CORPORATE HARMONY

An Enlightened Approach to Leadership and Organizational Development

Hello again from Corporate Harmony and welcome to the Module 4 Week 4 'Conversation Starter'!!

The technological revolution of the 21st century has rendered time management ideas and skills of the past obsolete.

The saying that "Time can't be managed – it just is" has never been more true … and in today's age of digital convergence, where all types of different technologies are merging into one ever-present inescapable demand for our attention, it is our attention that becomes the most valuable commodity. New ways to get us to notice information are being invented and refined every day, and the phrase "demands on your attention" was never more appropriate.

Philosopher William James was noted for saying, "my experience is what I agree to attend to", in other words, when we learn to control our attention we will be in control of our life experiences. Attention management is the act of controlling and leading one's attention toward tasks that will deliver to us the greatest value and productivity, professional and personal, by avoiding and controlling the unconstructive distractions of today's world.

With recognition that our attention has become the most valuable commodity, our ability to focus becomes the most valuable skill – and if we don't use it, like any skill, we will lose it.

Self-awareness and identifying how we divide our attention plus identifying the sorts of things we are focusing our attention on, is the first step. There are even tools out there that can help us with that, such as Stephen Covey's "Time Management Matrix" from his book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People".

Understanding our personal 'working style' can be beneficial in identifying what our natural tendency is and also identifying and prioritizing the activities we should be focusing our attention on.

Graham Allcott, in his book "How to be a Productivity Ninja", talks about different levels of attention: 1) Proactive Attention; 2) Active Attention; and 3) Inactive Attention. Our attention level changes from day to day, even from moment to moment. Recognizing one's own different levels of attention and having tasks ready at hand for processing in each different attention level, can be key for successfully completing a productive day. As highlighted in Week 2, when we are in a positive flow of energy that is when we possess the clarity and focus that we need for proactive attention – the clarity and focus that comes with a position of confident, Zen-like calm.

We can think of attention as a 'mental muscle' that must be strengthened for maximum performance or focus. In today's fast-paced business world, our natural tendency is to just push through getting things done, but like any muscle training, we must be aware of the signs and/or signals that our cognitive

functioning is being compromised. Such signs or signals include, but are not limited to, mistakes, forgetting, momentary blank-outs, and our mind wandering to a negative place.

Also important, is the understanding that our brain has evolved to pay attention to scarcity. If we consider our time to be a scarcity (and in today's working world, it usually is), our mind will voluntarily wander to a state of overwhelmed paralysis of not enough time to accomplish task. The skill of Positive Presence will successfully bring you back to the moment of clear focus by creating positive and time rich thoughts.

The bottom line to Attention Management is taking control of your thoughts, feelings and behavior. We must control the amount of information we receive, how we communicate information, and most importantly, how we control our attention for optimum focus. We become what we give our attention to.

We must use our new-found skill of Positive Presence – the skill of adjusting and creating a positive and energized mindset within our self through conscious thought processes – to create the necessary cognitive state for a focus on that which will bring us the greatest positive returns in terms of achieving peak performance, in terms of building and maintaining good relationships, and in terms of experiencing good health …. So take time for an 'APB' (Module 2 Week 3) or a '3x3' (Module 2 Week 2) on a regular basis throughout your day.

Acquiring the skill of Positive Presence is a slow and gentle process that begins with awareness … but it's also a process that must be doused liberally with forgiveness -- especially self-forgiveness -- as well as a good solid pinch of humour.

Remember, the more time we spend in the positive, the greater our capacity for achieving peak performance, for building and maintaining good relationships, and for experiencing good health…

This week's homework was laid out in Week 1 of Module 4 so please refer back to our previous 'Week 1 Conversation', and follow the instructions for the next 7 days! … and then move on to MODULE 5!!

So my friends, go to Week 16 in your Positive Presence Skill Building Journal, and until next time, let the skill of Positive Presence work for you.

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