask:**

- Do you need to use the support you already have more?
- Do you need to stop seeking support from people that you find unhelpful?
- Do you need some more positive support?
- Where can you go to find more people who could help you?

**Our physical and mental wellbeing will also affect our thinking**

---

People tend to have more resources within themselves when they look after themselves.  
Taking a positive and active approach to your health and wellbeing is your choice.



## **Optimism**

### **Believe change is possible**

Knowing you can change and having the confidence to change is vital.

This seems like such a simple thing. People can convince themselves they just can't change. So, right from the start, they're stuck. People are not trapped by their past or "not stuck with the cards they were dealt with". Do you agree with this?

Think of one thing you have changed before or a skill you have developed.

- Why was that important to do?
- How did you do it?
- How did making that change or learning that skill feel?

---

## **Habits can be broken: even thinking habits**

Everyone has habits. A habit is something you do without conscious thought and repeat over and over again. Keep repeating it and it seems normal. Not all habits are harmful. Habits can make life a little more convenient and easier. Do we need to think of a new way to tie our shoes? But...you can also get stuck with unhelpful habits. The more you do things by habit, the less creativity you have. It can affect your sense of freedom. The way we think and our automatic reactions can be a habit. Even though habits seem automatic, they can be changed if you put your mind and effort to it.

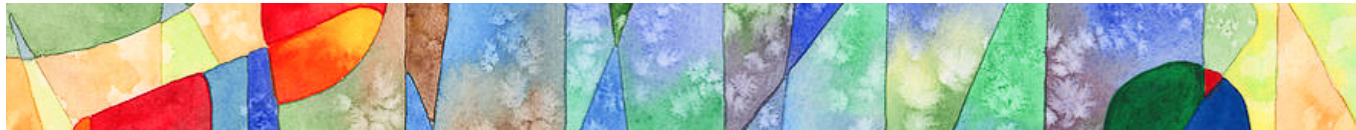
## **Make a committed decision to change**

How do you make a decision to change? Keep four points in mind. You must:

- **Want to change** - an essential first step. This means your heart is in it. So many people think change may be good but don't go beyond thinking about it.
- **Make a determined and committed** decision to change. Don't just read about the ideas in this workbook; use them!



- 
- **Have clear goals.** Get a plan on how you are going to achieve what you want.
  - **Deal with setbacks.** Slipping back to old ways is common and not a reason to give up. There is learning on what you could do differently if you are open to it.



## Thinking resiliently

**What Is Resilience?** Have you ever had times in your life when things just seem to get on top of you? Stressful events or situations are just too much to bear. This is when it helps people to be resilient. But what does being resilient mean? Resilience is the ability to recover and move on in the face of difficult circumstances. It is to being able to “bounce back” from life’s struggles. Resilience helps people to:

- Deal with stress and adversity
  - Be less prone to difficulties such as anxiety and depression
  - Overcome childhood disadvantage
  - Reach out to new opportunities
- The evidence for resilience comes from years of research that looked at why some people seem to do well in the face of life’s struggles and some do less well. Resilience is shaped by an interaction of a range of things

---

## Why is resilient thinking so important?

What happens to our thinking in difficult situations? People generally maintain a balance between their thoughts and feelings. It is our thinking that helps us control our feelings. Strong emotions like anger, fear or sadness can make our thinking close down. It is as if the rational part of our mind becomes flooded. The result is we are not thinking straight. When this happens we often do things that really don't work for us. Negative emotions narrow our focus to deal with the problem in front of us. The fight or flight reaction makes us just want to resolve the problem fast. On the other hand, when we are in more control of our thinking we are more likely to see that situation and its solutions more broadly. We can be more flexible and creative in how we deal with it. **Calm times**  
Thinking 50% Feelings 50%

**Strong emotions** Thinking 25% Feelings 75% Does your thinking get hampered by your emotions more than you would like?

What happens when it does?

So let's ask, how important is this work for you? On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it

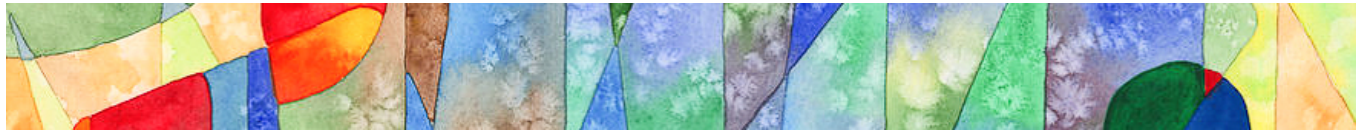
---

to get more control over your thinking?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Not important

Very important



## Character strengths

### Why do I need to know my Character Strengths?

Knowing your character strengths isn't just interesting information. When skillfully applied, character strengths can actually have a significant positive impact on your life.

Research shows that using your character strengths can help you:

- Buffer against, manage and overcome problems
- Improve your relationships
- Enhance health and overall well-being

**Creativity** If Creativity is your top strength, thinking of new ways to do things is a crucial part of who you are. You are never content with doing something the conventional way if

---

a better way is possible.

**Curiosity** If Curiosity is your top strength, you are interested in learning more about anything and everything. You are always asking questions, and you find all subjects and topics fascinating. You like exploration and discovery.

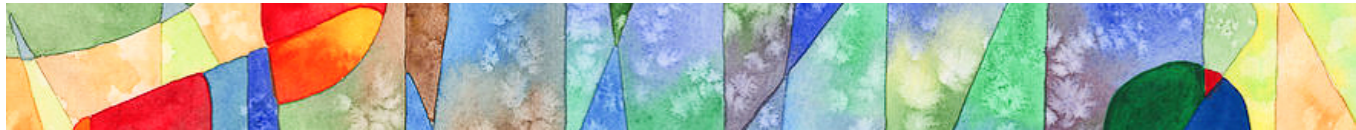
**Judgment** If Judgment is your top strength, thinking things through and examining them from all sides are important aspects of who you are. You do not jump to conclusions, and you rely only on solid evidence to make your decisions. You are able to change your mind.

**Perspective** If Perspective is your top strength, you have a way of looking at the world that makes sense to others and to yourself. Although you may not think of yourself as wise, your friends hold this view of you. They value your perspective on matters and turn to you for advice.

**Social Intelligence** If Social Intelligence is your top strength, you are aware of the motives and feelings of other people. You know what to do to fit in to different social

---

situations, and you know what to do to put others at ease. You are kind and generous to others, and you are never too busy to do a favor. You enjoy doing good deeds for others, even if you do not know them well. Today we have looked at only five of the 26 character traits explored in the full training module. Make a list of your character strengths and reflect upon how they help you develop workplace resilience.



## **Wisdom**

Most people don't spend a lot of time trying to listen to those messages they tell themselves between events and their reactions. It comes automatically. Do you find yourself over reacting or feeling worse than you think you should? Getting more control over what influences your thinking will help you gain more control of your reactions.

There are exceptions. Death of a loved one is an example. In a situation such as bereavement or other tragedies it is not your thinking, but the event itself that is more important. For most things, your thinking does have a powerful influence.

There are four things that influence our automatic reactions to situations:

- 1 Unhelpful thinking habits
- 2 Our style of explaining things



---

3 Deep core beliefs

4 Our physical and mental well being

Start paying attention to your initial thoughts. Check if your thinking is helpful and constructive or destructive and damaging. It can be hard work. Being aware of what you are thinking helps you to challenge thoughts that aren't working for you.

**For now, let's learn to listen!**

### **Unhelpful thinking habits**

When something happens, our first automatic thought may be more negative and unhelpful. Some psychologists believe the mind focuses on more negative details as a form of self protection. Our ancient ancestors had to prepare themselves for the worst as the world they lived in was full of danger. Modern living does not have the same levels of hazards, but that's the way our minds have evolved. It takes more effort to see the positive.

It helps to learn what kind of unhelpful thinking habits you have come to use

---

automatically. Your moods might be a signal. They tend to make us make knee jerk conclusions based on inadequate or incomplete information. That is why they are unhelpful.

### **Ten common unhelpful thinking habits**

**All or nothing thinking** You see things in extremes: good or bad, right or wrong

**Jumping to conclusions** has two types:

- **Fortune telling:** You predict things will turn out bad, even where there is no evidence saying it will.
- **Mind reading:** you think you know what people are thinking

**Over-generalising** Assuming something happened once; you think it will happen all the time. It is a never-ending pattern of defeat. Has something difficult happened in the morning and you say to yourself, “well that is today ruined” or “that’s the story of my life?”

---

**Making a mountain out of a mole hill** You exaggerate the importance of things or blow things out of proportion. It just won't be bad. It will be a disaster.

**Emotional reasoning** If I feel it, it must be true. We confuse feelings for facts.

**Should statements** You tend to think in absolutes. Things or people should act in a certain, predictable way. Words like should, must, have to dominate your thoughts. We live by fixed rules and unrealistic expectations for ourselves and others that can lead to guilt and disappointment.

**Taking things personally** Blaming yourself when something is not at all connected to you.

**Wishful thinking** "If only" thinking dominates. It is being locked into the past and regrets.

**Mental filter** Pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it.

**Discounting the positive** Anything positive does not count. You reject the possibility that there is something positive here or something good could come out of it.

**Types of unhelpful thinking**

---

• Over generalizing • Jumping to conclusions • Mind reading • Making a mountain out of a mole hill • Emotional reasoning • Should statements • Taking things personally • Wishful thinking • Ignoring the good • Dwelling on the bad

---

## **Rehearse Successful**

Tactics/Strategies/Actions Mentally rehearse how you will act before going into the situation. Try to anticipate how others will react, what they will say, and how you'll respond. Check out the best and worst cases; play out both scenes. Check your feelings in conflict or worst-case situations; rehearse staying under control.

## **Put Yourself in Situations That Call for Your Weaknesses**

Put yourself in situations where you must overcome or neutralize a weakness to be successful. Find opportunities to develop counter-coping skills: If you're shy, attend functions where you don't know many people; if you're too aggressive, work with children, etc.

## **Examine Why You're Blocked on a Key Issue**

Examine what you are worrying/angry about and list all of your thoughts about it; ask why these feelings are holding you back. Why are the feelings overriding your thinking? How are they getting in the way? Why are they important to you? How can you move

---

beyond them and learn to do something differently?

### **Study Your History of Conflicts for Insights**

List the people and situations which cause you trouble. What are the common themes? Why do those kinds of people and/or those kinds of situations set you off? Do they have to? Was the conflict really important? Did it help or block your learning and getting things done? Try to anticipate those people/situations in the future.

### **Learn to Separate Opinions from Facts**

Practice separating opinions, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and values from facts and data. Try to base more of your comments and actions on the data side. If there is a need to air subjective information, announce it as such, and label it for what it is. Don't present opinions with the look and sound of data.



## **Problem solving**

The capacity for effective problem solving is critical for resiliency. The capacity to deal effectively with adversity depends on a person having access to a range of flexible strategies for addressing conflict, seeking help, and dealing with unforeseen setbacks.

### **The problem solving process**

Problem solving can be broken down into a four-step process which can be applied to almost any type of problem, from the social to the scientific:

- Identify the problem
- Generate solutions
- Evaluate the possible solutions, decide on the best course of action, and put it into action

- 
- Evaluate the outcome. If the problem is not solved, repeat from step 2.

### **Identify the problem**

This step may sound obvious, but sometimes identifying the problem can be more difficult than it appears. Once the problem is clearly identified, this often goes more than half-way to solving it. Identifying the problem means clearly working out what one's goal is, and what is currently preventing one from achieving this outcome.

### **Generate solutions**

The key at this stage of the process is not to be overly critical or evaluative of the solutions generated, but to simply think of as many different ways of solving or addressing the problem as possible. This is like a 'brain-storm'. You get more creative solutions if you feel free to table anything.

### **Evaluate solutions and choose the best one to act on**

Having generated a list of possible approaches to dealing with the problem, it is now necessary to evaluate each of the options and decide which is the preferred approach,

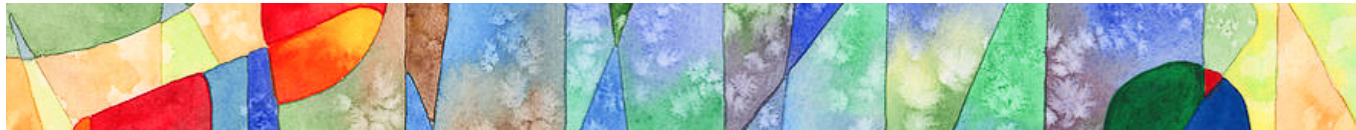


---

taking into consideration everything that might be relevant to the decision. One's knowledge is rarely perfect, so this is a matter of a 'best guess' in most cases.

### **Evaluate the outcome**

Having tried a solution, it is important to evaluate the success of the solution. If it hasn't worked, return to step 2, and revisit the possible solutions. Continue this process until the problem is resolved.



## **Emotional literacy**

**Emotional literacy** is the ability to recognize, understand and appropriately express our emotions. Just as verbal literacy is the basic building-block for reading and writing, emotional literacy is the basis for perceiving and communicating emotions. Becoming emotionally literate is learning the alphabet, grammar and vocabulary of our emotional lives.

Emotions are an integral part of human nature. Through emotions we respond to life in many different ways -- with anger, happiness, fear, love and loneliness. Emotions influence our thoughts and actions; they inspire our needs; they affect our bodies and impact on our relationships.

Many of the problems in modern society are due, at least in part, to people being unable to understand and appropriately express emotion. Emotional Literacy is a preventive tool, which properly understood, can help solve many social ills -- violence, illness, drug

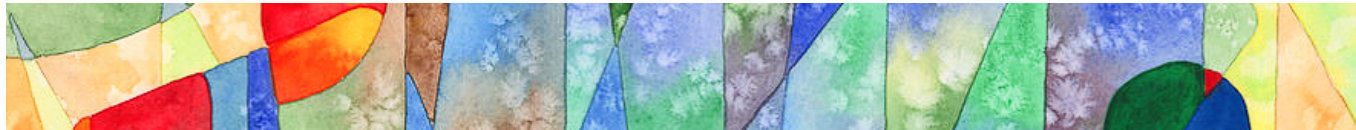
---

abuse, dysfunctional relationships, and global societal conflicts.

On the other hand, people who deal with emotions in a positive way find tremendous benefit. Emotional Literacy can contribute to health, to positive relationships, to success, and to quality of life.

Emotional Literacy is universally relevant. It can benefit every individual, every organization, and every profession. It has the capacity to transform each person and their relationships. Emotional Literacy is a key to living a full rich life. It is basic to joy and enthusiasm for living and fundamental to your ability to love and be loved.

Emotional Literacy is a profound and beautiful language available to everyone. It can be implemented rapidly, safely, and with lasting effect. Learning how to become emotionally literate is one of the best investments that human beings can make for themselves, their children, and the future.



## Coping

### Eight Steps towards a more satisfying life

Do you want to lift your level of happiness? Here are some practical suggestions from University of California Psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky. These are not magical answers, but they do help.

**1. Count your blessings.** One way to do this is to keep a “**gratitude journal**”. Write down things you are thankful for every day (you watch a nice sunset, a child’s first steps). You can do it daily or weekly. Keep it fresh by varying your entries as much as possible.

**2. Practise acts of kindness.** These should be both random (let that harried mum go ahead of you in the checkout line) and planned (bring Sunday tea to an elderly neighbour). Being kind to others, whether friends or strangers, triggers a cascade of positive effects. It makes you feel generous and capable. It gives you a greater sense of connection with others. It wins you smiles, approval and reciprocated kindness. It helps

---

build **empathy**, one of the resilience building skills we saw on page 5.

**3. Savour life's joys.** Pay close attention to momentary pleasures and wonders. Focus on the sweetness of a ripe strawberry or the warmth of the sun when you step out from the shade. Some psychologists suggest taking “mental photographs” of pleasurable moments to think about in less happy times.

**4. Thank a mentor.** If there's someone whom you owe a debt of gratitude to for guiding you at one of life's crossroads, express your appreciation. Do it in detail and, if possible, in person.

**5. Learn to forgive.** Letting go of anger and resentment allows you move on. This also can involve letting go of anger towards yourself for mistakes in the past.

**6. Invest time and energy in friends and family.** Where you live, how much money you make, your job title and even your health have surprisingly small effects on your satisfaction with life. The biggest factor appears to be strong personal relationships.

**7. Take care of your body.** Getting plenty of sleep, eating well, exercising, stretching,

---

smiling and laughing can all enhance your mood in the short term. Practiced regularly, they can help make your daily life more satisfying. Don't misuse your body with chemicals; alcohol, nicotine or caffeine.

**8. Develop strategies for coping with stress and hardships.** There are no avoiding hard times. Have a plan for emergencies. Religious faith has been shown to help people cope, but so do the secular beliefs enshrined in sayings like, "This too shall pass" and "One day at a time." The important thing is that you have to believe the saying.



## **Looking After Ourselves**

Common advice to people under stress is to look after yourself. The question is how? As stated on page 15, how we are feeling mentally and physically can affect how we are thinking. Taking your health and wellbeing into your own hands helps build resilience. It does not mean you won't have difficulties and challenges. Everyone does at times. While there is no guarantee, these things do help to build your resources.

**1. Positive steps to emotional health and wellbeing (Positive Steps, Health Education Authority, 1999)** They are things we should do regularly including: **Accepting who you are**

Our beliefs, background, culture, religion, and sexuality make us who we are. Everyone is entitled to respect.

---

### **Talking about it**

Most people feel overwhelmed by their problems sometimes. It can help to share your feelings. Who do you have you can openly talk to about your feelings or situation? If you feel you don't have someone to talk to, help-lines are available.

### **Keeping in touch with friends and family**

You don't have to be strong and struggle on alone. Friends and family are important, especially at difficult times. Keep in touch.

### **Getting involved**

Meeting new people and getting involved in things can make all the difference for you.

### **Keeping active**

Regular exercise really helps if you're feeling depressed or anxious. It can give you more energy too. Find something you enjoy - sport, swimming, walking, cycling or dancing.



---

### **Learning new skills**

Learning a new skill can increase your confidence whether it's for pleasure, to make new friends or improve your chances of a job.

### **Doing something creative**

Creative things can help if you are anxious or low and increase your confidence. Music, writing, painting, poetry, cooking, gardening - experiment to find something you enjoy.

### **Relaxing**

Try and make time for yourself. Fit things into your day that help you unwind - reading, listening to music, prayer or meditation - whatever you enjoy or find relaxing.



## **Mindfulness**

**Mindfulness breeds resilience.** You're worrying, hurrying, scurrying about. You have a dozen things on your mind -- but stop for a moment: Are you being mindful?

Mindfulness -- paying attention on purpose and without judgment – the benefits of mindfulness tools for reducing stress and anxiety.

"These are difficult times right now for a lot of people," said Goldstein, who is in private practice and has authored books and CDs on mindfulness. Learning to become more "present," he said, frees us to be more flexible and creative - and ultimately, more resilient, enjoying better health and well-being.

Participants in a study who practiced mindfulness techniques for five minutes a day over a period of three weeks reported significant reductions in stress along with increases in life satisfaction, positive relations with others and mastery of one's environment. These are "all key players in creating a life worth living," Goldstein added.

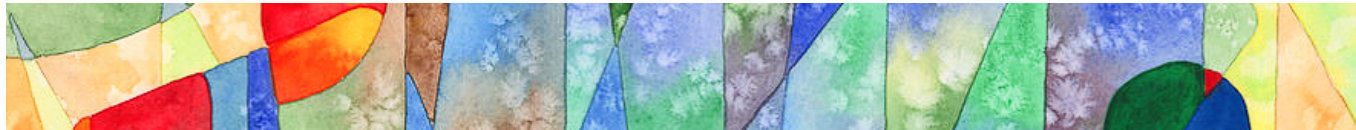
---

***Psychologist Elisha Goldstein.***

Mindfulness works by helping us break out of habitual, often ineffective patterns of thinking and acting. The human mind, Goldstein explained, is constantly thinking about without having to constantly think about the skills you're using. But this tendency has a downside: responding to problems in rigid, unthinking ways.

"When, for example, we hear that budget cuts are coming," Goldstein said, "we may become anxious and afraid. Our mind is going on automatic pilot, thinking, 'How do I fix this? What do I need to do?' Our body may tense up, our heart pounds and our breathing becomes rapid."

Caught in this uncomfortable bind, some people speed up and work even harder to try to solve the problem. Others flee, seeking escape through substances like alcohol. But either approach, Goldstein said, "is like pouring kerosene on the fire, and we start to become more and more anxious." Fast-moving multi-taskers often end up even more stressed, while those seeking escape succeed in doing so only temporarily.



## Wellbeing

More than 11 million Australians spend an average of 8 hours a day in the workplace (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014).

That's a big chunk of your day you could use to be more active. And if your job mainly involves sitting (e.g. at a computer), you might be putting your health at more risk.

Not getting enough physical activity and sitting too much both increase your risk for heart disease and other health problems. To improve heart health, you need to:

- do 30-45 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (like brisk walking) most days of the week
- reduce the time you spend sitting every day and break up sitting time. Read more about getting active and sitting less. You might not think there's much you can do about being more active and sitting less at work, but you'd be surprised. A few

---

simple changes can add to your daily physical activity and reduce your sitting time. You may even find there are other benefits – like feeling happier and healthier!

### **Is your workplace active?**

Does your workplace encourage you to be active? Talk to your health representative about these ideas: Talk with your employer about getting heart health checks done for employees. Does your office have a lunchtime walking or exercise group? Are standing desks and meetings encouraged? Use a height-adjustable desk so you can work standing or sitting. Shift your meetings outdoors and take a walking meeting.

### **Tips for moving more and sitting less at work**

There are plenty of ways you can make sure you stay active and cut down your sitting time at work. Take regular breaks from your computer. Get up and take a break every 30 minutes, and have lunch away from your desk. Rotate sitting tasks with standing tasks across your shift. Get into the habit of standing to greet visitors or when you're on the phone (a headset or speaker phone can make it easier). Instead of phoning or emailing a colleague, get up and go talk to them. Use the stairs instead of the lift or the hoist. Use meetings as a chance to stand. Stand at the back of the room during toolbox talks or

---

presentations. If you have to sit in long meetings, take standing breaks. Suggest standing or walking meetings. Drink more water. Going to the water cooler and toilet will break up sitting time. Move your bin away from your desk so you have to get up to use it.



## **Dealing with Adversity**

### **Dealing with life-altering adversities**

#### **Take time**

Give yourself time to heal. Remember, after all, that post-traumatic growth is not an instantaneous process. But rather it takes time. You should realize that this will be a painful and difficult phase in your life. So be patient and allow yourself to fully mourn the losses you have incurred. And don't be hard on yourself about the changing emotional states you may be experiencing.

#### **Ask for support**

Ask for support from people who truly care about you and whom you feel will be able to empathize well with your situation. There are no extra points for valor for going through tragedies like this alone. But do make sure to keep in mind that your traditional support

---

system may be weakened if those who are close to you are also suffering the loss.

### **Join support groups**

Look into local support groups that may be available in your area. These can be especially helpful for those people with limited personal support systems in their own lives. Ideally, if you do choose to join a group, try to find one that is led by an appropriately trained and experienced professional. In all, these groups can help you to realize that others in the same circumstances are struggling with similar reactions and emotions.

### **Talk about it**

Communicate your experience during your recovery process. If you don't have a close support system and you don't feel comfortable participating in groups, you may even want to put your thoughts and feelings down into a journal. The key point is to be able to have a release valve for your emotions and thoughts as you work your way through the trauma.



---

### **Focus on healthy behaviours**

Try to engage in as many healthy behaviours as possible to help you cope with the inevitable stress. Simple lifestyle choices like eating well-balanced meals, exercising, and making sure you get enough rest will significantly enhance your ability to cope with stress. If you are experiencing ongoing difficulties sleeping, a practice of meditation or other relaxation techniques may prove to be of great help.

### **Reestablish routines**

A major life-altering trauma has the ability to throw off any sense of rhythm in life. So make an effort to establish, or reestablish, routines such as eating meals at regular times, or following a regimented exercise program.

### **Avoid alcohol and drugs**

But do try to avoid alcohol and drugs. These are some of the most popular crutches and distractions that people tend to rely on to diminish their pain in times of great distress. As we mentioned earlier, the goal of post-traumatic growth is not to escape the pain.

---

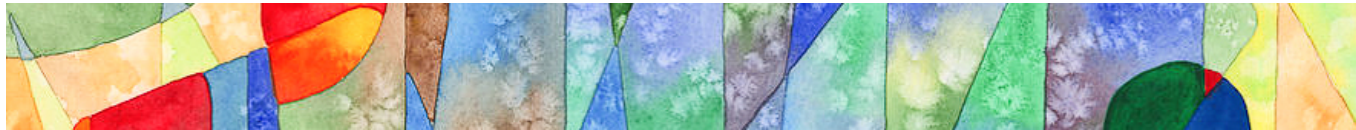
Rather it is to feel it, and through it, to emerge transformed for the better. So instead of alcohol and drugs, try to find other enjoyable hobbies or activities that will keep you present and not distracted from what you need to be feeling in order to truly heal.

### **Avoid major life decisions for a while**

In addition, try to avoid making major life decisions in these times of deep distress. Thoughts of whether to switch careers or move cities can just add to the substantial stress that you are already experiencing. Put off contemplating those kinds of decisions until you have recovered sufficiently to consider them with a clearer mindset.

### **Look for meaning and purpose in your life**

And finally, through this process, look to discover and connect with the inherent meaning that may be found in major adversity. This is the last, and perhaps most profound, recommendation. Potential meaning can be gleaned from even the most despairing situations.



## **Breathe**

We need the skills that help put the brakes on unhelpful thinking, at least for a moment. This gives you the opportunity to then challenge unhelpful thoughts or beliefs and then change them.

Some thought stopping skills:

### **Deep Breathing 7/11**

A simple but powerful technique that is easy to learn. It has immediate beneficial effect.

From deep in the pit of the stomach breathe in for 7 seconds and then breathe out for 11 seconds. Do this 5, 6, 7 times and see the reaction. The reason for making the out breath longer is that inhaling triggers one part of our nervous system that creates arousal and exhaling stimulates a relaxation response. By breathing out more than breathing in you trigger the relaxation response over the arousal response.

---

## **Clenched Fists**

This is a simple technique from Yoga. It works on a simple principle. If you tense muscles and then relax them, they are always more relaxed after you have just tensed them.

First, make your hands into tight fists... as tight as possible. Notice the tension in the muscles of the fingers. Become aware of the hardness of your fingernails in the palm of your hands. Notice the skin stretched across the knuckles and how your wrists have become rigid. Hold this for several seconds.

Now, begin to relax your hands. When you do... really concentrate on the change between tension and relaxation. When you are really concentrating, relax those hands and fingers. The relaxed feeling is now going up your arms to your shoulders. In a few minutes it will spread to your whole body. You don't have to say anything or do anything. Let the relaxation flow.

## **Affirmations of power**

We can help make associations work for us. We can learn to associate a phrase we say to

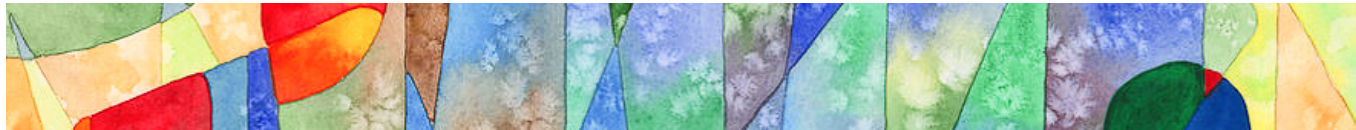
---

ourselves with a signal to think things through.

I can think this through. I can get my mind working for me here. **Write others that work for you.**

### **Visualization**

Picture in your mind a relaxing, calming place and go there in your mind for a moment.



## Reactions

When confronted with difficulties or challenges thoughts flood through our thinking in a flash. As discussed they are based on:

- Our explanatory style
- Unhelpful thinking habits
- Core beliefs

The main question is: **Is this thinking accurate?** Does our explanatory style, unhelpful thinking habits or core beliefs make it bigger, nastier than it needs to be? If it does, it can freeze us in an unhealthy direction that just does not work for us. We all have some situations that seem more difficult for us. It is like something is able to push our buttons and we react. Being criticized, dealing with authority, conflict etc. What type of situations “push your buttons?”

---

**If thoughts tend to centre on certain things then the feeling that follows is predictable.**

- Feeling attacked, our rights violated (Anger) • Loss or loss of self worth (Sadness) • Future threat (Fear, Anxiety) • Comparing yourself in a negative way to others (Embarrassment) • Hurting someone else (Guilt)

**Basically we are saying, don't just react to things, respond. Make your thinking work for you!**

People cannot get at your thoughts or change your mind unless we let them or want them to. You have control over what you think or say to yourself. What do you think of that statement? So how do you gain more control over your thinking?

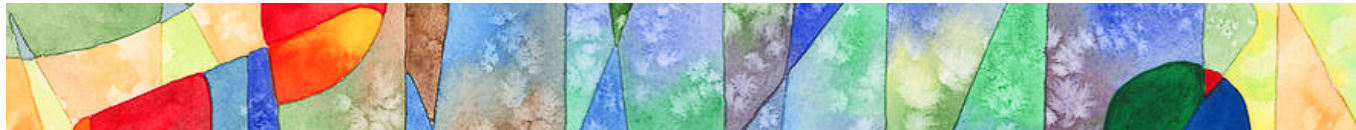
In looking back to our ABC's (Adversity, Beliefs and Consequences) the beliefs (our thinking) matter a great deal because they will shape the intensity of our feelings and what we do. When we are more resilient we are not saying we don't have strong feelings. We are able to regulate and control them to **respond** to situations in ways that work better for us.

---

**The skills that help us move forward are:**

- Catching that unhelpful, initial reaction.
- Putting on the brakes and stopping that chain of unhelpful self talk.
- Create thinking time. Be a detective. Examine what is really going on.
- Being flexible and creative in your thinking.
- Challenging negative thinking.
- Substitute more reasonable thinking.





## **Boundaries**

### **Begin to Set Personal Boundaries**

*Do you have a hard time standing up for yourself? Do you keep agreeing to do things that you really don't want to do? Do you tolerate rude comments or pushy people because you can't handle conflict? Do you take things personally?*

Creating stronger boundaries is the number one way for most women to improve their lives. Here you can learn how to stand up for yourself! Set personal boundaries and free yourself from the "disease to please" with these three steps!

### **Step 1: Self-Awareness**

The first step in learning to set boundaries is self-awareness. Complete the following sentences.

---

## **Step 2: Setting Your Boundaries**

Learn to set boundaries with others. Find support and using specific language.

## **Step 3: Strengthen Your Internal Boundaries**

Too often, women neglect to stand up for themselves by avoiding confrontation. When someone offends you, stop and ask these three questions.

## **Guilt in Setting Boundaries**

Learn how to overcome guilt. Get rid of the obstacles that could be blocking your way to setting boundaries in your life.

The first step in learning to set boundaries is self-awareness. For example, pay close attention to the situations when you lose energy, feel a knot in your stomach, or want to cry. Identifying where you need more space, self- respect, energy or personal power is the first step.

Another way to identify your boundaries is by completing these three sentences with at

---

least 10 examples.

1. People may not \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I have a right to ask for \_\_\_\_\_.
3. To protect my time and energy, it's OK to \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Day 20 – Saying no Saying ‘No’ When and how to say no**

Sure it's easier to say yes, but at what price to your peace of mind? Here's why saying no may be a healthier option for stress relief.

#### **Busy doing other people's work**

Is your plate piled high with deadlines and obligations that you're trying to squeeze in between meetings? Are you trying to cram too many activities into too little time? If so, stress relief can be as straightforward as just saying no.

#### **Why say no?**

---

The number of worthy requests isn't likely to lessen, and you can't add more available time to your day. Are you doomed then to be overcommitted? The answer is no, not if you're willing to say no. It may not be the easy way, but it is a path to stress relief.

**Consider these reasons for saying no:**

**Saying no isn't necessarily selfish.** When you say no to a new commitment, you're honoring your existing obligations and ensuring that you'll be able to devote quality time to them.

**Saying no can allow you to try new things.** Just because you've always helped plan the company softball tournament doesn't mean that you have to keep doing it forever. Saying no will give you time to pursue other interests.

**Always saying yes isn't healthy.** When you're overcommitted and under too much stress, you're more likely to feel run-down and possibly get sick.

**Saying yes can cut others out.** On the other hand, when you say no you open the door

---

for others to step up. They may not do things exactly the way you would, but that's OK. They'll find their own way.

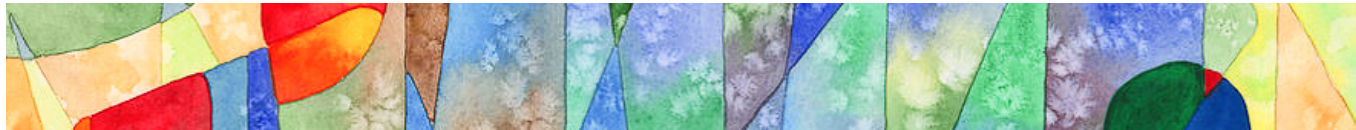
**Reflection statement**

Am I always saying yes?

*It feels good to be the go-to guy or girl: the one that everyone comes to for solutions to their problems. When people smile at you and tell you, "Thank you so much. I just don't know what I would do without you," feelings of importance, value, and worth well up inside of you. The immediate verbal affirmation you receive from saying, "Yes," to every request can even fulfill subconscious aspirations of being popular: I could never be class president, but I can fix every technical challenge people bring to me. At last, I'm a VIP!*

**Reflection statement**

Is this true of you or anyone else in your workplace?



## **Stress**

**Stress Learning Objectives:** 1. Have a critical understanding of psychological stress and distress 2. Have an awareness of how psychological distress can greatly affect healthcare professionals 3. Understand how stress can affect your perception of the present moment 4. Develop an appreciation of what common triggers cause you stress and psychological distress in your life, and how you can identify and manage them.

### **Why is stress bad for you?**

A little bit isn't! Many people function well, especially in terms of producing something for a deadline, under a little stress. However, long-term exposure to low levels, or just short-term exposure to high levels of stress can really take its toll on the body.

It is widely accepted that stress exacerbates a great many medical conditions, and it is argued that it may in fact be the direct cause in many others too. Stress is a fact of life, and it would be impractical to avoid everything that caused you the slightest amount of

---

stress. It is important to note how you respond to it. Some stressors, such as a presentation may elicit behaviour such as biting your nails. Whilst this is self destructive, it is not going to cause you any long-term harm. However, if your response is to tend towards violence or panic then the longer-term implications are not so good. Therefore, stress in itself may not be particularly bad for you, but the way in which you react to it may be.

By being aware of this and that our mind is worrying away unnecessarily, we have the potential to control the way in which we manage feelings from the past and apprehension of the future in order to achieve a better control of our stress levels. Having a level of control over stress has numerous benefits to our physical and mental health, which highlights the importance of cultivating an awareness of how our mind creates stress.

**Top Tip:** Keeping a Stress Diary can help you to get to grips with the common causes of ‘Short-Term’ stress in your life as well as provide insight into how you react to and cope with them. By writing the details of these events down, you can analyse the feelings associated with the event and manage them. This is an important stage in learning to

---

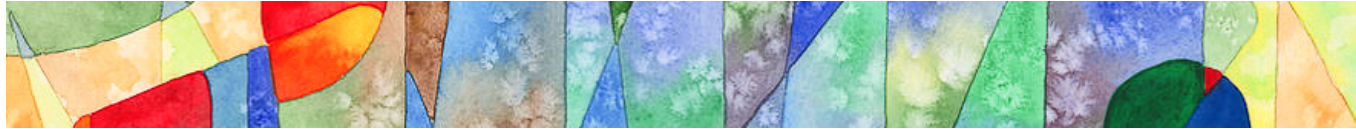
respond differently to similar events or to avoid them all together.

Try filling it in over the next week or two. This will help you evaluate what can be a key trigger for stress in your life. Repeat the exercise again in several week's time to see how things have changed.

**KEY POINTS:**

1. Stress is physiological and some helps motivate us
2. Psychological distress disproportionately affects healthcare professionals, increasing risk of psychological morbidity
3. We can control our thought processes by developing a meta-awareness so as to prevent rumination and reduce the impact that stress has on our experience of the present moment
4. By keeping a stress diary, we can develop an awareness of the common triggers that cause us stress in our lives and learn to manage, or avoid them.





## **Relaxation**

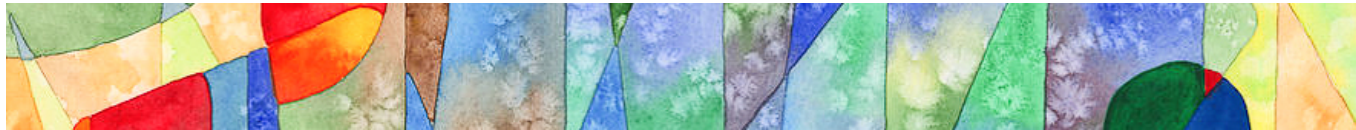
### **Relaxation Learning Objectives:**

1. Develop an awareness of the principals of the effects that stress and relaxation have on the body
2. Be able to try a variety of different, established, relaxation techniques
3. Appreciate which techniques work well for you and which you feel comfortable practicing

Many things can help us relax. Listening to music, hobbies, light exercise or just a good long soak in the bath are all great starts. Relaxing is important, but it is often overlooked in our daily routine. By taking time out to relax, you are giving your mind and body time to recover. This has obvious effects on stress and anxiety, but has been shown to increase your life expectancy too.

---

The Life Balance Pyramid is designed to guide you in creating a 'recipe' for developing overall balance and wellbeing. In principle, if you have a good foundation of daily activities and a positive outlook on life, you can build on this with emotional, physical and social supporting activities. Topping this up with more 'emergency' coping skills will help us to deal with all of the things that life has to throw at us in a more balanced manner that is less harmful to our own mind and body. By practicing relaxation strategies, such as the ones mentioned in this section, or Mindfulness, you are developing skills that will benefit you at every level of the pyramid.



## **Looking after yourself**

### Why it's important

It's easy for your children and work colleagues to take up your every waking minute. But unless you look after yourself, you can exhaust all your reserves of energy and enthusiasm. Make time for the people and activities that help you feel positive, energetic and self-confident.

If these ring a bell, it's time to take more care of yourself:

- Are your meals often the children's leftovers?
- Is your main social event the parents' evening at school?
- Is running around after the children the only decent exercise you get?

---

## **Make time for yourself**

It can be difficult, but make time for yourself and relax. Don't see this as a special treat but as something you deserve on a regular basis.

So whether it's a walk on your own, a meal out or a get together with a good friend, find a couple of hours for it.

## **Juggling work and home**

Balancing your job with your home life can be tough and there's nothing worse than worrying about your childcare arrangements while you're at work. To find out more about childcare options see our childcare section.

You could also:

- Find out about family-friendly practices in your workplace. Up to 60 per cent of employers say they let their staff vary their hours and nearly half offer stress counselling.
- Take a few minutes at the end of the day to share the ups and downs of your day with

---

your partner or a friend - but don't spend the whole evening thinking about work.

- Make the most of time off. Do something together as a family at the weekends.

### **Look after yourself**

Although some mental illnesses may be genetically predetermined, or otherwise unavoidable, there are ways to keep the blues at bay and make sure your mind and body stay healthy and happy.

### **Eat well and keep fit**

Regular, healthy meals and moderate exercise can make a significant difference to your moods. You'll feel more energetic and able to look after yourself. There's also the added benefit of looking fit and toned, which is a confidence booster.

### **Do something you love**

Write a list of all the things in life that you enjoy, no matter how trivial they might seem at first. Now plan to do at least one small thing every day, and have bigger things to look

---

forward to as well. A hobby or interest that totally absorbs your interest is great, even if it's just for an hour a week, but don't take it to extremes and let it take over the whole of your life.

### **Make lots of friends**

Even shy people can have an active social life. Get out and meet some new people, and remember - they don't have to be identical to you to be good friends. Avoid people who drag you down all the time and never give anything in return for your support. Seek out the company of others who make you laugh, or feel inspired.

### **Learn how to handle stress**

Don't be afraid of challenges, overcoming them will help to increase your self-confidence. Stress management is not all about being passive, or lying down in a darkened room with a wet flannel on your forehead! Learn some active techniques to help you relax, rather than slobbering out in front of the telly, or getting drunk.

### **Big yourself up**

---

If you're in the habit of putting yourself down a lot, try making a list of all your good qualities. Get a friend to help you. You'll be surprised at how long that list turns out to be. Remind yourself of the list from time to time.

Stay out of the downward spiral

Be honest about your feelings, but don't go on and on about feeling bad all the time to anyone who'll listen, it will make you feel worse. Avoid sitting around and doing nothing for days on end, especially if you're feeling a bit down, keep busy or do something deliberate to relax yourself.

Keep your brain active Take an interest in what's going on in the world, or at least one area of it. Be enthusiastic about life and never stop learning.

**Don't worry, be silly**

Learn how to ignore the unimportant things that may niggle you, and break large unpleasant tasks down into smaller, manageable chunks. Keep a sense of humour at all times, and try to see the funny side of most situations.







## **Self Empowerment**

The smallest positive change in your thinking can begin to unravel the biggest problem. When you ask the right questions of Life, Life will answer. There are many ways to make our changes. We could also begin to honestly look at our flaws NOT by looking at what is WRONG with us, but to see the barriers that we have put up that keep us from being all that we learned in childhood. They never were true for us. We merely accepted someone else's belief system. If we learned these thoughts once, then we can now unlearn them. We acknowledge that we are willing to learn to love ourselves.

## **Be Committed to the Relationship**

– You Have With Yourself We get so committed to other relationships, but we tend to toss ourselves away. We get around to ourselves now and then. So, really care for who you are. Be committed to loving yourself. Take care of your heart and soul.

---

### **Treat Yourself as Though You Are Loved**

– Respect and cherish yourself. As you love yourself, you will be more open to love from others. The Law of Love requires that you focus your attention on what you do want, rather than what you don't want. Focus on loving you.

### **Take Care of Your Body**

– Your body is a precious temple. If you are going to live a long, fulfilling life, then you want to take care of yourself now. You want to look good, and most of all, feel good and have lots of energy. Nutrition and exercise are important. You want to keep your body flexible and moving easily until your last day on the planet.

### **Educate Yourself**

– Too often we complain that we don't know this or that and we don't know what to do. But we are bright and smart, and we can learn. There are books and classes and tapes everywhere. If money is a consideration, then use the library. Find a self-help group. They are listed under Community Services in the yellow pages of the telephone book. I know I

---

shall be learning until my very last day.

### **Fulfill Your Creative Side**

– Creativity can be any activity that fulfills you. It can be anything from baking a pie to designing a building. Give yourself some time to express yourself. If you have children and time is short, find a friend who will help you take care of your children, and vice versa. You both deserve time for yourselves. You are worth it.

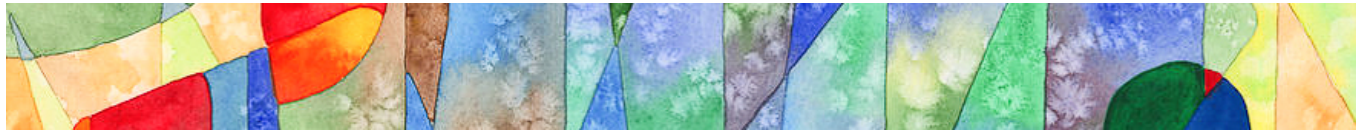
### **Make Joy and Happiness the Center of Your World**

– Joy and happiness are always within you. Make sure you are connected with this place inside of you. Build your life around this joy. When we are happy, we can be creative, we don't sweat the small stuff, and we are open to new ideas.

### **Have Integrity – Keep Your Word**

In order to honor and respect yourself, you must have integrity. Learn to keep your word. Do not make promises you will not keep even to yourself. Don't promise yourself you will start the diet tomorrow or exercise every day unless you know you will follow through. You want to be able to trust your





## **Become a Mentor**

### **Why Should I Mentor?**

It makes business sense. The demand for skilled women professionals has been growing steadily. Companies cannot afford to lose their top talent. Mentoring is crucial to a company's ability to remain competitive by retaining and promoting their best employees. Research shows that mentoring leads to higher job satisfaction, career advancement, work success, and future compensation. Employees who are mentored are less likely to leave the organization.

Mentoring also plays a powerful role in getting young employees up to speed on the organizational culture, accelerating their integration into the organization and enhancing their effectiveness.

---

## **Who Should Be a Mentor?**

Any woman or man in a position of responsibility or influence may be the right mentor for a technical woman. It is important that a mentor be committed to leveraging the talent and furthering the career of protégées. A good mentor:

- Recognizes how a diverse workforce enriches the organization's "gene pool" from which creativity and innovation spring.
- Is aware that women in technology face additional barriers to advancement and is dedicated to further breaking down these barriers.

## **Is my protégée ready**

Your protégée is ready if she:

- Has ambitions to advance and increase her contribution to the organization
- Is interested in being mentored
- Actively seeks constructive feedback and acts on it

- 
- Is able to commit time and effort to professional growth
  - Is willing to explore new behaviors and skills

The best mentoring relationship results come when the protégée “owns” the process and drives activity toward the results. If your protégée is not able to clearly articulate a goal for the relationship or has trouble creating the meeting plan, have her prepare accordingly before you start into formal mentoring.

### **What Are the “Dos” of Mentoring?**

These tips are designed to help you think about what mentoring is and is not.

*Do:* Be clear on where the line is drawn between your responsibilities and those of the manager.

*Do:* Agree on goals for the mentoring relationship from the outset, and put them in writing. Frequently go back to your goals to measure progress.

*Do:* Act as a colleague first, an expert second. A know-it-all approach to mentoring is

---

intimidating and will limit your successes. Strike an open and warm tone so your protégée will feel she can ask you difficult questions and take risks. Listen as much as you speak so her questions and aspirations are always the central focus.

*Do:* Set realistic expectations. You can provide your protégée access to resources and people, but make it clear you do not wield your influence over others. You may be a senior executive but that does not mean you fix problems for the protégée – you coach as you can but the protégée does the heavy lifting.

*Do:* Keep a time limit as part of the goal, and evaluate your progress periodically. Every mentoring relationship has phases – including the end to formal mentoring. This doesn't necessarily mean the end of your relationship, but a change in how you interact and how often.

*Do:* Remember that mentoring is a process with a goal. Have a fun relationship but don't get off track and lose sight of goals.

*Do:* Expect high performance from the protégée and accelerate her learning. Research suggests that the most beneficial mentoring is based on mutual learning, active



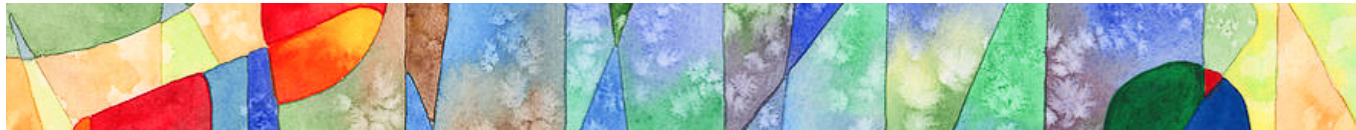
---

engagement, and striving to push the leadership capabilities of protégées.

*Do:* Listen, listen, and then listen some more. Hear the concerns of your protégée before offering advice and guidance. Establish trust and openness in communication from the start.

*Do:* Strive to protect the protégée from what you see as major professional errors or missteps, but also leave room for her to learn from her own experience and mistakes. Remember that a successful mentoring relationship is one where the protégée eventually advances and no longer needs your support. Make sure the protégé is not overly dependent on your advice.

*Do:* Recognize that the protégée's goals are her own and that she may have career goals that differ from the path you chose. Your role as a mentor is to guide; it's up to the protégée to decide what to implement in her career.



## **Your goals**

Setting goals can help you live life in accord with your values, and are a useful way to keep your resiliency plan on track.

Once you have identified the most important values and areas of your life to work on, as well as behaviours that you have recognised may be working against your resiliency try to identify specific achievable goals (outcomes) that are consistent with them.

Review the Resiliency Plan options and answers you have created in each of the workbook.

After careful reflection, compile a personal plan below.

## **My values**

## **My long-term goals**

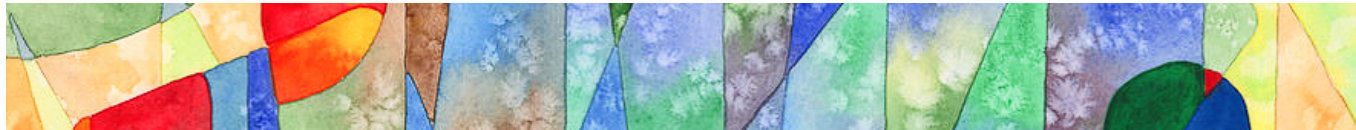
---

**My short-term goals**

**My first steps Skills I want to build**

**I want to know more about ...**

**These are the resiliency competencies I want to cultivate ...**



## **My Skills**

The skills that help us move forward are:

- Catching that unhelpful, initial reaction.
- Putting on the brakes and stopping that chain of unhelpful self talk.
- Create thinking time. Be a detective. Examine what is really going on.
- Being flexible and creative in your thinking. Challenging negative thinking. Substitute more reasonable thinking.

## **Looking After Ourselves**

Taking your health and wellbeing into your own hands helps build resilience.

---

### **Accepting who you are**

Our beliefs, background, culture, religion, and sexuality make us who we are. Everyone is entitled to respect.

### **Talking about it**

Most people feel overwhelmed by their problems sometimes. It can help to share your feelings.

### **Keeping in touch with friends and family**

You don't have to be strong and struggle on alone. Friends and family are important, especially at difficult times. Keep in touch.

### **Getting involved**

Meeting new people and getting involved in things can make all the difference for you.

### **Keeping active**

---

Regular exercise really helps if you're feeling depressed or anxious. It can give you more energy too.

### **Learning new skills**

Learning a new skill can increase your confidence whether it's for pleasure, to make new friends or improve your chances of a job.

### **Doing something creative**

Creative things can help if you are anxious or low and increase your confidence..

### **Relaxing**

Try and make time for yourself. Fit things into your day that help you unwind - reading, listening to music, prayer or meditation - whatever you enjoy or find relaxing.

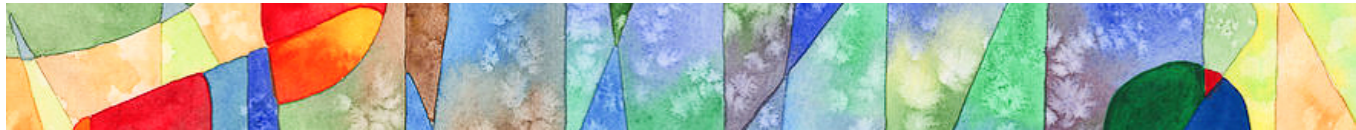
### **Asking for help**

Everyone needs help from time to time. It's ok to ask for help.

---

## **Surviving**

When times are difficult, it is sometimes all we can do to survive.



## **Help**

### **Using support**

Why should we ask for help? Have you ever heard a problem shared is a problem halved? Being able to ask for help strengthens our belief that we are not alone and that someone cares.

Some peoples' core beliefs make asking for help difficult.

- Keep things to yourself
- People should be independent
- People will think less of me if I ask for help

How can someone ask for help if they deep down believe only weak people ask for help? If you don't value yourself, you may think, "I don't want to bother anyone."



---

Another way to look at asking for help is to ask yourself this: How do I feel when someone turns to me for help? Do I feel valued? Is my opinion important? Asking for help is a way to make others feel valued as well as gaining support for ourselves.

Young men, in particular often have difficulty asking for help. Fathers have an important role to teach this skill by example. Being able to ask for help can be seen as strength. This sends out a powerful message. When faced with a problem, it's ok to ask for help.

Some kinds of help are easier to ask for than others. To ask someone to help move a cabinet is often easier than wanting to talk because we are hurt, sad or angry.

Building your supports involves not only being open to ask for help, but also being willing to give it.

**Up for discussion:**

- When did I ask for help and found that help really useful?
- What type of help do I find easier to ask for?

- 
- What type of help do I find more difficult to ask for? Why is that?
  - How do I feel when someone asks me for help?
  - What are the benefits of being able to ask for help?

Supportive relationships are a strength that helps build resilience. Who are the important people in your life you feel able to talk to or ask for help from?

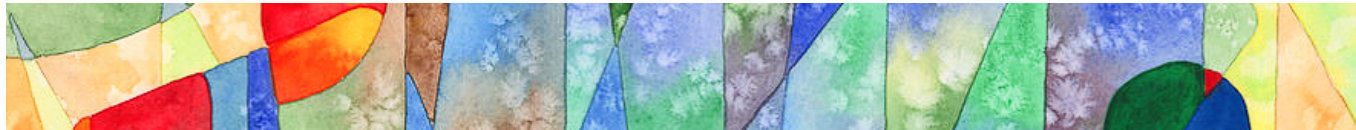
**Make a list of people who are supportive and in what way.**

Write your name inside a circle below. Next, use the list you have just made to draw other circles representing each person in your life. As you draw each circle, write the name of the person in it. Draw circles of those you consider most supportive nearest to you and people less supportive further away from you. Add more lines if you need to.

**Some questions to ask:**

- Do you need to use the support you already have more?
- Do you need to stop seeking support from people that you find unhelpful?

- 
- Do you need some more positive support?
  - Where can you go to find more people who could help you?



### **Gratitude Keep a Gratitude Journal**

The basic practice is straightforward. In many of the studies, people are simply instructed to record five things they experienced in the past week for which they're grateful. The entries are supposed to be brief—just a single sentence— and they range from the mundane (“waking up this morning”) to the sublime (“the generosity of friends”) to the timeless (“the Rolling Stones”).

But when you dig into the research, you find that gratitude journals don't always work—some studies show incredible benefits, others not so much. To understand why, I took a closer look at the research and consulted with Robert Emmons, arguably the world's leading expert on the science of gratitude and an author of some of the seminal studies of gratitude journals.

Emmons, a professor at the University of California, Davis, shared these research-based tips for reaping the greatest psychological rewards from your gratitude journal.

- 
- **Don't just go through the motions.** Research by psychologist Sonja

Lyubomirsky and others suggests that journaling is more effective if you first make the conscious decision to become happier and more grateful. "Motivation to become happier plays a role in the efficacy of journaling," says Emmons.

- **Go for depth over breadth.** Elaborating in detail about a particular thing for which you're grateful carries more benefits than a superficial list of many things.
- **Get personal.** Focusing on *people* to whom you are grateful has more of an impact than focusing on *things* for which you are grateful.
- **Try subtraction, not just addition.** One effective way of stimulating gratitude is to reflect on what your life would be like *without* certain blessings, rather than just tallying up all those good things.
- **Savour surprises.** Try to record events that were unexpected or surprising, as these tend to elicit stronger levels of gratitude.
- **Don't overdo it.** Writing occasionally (once or twice per week) is more beneficial than

---

daily journaling. In fact, one study by Lyubomirsky and her colleagues found that people who wrote in their gratitude journals once a week for six weeks reported boosts in happiness afterward; people who wrote three times per week didn't. "We adapt to positive events quickly, especially if we constantly focus on them," says Emmons. "It seems counterintuitive, but it is how the mind works."

In looking over this list, what strikes me is how keeping a gratitude journal—or perhaps the entire experience of gratitude—is really about forcing ourselves to pay attention to the good things in life we'd otherwise take for granted. Perhaps that's why the benefits seem to diminish when you start writing more than once per week, and why surprises induce stronger feelings of gratitude: It's easy to get numb to the regular sources of goodness in our lives.



### **Action plan Taking the Work Forward: Action plan/tool kit**

The good news is we know that by putting effort into reflection about our work, people can and do improve their skills, supports and resources.

#### **My action plan**

What skills do you already have that you can use?

What skills do you want to work on? What steps will you take to work on them?

#### **To sum it all up**

As stated in the beginning of this booklet, new skills don't happen by themselves. They need to be practised until they become part of everyday life. To remind yourself of the steps to use this work use the word FRANKS

---

**F = FEELINGS,**

Our feelings are shaped by our thinking.

**R = RELAX,**

Being calm helps us 'listen' to what we are thinking. A = ANALYSE, What are we thinking?

Is our thinking working for us? **N = NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE,**

Change negative thoughts to more positive or neutral ones.

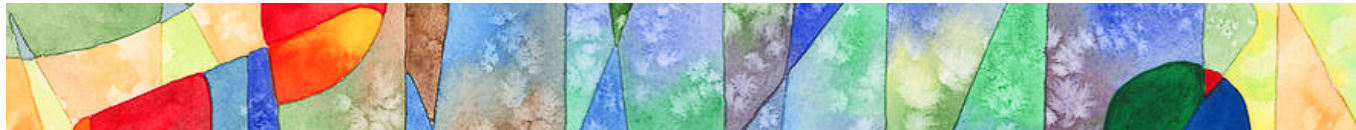
**K = KIND,**

Be kind to yourself. Have ways to look after yourself and your wellbeing.

**S = SUPPORT,**

We all need support – know who can help.





### **My Resiliency Plan**

From this workbook I will include the following into my resiliency plan: • Things I want to remain aware of as I build my resiliency preparedness.

- Skills that will help me deal effectively with situations that call upon me to be resilient.
- Concepts that will assist me to understand the complexities of a situation.

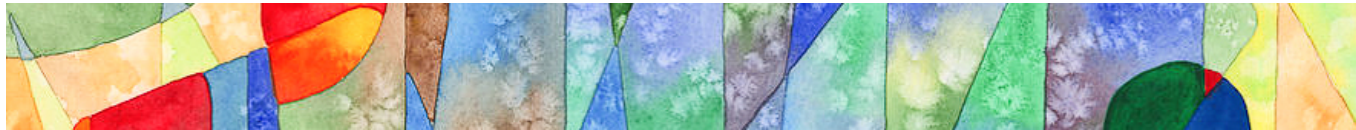


### **Make this your Office Wellness month**

Undertake a module or reflection each day during the month with your office team to build their workplace resilience.

**The theme for the Office Wellness Month is Empowerment and Resilience in the office.**

Equip your staff to be self-coaching and to develop resilience awareness and skills. Have your staff share in supportive and empowering activities that will build morale and team spirit in your office.



This module is a bonus addition to the Happy & Engaged Workshop program.

## Happy & Engaged Workshop Modules

What makes us happy?

Emotional literacy

Character strengths

Sometimes I feel

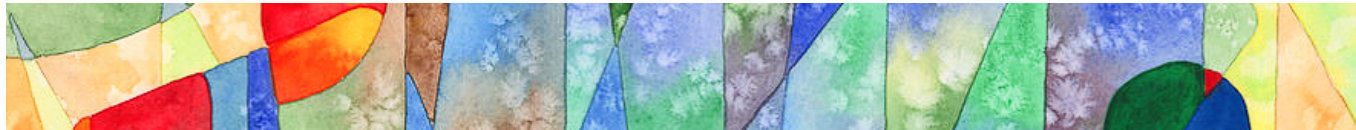
Relationships

Workplace culture

Engagement

Choosing to be happy

My happiness manifesto



Happy & Engaged – Creating healthy, happy and productive workplaces

Michael Auden

[www.MichaelAuden.com.au](http://www.MichaelAuden.com.au)

[Michael@michaেলাuden.com.au](mailto:Michael@michaেলাuden.com.au)

1 Wedge Court

Glen Waverley Victoria 3150