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SELF-MANAGEMENT

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THEME 1.
INTRODUCTION. SELF-MANAGEMENT.
DEFINING SELF-MANAGED DEVELOPMENT.

Self-management means different things in different fields. In business, education, and psychology, self-management refers to methods, skills, and strategies by which individuals can effectively direct their own activities toward the achievement of objectives, and includes goal setting, decision making, focusing, planning, scheduling, task tracking, self-evaluation, self-intervention, self-development, etc. Also it is known as *executive processes* (in the context of the *processes of execution*).

- Self-management skills tell an employer whether or not your personality fits the personality of the company, the bosses, and the co-workers.
- Over 50 percent of the people who are not successful on the job have trouble with their co-workers and bosses, so it's important for you to show employers how you fit into their operations.
- Many employers would rather hire an inexperienced worker with good self-management skills than an experienced worker who might cause problems

Self-managed development is all about taking responsibility and reflecting, both before and after action, key issues in the changing and dynamic business environment.

George Bernard Shaw said: *"The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want and, if they can't find them, make them."*

A slightly idealistic statement, perhaps. However, it may be that self-managed development is a way of helping people to find or make the right circumstances! You may be asking yourself: 'Why self-managed development when there are so many other things in my life?'

BUT

- Are you really happy with what you have achieved in life and work so far?
- Could you be doing more?
- Do you want to do more?
- Are there things in life that you've always wanted to do but never quite got round to?
- Are there opportunities you haven't taken?

Now is the time to start doing something about it. Self-managed development is all about **you** taking responsibility for **your** future!

Many organisations are incorporating self-managed development into their management development strategy. They actively want to encourage people to take more control of, and responsibility for, their own development. After all, people are an organisation's most important asset. This, of course, does not mean that the organisation abdicates its responsibility for its people's

development; in some ways it creates a more complex situation for human resources people. For the individual, as a self-developer, new and exciting challenges exist.

DEFINING SELF-MANAGED DEVELOPMENT

Self-managed development is the process whereby you take responsibility for, and control of, your own development.

As long ago as the 16th century, Galileo said: *“You cannot teach a man anything. You can only help him discover it in himself.”*

WHY ARE ORGANISATIONS DOING IT?

Typically, human resource professionals cite one or more of the reasons given here and on the following pages for incorporating self-managed development into their HR strategy.

1. Changes in career patterns, both from an organisational and individual perspective, involving some of the following:

- Organisations are employing more rigorous performance measures
- There are shorter, less predictable career paths
- Increasingly, portfolio v corporate careers
- There is greater mobility between companies
- Management talent is identified early and promotion follows
- Increased job insecurity

Dominic Cadbury recently said: *There is no such thing as a career path, there is only crazy paving and you have to lay it yourself.”*

2. Individuals in organisations are being called upon to develop new managerial skill and capabilities:

- Ability to ‘helicopter vision’ and use their imagination
- The move from specialist to generalist - the individual who has a holistic view of the organisation
- Exceptional process and people skills - teamworking, influencing and interpersonal skills
- Leadership skills and the ability to cope with change and complexity
- Sensitivity to cultural differences and diversity

3. The ability to cope with change, both at an organisational and individual level, is something that we all have to deal with in today’s business environment:

Individual change

- continuous learning and development to keep up-to-date
- the need to acquire recognisable transferable skills
- the expectation that individuals ‘own’ their own development

Organisational change

- development of individuals enhances their ability to cope with organisational change

‘The Learning Organisation’

- an organisation’s ability to learn faster than its competitors is its only sustainable competitive advantage

Yesterday	→	Tomorrow
● Hierarchies and control	→	Matrix management and empowerment
● Organisations develop their people	→	Development owned by individuals
● Progression ‘up the ladder’ one step at a time	→	Progression based on merit
● Career growth	→	Personal growth/‘portfolio’ working
● Focus on training	→	Focus on learning

WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT

There are many reasons for people to take responsibility for their own development.

Some of the key ones are:

- ✓ For improved career management
- ✓ To improve current ability
- ✓ To develop knowledge or skill
- ✓ To manage a life change
- ✓ Because the person wants to take control

Remember, ultimately YOU are responsible for your own development!

GETTING STARTED

Once you have decided that you want to manage your own development, you should develop a system for recording your thoughts, ideas and plans. So, this first activity idea involves you in **creating a development log**.

First of all, think about how you like to learn and how best you can record your progress, thoughts and ideas. You may find a simple notebook or record cards sufficient for your needs, or you could build your log into your personal organiser or even create a development log on your PC. Remember, whatever approach you choose the only important thing is that it works for **you**.

Yesterday	→	Tomorrow
● One organisation/job/career	→	Multiple organisations/jobs/careers
● Upward progression	→	Many alternative career paths
● Formal education	→	Continuous learning
● Development decided for you	→	You take responsibility
● Job security	→	Portfolio careers and employability

A MODEL FOR SELF-MANAGED DEVELOPMENT

INTERACTIVE PROCESS

The process of self-managed development has to be an integrated and interactive process: integrated in the sense that it must link to other organisational processes, and interactive in that it must involve others. The model here shows the various processes involved.



Fig.1 A MODEL FOR SELF-MANAGED DEVELOPMENT

EXTERNAL FACTORS

The outer rim of the self-managed development model indicates four external factors that an individual may take account of and involve in managing his or her own development. **Business objectives** are key to the whole process. Having a good understanding of your organisation's strategy and objectives will help you to put your own learning and development needs into a context.

Learning relationships refer to all the people with whom you develop learning relationships and who help in your self-managed development.

Career objectives should be considered, even though these may change over time. However, having some sort of career plan will help you to focus on the important aspects of your development.

Learning activities are the learning processes you take part in in order to develop your skills and knowledge.

PERSONAL FACTORS

The inner core of the model shows the three key elements which you, as an individual, must do in order to effectively get started on the process of self-managed development.

- **Self-analysis** involves any process of examining your current range of strengths, weaknesses, skills, competences, etc

- **Reflection** involves you in reviewing, possibly with another person or a group of people, where you are now and where you want to get to

- **Action planning** is when you take all the analysis and reflection and begin to make sense of it by deciding what you are going to do, how you intend to develop and when you are going to do it. While this part of the process is almost completely down to **you**, the individual, the outer frame, to a large extent, involves others. Indeed, the whole process of self-managed development cannot be done in isolation. As a minimum, you should involve others by developing learning relationships. For even greater effectiveness, your organisation can be involved by offering support, guidance and resources.

LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS

As a self-developer you may well have developed relationships with many people who assist you in your self-managed development. Typical relationships can be categorised as follows:

Coach Mentor Role model

Counsellor Learning partner

Learning support group

Collectively, the people with whom you develop learning relationships are known as your learning network.

LEARNING NETWORK

Each of us will have our own learning network – namely, the various people who have helped us to learn, grow and develop over the years. A useful way to examine your learning network is to create a mind map of all the people with whom you have had learning relationships in your life.

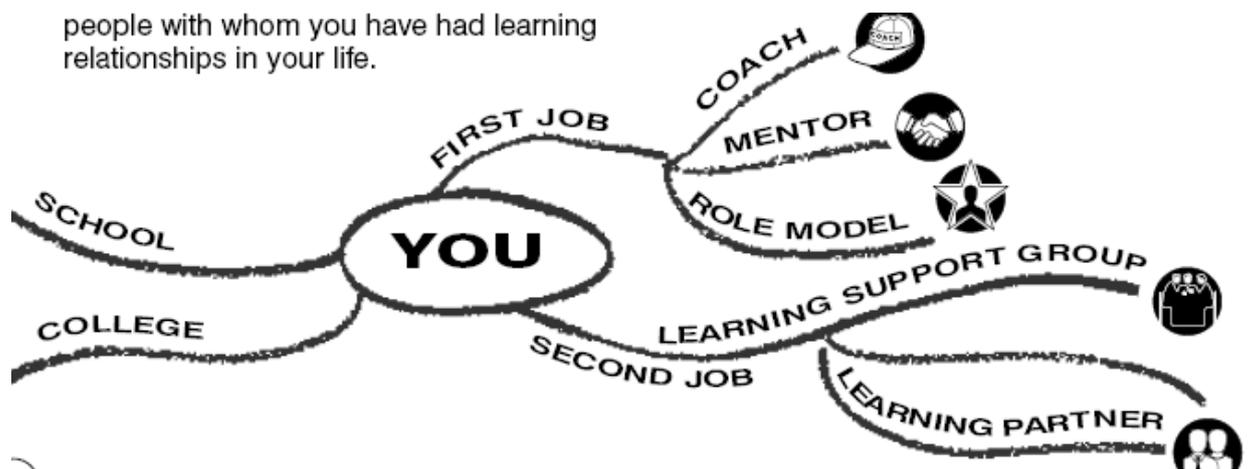


Fig.2. LEARNING NETWORK

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

There are many day-to-day activities in which we all take part that can provide opportunities for learning. For instance:

- Project work
- Secondment
- Computer-based learning (even surfing the Internet!)
- Structured reading
- Attending conferences
- On-the-job coaching
- Work shadowing
- Action learning sets

The important thing about a learning activity is that you have to make it one!

RAISING SELF-AWARENESS

The process of self-analysis involves you in a wide variety of different possibilities and opportunities for raising self-awareness. The idea here is to gather sufficient information in order to make effective decisions about future objectives for your self-managed development.

By examining your current range of strengths, weaknesses, skills and competences, you will gain a clearer idea of 'who you are' and 'what you've got'.

There are many different ways of raising self-awareness through self-analysis.

Some quite simple ways are:

- SWOT analysis
- Current job analysis
- Questionnaire completion:
 - self-assessment of skills or competences
 - personality questionnaires

- questionnaires which focus on particular skill areas (for instance, how you deal with conflict, how you influence, what your team type is, how you learn, etc)

- Performance review
- Discussions with colleagues to gain feedback

SWOT ANALYSIS

You should undertake this activity prior to completing any other form of self-analysis, as it is best to do this with a completely open mind before you are affected by any other external factors.

Split a page in your learning log into four:

Using the instructions on the previous page, note down everything that you consider to be your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

A JOB TREE

Undertaking a detailed job analysis of your current role can also help you to gain a better overview of 'who you are' and 'what you've got'. One way of doing this is to create a job tree, as described on the following pages.

CREATING A JOB TREE

To create a job tree, take a blank sheet of paper, draw in a tree trunk and on to it write your job title. Add to your tree trunk the main branches, representing the chief elements of your job (probably about 6-8), annotating each branch accordingly (for instance, selling, team management, administration, etc).

Next, take each branch in turn and add smaller branches (or twigs) to elaborate on what each of the key elements of your job involves, ie: the tasks you do on a day-to-day basis. Again, you should annotate as you go along. You now have a basic job tree.

The next phase in creating a job tree is to analyse your job in detail by annotating your tree in response to the instructions given below. Use different coloured pens or devise some sort of code to ensure you understand the tree when it is completed.

- Look at each of the key elements and decide what percentage of your time you spend on each. Note the figure on your tree beside each element.

- Which tasks do you like and dislike? Indicate on your tree the degree of liking or dislike in some way. (For instance, +++ for 'really like' and --- for 'really dislike').

- Which tasks are regarded as important by either the organisation or your boss? Indicate this on the tree by the task, again indicating degree in some way.

- Looking at each of the tasks, how effective or skilled are you at them? Use a symbol to indicate the degree and annotate your tree.

- Now indicate where you need to develop by drawing a circle around the area.
- Finally, indicate if a particular area of your job needs developing by circling it in a different colour.

You should now have a complete job tree that represents your current job.

ANALYSIS

The whole purpose of a job tree is to provide you with a complete picture of your current job, to enable you to add to your analysis of your self-development needs. Ask yourself the following questions and make notes:

- What patterns are emerging?
- What does it say about:
 - me?
 - my job?
 - my boss?
 - my organisation?
 - my likes and dislikes?
- What development issues and ideas are emerging?

Alternatively, you can discuss these questions with a learning partner or in a learning support group.



SUMMARY

The following key points summarise the main messages:

- **Create a development log** - a recording system to suit your own particular needs
- **Focus on your objective** - have a reason to develop: job, life, a particular skill, etc (write it down!)

- **Develop a personal profile** - get to know yourself, ask yourself questions and note down the answers in your log
- **Do a personal SWOT analysis**
- **Complete questionnaires** - these can help you to make sense of many different aspects of your life by providing a structure and framework

THEME 2.

ACADEMIC SELF-MANAGEMENT

Who is a successful learner? Most of us know, read about, or have observed successful and expert individuals in some field or profession (e.g., a plumber, musician, athlete, teacher, or artist). These individuals have special knowledge and skills in a particular field. Similarly, successful learners also possess special knowledge and skills that differentiate them from less successful learners.

Successful students are not simply individuals who know more than others. They also have more effective and efficient learning strategies for accessing and using their knowledge, can motivate themselves, and can monitor and change their behaviors when learning does not occur.

Just as individuals cannot learn to become expert musicians, dancers, or golfers without practice, learning to be a successful learner requires more than simply reading and listening to class lectures. For this reason, you will be asked throughout this book to respond to questions and exercises, and to actually practice some new ways of learning. The key to success is practicing the learning strategies taught here so they become automatic. As you practice, you will be able to learn more material in less time than prior to using these new strategies. Thus, you will learn to study “smarter,” not necessarily harder.

Most of you have expertise in some activity or hobby. You have spent considerable effort and persistence in acquiring knowledge and developing your skills and probably feel competent and motivated to excel. You are now beginning the process of developing the necessary expertise to meet the academic demands of college learning. Much of the same self-discipline and self-motivation you apply to your present area(s) of expertise will be needed in your pursuit of academic excellence.

WHAT IS ACADEMIC SELF-MANAGEMENT?

At one time, it was thought that intelligence was the main factor determining academic success. After years of research in learning and motivation, educators have found that students can learn how to become more successful learners by using appropriate strategies to manage their motivation, behavior, and learning.

The word *management* is a key term in understanding successful learners. They self-manage or control the factors influencing their learning. They establish optimum conditions for learning and remove obstacles that interfere with their learning. Educators use a variety of terms to describe these

students (e.g., *self-regulated*, *self-directed*, *strategic*, and *active*). No matter what term is used, the important factor is that these students find a way to learn. It does not matter if the instructor is a poor lecturer, the textbook is confusing, the test is difficult, the room is noisy, or if multiple exams are scheduled for the same week, successful learners find a way to excel.

Many individuals fail to realize that the self-management strategies used to become more successful learners often generalize to their personal and work lives. Who is more likely to be promoted in a job: an employee who can work independently and set and attain goals, or an employee who needs constant supervision and direction in his or her daily work? Educators who emphasize the importance of self-management take the position that students can do a great deal to promote their own learning through the use of different learning and motivational strategies. In other words, these learners “view academic learning as something they do for themselves rather than as something that is done to or for them” (Zimmerman, 1998).

Think about Zimmerman’s quote and what it means to you as someone who is attempting to become a more successful learner. What are some of the changes you think you may have to make?

I have taught thousands of undergraduates and have come to the conclusion that I cannot make students learn if they do not want to. I can help them and guide them, but I cannot make them learn. Personally, it is a joy to work with students who take an active role in their own learning. However, some students say they want to learn but do not want to do the things that are necessary to manage their own learning. How many times have you observed parents and teachers prodding or almost begging students to learn? In many cases, these students really want to be successful, but they do not fully understand their responsibilities in the learning process.

WHY ARE SOME STUDENTS LESS SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS?

When I discuss reasons for low achievement, I am not including students who have serious learning disabilities, poor language skills, or who have experienced an inadequate education because of factors beyond their control. Instead, I am referring to students who should be achieving higher than their present performance. In many cases, more than one explanation may be appropriate for a given student.

1. They Hold Faulty Beliefs About Their Ability, Learning, and Motivation

Students’ beliefs about learning and motivation influence their behaviors. The following beliefs can impact achievement: If students believe they are less capable than others, they may spend considerable time using failure-avoiding strategies in the classroom (e.g., trying not to be called on, copying material from friends, and appearing to be trying hard when they really are not). Other students who believe they can achieve are more likely to spend their time using effective learning and study strategies, and tend to persist longer on difficult tasks.

Some students believe that ability or intelligence is fixed. That is, people are born with a certain amount of ability, and there is not much that can be done about it. This misperception often causes some students to accept their low achievement or to become satisfied with a B or C average, thinking that only the brightest students obtain an

Psychologists have found that intelligence is the result of how much information students know and the strategies they use to control their thinking and learning. In other words, “smart” students do not possess abilities that other students cannot learn. “Smart” students study more effectively than other students. If other students learn and use these same methods, they become “smart.”

It is unfortunate that many students go through school thinking they are not good learners and that little can be done to improve their achievement. This faulty belief often remains with individuals throughout their lives and limits their goals and aspirations. The problem is not that these students are incapable of being successful learners, they simply have not been taught how to study and learn effectively.

2. They Are Unaware of Their Ineffective Learning Behavior

Many students believe that if they simply spend a good deal of time studying, they will be successful. Successful learners do work hard, but they realize that how they study is more important than how much time they spend studying. For example, many college students report that they spend considerable time reading a book many times before an examination. Some students are not aware that the practice of underlining (highlighting) words and phrases in textbooks and simply rereading are generally ineffective learning strategies, because they are relatively passive activities involving little thinking. It is possible to spend considerable time underlining or rereading a chapter and still not remember many of the important ideas presented. Reading and remembering are two different tasks. Unless students are actively involved in outlining, organizing, questioning themselves, and summarizing the material while they read, much of the time is wasted (Cortina, Elder, & Gonnet, 1992).

3. They Fail to Sustain Effective Learning and Motivational Strategies

Students usually take more exams and quizzes in high school. Therefore, if they score well on most of the evaluations but low on one or two, they can still maintain a high grade. In college, the situation is different. Fewer evaluations are given throughout the term. For example, a course may require a paper, two exams, and a final; each evaluation may involve 20% to 30% of the final grade. Students who want high grades cannot afford to let down during the semester group is formed.

Many students demonstrate the knowledge of how to learn and do well at times, but fail to attend class regularly, do not keep up with their assignments, and, in general, get behind in their work. Although these students have the potential for doing well, they cannot sustain their motivation and effort throughout the term. The end result is lower academic performance.

4. They Are Not Ready to Change Their Learning and Study Behavior

Some students are not convinced they need to change. After all, they got through high school and were able to get into college. These students often raise questions, publicly or privately: “Why do I need to change?” “I graduated from high school,” or “I was accepted to this college.” It is not until the first midterm exams that some students realize that many of the learning and study skills used in high school are insufficient for academic success in college. The earlier students become aware of this fact, the quicker they can begin to make the necessary changes.

Although many students realize they need to improve, they tend to stick with familiar strategies, even though they are not achieving the best results. They simply are not motivated to change. Some students believe that it takes too much effort and time to learn new methods of learning. Learning to play a new song on the guitar or a new dance routine takes effort. Yet, because individuals enjoy the activity and gain special satisfaction from excelling in an area, they do not consider it work. When students use their effort and time more wisely and use more effective methods of learning, they find that the amount of effort and time does pay off in terms of higher grades, greater knowledge and confidence, and more time for fun.

HOW CAN YOU MANAGE ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR?

The following are six major components of academic self-management or self-regulation. Learning the self-management skills related to each of these components can help you exert control over your own learning and promote your own academic achievement (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997):

1. Methods of learning
2. Motivation
3. Use of time
4. Physical environment
5. Social environment
6. Performance

THEME 3.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT. METHODS OF LEARNING.

Self development, or personal development, is about developing your own skills and knowledge so that you are continuously learning and developing yourself.

If you are to be committed to your self development you need to take ownership of it by following the guidelines below:

- you become a learner
- you take responsibility for your own learning

- you establish your own needs for your development for personal growth and improved work performance
- you use a range of flexible learning methods, formal and informal, as methods of self development (learning is not always about ‘going on a training course’)
- you learn how you learn best and use this information as you commit to your own continuous self development.

How people learn

In order to understand what type of training and development is appropriate for you, you need to know something about how people learn. You need this information to enable you to think more clearly about what type of learning will suit you best.

Learning can be defined as ‘acquiring knowledge of, or skill in, by study, experience, or instruction’.

There are various types of learning that take place throughout our working life:

- *intuitive* – this is the more or less automatic response to new information or activities; learning takes place without you being aware that it is happening
- *incidental* – this is when a particular event happens, and it makes you think about what happened and why it happened; this type of learning is more conscious
- *retrospective* – this type of learning takes place when you systematically make a habit of thinking about activities and events and analysing what you learnt from them
- *prospective* – this is the most active method of learning, this is when you plan to learn before an experience and then review the learning experience afterwards. This is the most effective and powerful type of learning. If you are serious about your own self development you ought to be constantly involved in prospective learning.

The learning cycle

The learning cycle is shown in Figure 1. The learning cycle shows that effective learning consists of four linked stages:

1. having the experience;
2. reviewing the experience – thinking about this particular experience, what happened and why it happened;
3. concluding from the experience – deciding how valid and relevant the learning has been;
4. trying it out and planning the next steps.

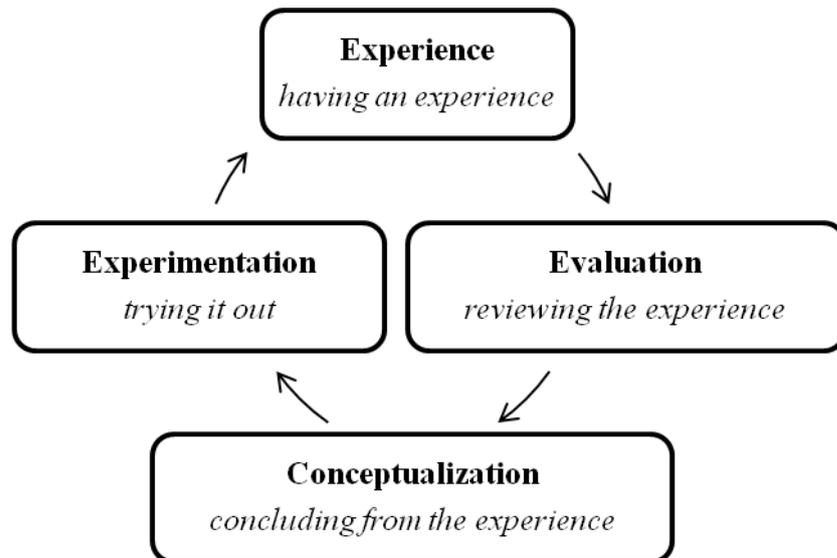


Fig.1. The Learning Cycle.

To gain the most benefit from self development, you need consciously to go through the whole of the learning cycle.

Learning styles

There has been a good deal of research done on how adults learn. David Kolb, Alan Mumford and Peter Honey, in particular, have suggested that there are four main learning styles.

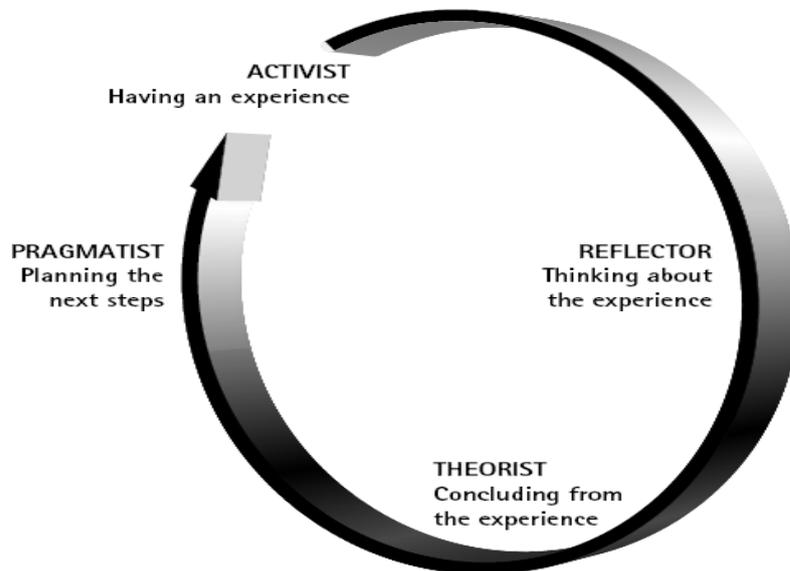


Fig.2. Learning styles

Activists

Activists like to be involved in new experiences. They like to solve new problems and to be involved in new opportunities. They like the excitement of change and working in a team.

Activists enjoy high visibility roles, such as chairing meetings, leading discussions and giving presentations. They do not like learning by watching and prefer not to learn by reading or in any passive way.

Reflectors

Reflectors like to think carefully and like time to think things through before taking any action. They are inquisitive but measured; they learn best from watching and carrying out research themselves. Reflectors do not like to be the centre of attention or being rushed; they learn less from situations where they do not have time to be as thorough as usual.

Theorists

Theorists learn best when they have an opportunity to methodically explore the linkages between situations, events and ideas. They are comfortable with concepts and theories; they are logical and like to question assumptions. Theorists do not like being thrown in at the deep end and are only interested in learning when they can clearly see the value of the learning; they do not like to be involved in things that they perceive to be shallow.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists are very practical. They like to see, very clearly, the link between learning and the job they are doing. They like to put their learning to the test and try out and implement what they have learnt. Pragmatists do not learn well if they cannot clearly connect what they are learning to their work, to a specific problem that they are dealing with.

The stages of self development

There are four key steps that you need to carry out to set up a system for your self development:

- 1) *personal audit* – undertake an audit of where you are now, in terms of what you can do now
- 2) *setting self development objectives* – setting aims and objectives in terms of what you want to achieve. These will be both work-related and personal goals
- 3) *identifying development needs* – identifying the knowledge and skills that you will need to achieve your goals
- 4) *constructing the development plan* – analysing the information that has been revealed in 1 and 3 above, identifying the gaps. The gaps will form the basis of your development plan. Your self-development plan will motivate you to carry out your development, provide a tool to monitor and evaluate your achievements and provide a schedule to work to.

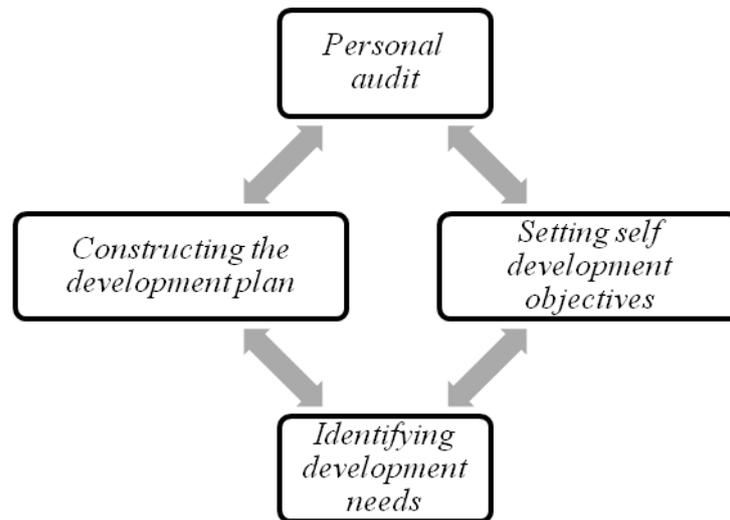
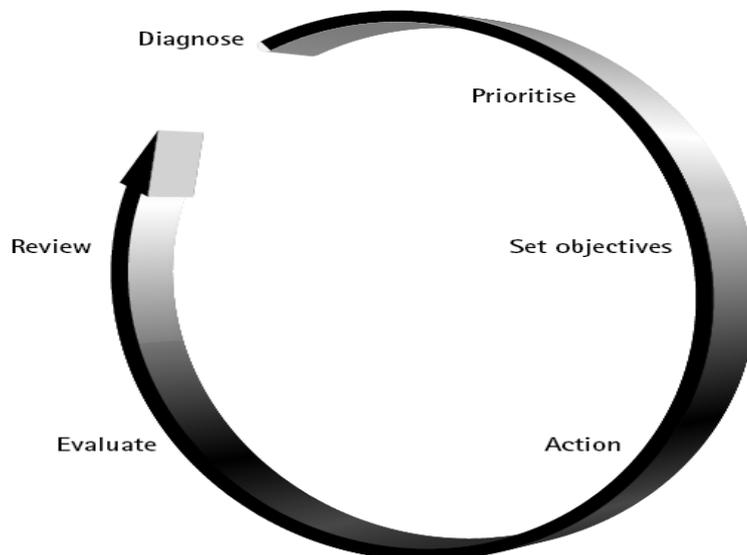


Fig.2. The stages of self development

The cycle of continuous improvement



SELF-DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

Contents list

Section 1. Personal audit

An analysis of my preferred learning style

Curriculum vitae

Training courses I have attended

Personal SWOT analysis

Section 2 Self-development objectives

Section 3 Self-development plan

Section 4 Self-development reviews

We will now look at each of these stages in more detail.

Undertaking a personal audit

The personal audit involves assessing your current level of knowledge and listing your current skills and abilities. There are various tools that you can use to inform your personal audit. Enlist the support of your line manager and others with whom you work.

A good place to start is with your current CV, this will have the information about your previous job experience and any qualifications that you have.

Identifying your own development needs

Your development will encompass a wide range of learning activities which can take place over the short and the long term. Your development should take place through a series of planned experiences. The following list gives examples of the types of development activities you might use to meet your development needs.

- workplace experience and practice
- action learning/special assignments
- peer group contacts
- reading
- work shadowing
- coaching and tutoring
- mentoring
- distance learning
- job rotation
- job enrichment
- counseling
- community involvement
- delegation

Your self-development plan

Now you have completed your personal audit, set your objectives and identified your development needs, you need to write your self-development plan. This is your action plan which will show how you intend to fill the gaps that you have identified, and when you will review your progress. If there are no gaps, it is unlikely that your analysis has been done properly; it is unlikely that you would be so knowledgeable, skilled and perfect that you have no development needs at all! Your self-development plan shows how you will carry out the development process.

Constructing your self-development plan. The way to work out how you are going to fill your self-development gap and meet your self-development needs is to list your needs and match them with the most effective form of learning that will meet each need. Your development plan needs to show your development objectives, what you intend to do to meet your development needs and when you will review your progress against your plans. Ideally your development plan should include a range of learning activities which suit your learning style, and include a balance of both formal and informal learning experiences. See the example in Figure 3.

Development objectives	Proposed action				
	Proposed development	Date development undertaken	Review date	Outcomes of development activity and review comments	Further action
1					
2					
3					
4					

Barriers to self development

It is difficult for many of us to actually get down to constructing our self-development plan. There are many reasons we might give for not involving ourselves in structured self development, such as:

- I haven't got time
- I've managed without it so far
- I need someone to organize it for me
- I'm too old to change my ways now.

Do any of these barriers apply to you? If so, it is time for you to rethink your attitude to self development. It is important to find the time that you need for your self development; you may have managed so far, but it is going to be increasingly difficult to manage in the future. Only *you* can manage *your* self development and you are never too old to change your ways – if you want to!

Planning the support you need for your self development. You will find it useful to identify the people who can help you achieve your self-development objectives. It is your responsibility to ask for help when you need it. There is no doubt that you will find it useful to have a mentor within your workplace to provide essential support. We looked at the role of a mentor and so you already know the contribution that a mentor can make to the achievement of your self-development objectives. There will also be contacts both within your organization and outside your organization, which will be able to help you, such as:

- colleagues and managers at work – such as your line manager or personnel manager
- friends and acquaintances outside work – personal contacts who may have particular skills and experience and could help you with your personal and career development.

You can probably think of other types of contacts that may provide you with support, such as community groups.

Recording your progress

It is a good idea to keep an up-to-date record of your personal learning; you can use this information to regularly update your self-development plan. This type of record also makes life much easier when you need to update your CV and/or if you belong to a professional body which requires you to keep a record of your CPD. An example of such a record is shown below.

THEME 4.

PERSONAL MOTIVATION DEVELOPMENT

Motivation

“Each semester I write down goals that I want to attain.”

“When I feel down, I talk to myself to motivate me to keep on task.”

Although there are many different ways to define motivation, the approach taken in this book views motivation as the internal processes that give behavior its energy and direction. These internal processes include your goals, beliefs, perceptions, and expectations. For example, your persistence on a task is often related to how competent you believe you are to complete the task. Also, your beliefs about the causes of your successes and failures on present tasks influence your motivation and behavior on future tasks. For example, students who attribute failure to lack of ability behave differently from students who attribute failure to lack of effort.

It was obvious that the student had not thought about the extent to which she had the ability to control her own motivation.

Think about the pilot of a 747 who wakes up in the morning knowing that she must fly a few hundred people from Los Angeles to New York, or the surgeon who must perform a delicate heart operation. The public is fortunate that these individuals know how to motivate themselves even when they do not feel like doing something. It would be alarming to hear a pilot say: “I don’t feel like flying today,” or a surgeon say: “Not another operation, I’m not in the mood.”

One of the major differences between successful and less successful individuals in any field or specialization is that successful individuals know how to motivate themselves even when they do not feel like performing a task, whereas less successful individuals have difficulty controlling their motivation. As a result, less successful individuals are less likely to complete a task, or more likely to quit or complete a task at a lower level of proficiency. Although successful learners may not feel like completing required tasks, they learn how to motivate themselves to completion to maintain progress toward achieving their goals.

Another issue is whether one has a problem in motivation or persistence. A student may be motivated to engage in a task but have difficulty persisting because he or she easily becomes distracted while engaging in the task (Kuhl & Beckman, 1985).

Think about your own behavior. Identify a situation in which follow-through, not motivation, was a problem. That is to say, you really wanted to complete a task, but you had difficulty persisting because you were easily distracted. Also, think about a situation in which you were successful in controlling your behavior in a potentially distracting situation. What self-management strategies do you use to maintain your persistence in a task?

To be a successful learner in college, students must be able to concentrate and deal with the many potential personal and environmental distractions that may interfere with learning and studying. Students use many different processes to control aspects of their behaviors. The following are examples of self-management processes:

“When I am in the library and distracted by a conversation, I move to another table.”

“When I start worrying on an exam, I immediately begin convincing myself that I can do well if I take my time.”

“When I start thinking that I don’t have the ability to achieve, I remind myself that more effort is needed.”

Dealing with distracting factors in learning is an important aspect of self-management, because it helps protect one’s commitment to learn.

A number of important motivational self-management techniques can be used to develop and maintain these important beliefs. The first is goal setting. Educational research indicates that high achievers report using goal setting more frequently and more consistently than low achievers (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986). When individuals establish and attempt to attain personal goals, they are more attentive to instruction, expend greater effort, and increase their confidence when they see themselves making progress. It is difficult to be motivated to achieve without having specific goals.

A second motivational self-management technique is *self-verbalization*, or **self-talk**. This procedure takes many forms. For example, verbal reinforcement or praise can be used following desired behavior. You simply tell yourself things like: “Great! I did it!” or “I’m doing a great job concentrating on my readings!” Reinforce yourself either covertly (to yourself) or aloud. At first, you may think it sounds strange or silly to use self-verbalization. Once you get familiar with it, you will find that it works. Don’t underestimate the power of language in self-control of motivation. World-class athletes have been trained to use verbal reinforcement for years.

More elaborate self-talk training programs are available to help individuals control anxiety, mood, and other emotional responses (e.g., Butler, 1981; Ottens, 1991). These programs are based on the belief that what one says to oneself is an important factor in determining attitudes, feelings, emotions, and behaviors. This speech or self-talk is the running dialogue inside our heads. Some of our speech motivates us to try new tasks and persist in difficult situations; other self-talk is unproductive

and inhibits our motivation to succeed. The goal of these programs is to change negative self-talk to positive self-talk.

Another motivational self-management technique is arranging or imagining rewards or punishments for success or failure at an academic task. Students who control their motivation by giving themselves rewards and punishments outperform students who do not use this control technique (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986). What self-control strategies have you used in the past to control your motivation? The following are examples reported by my students: “If I study for 50 minutes, I’ll allow myself to speak on the phone for 10 minutes”; or “If I work on my term paper for an evening, I’ll treat myself to a pizza”; or “If I find that I’m keeping up with my work, I’ll go to a movie on a weeknight.”

In summary, to control your motivation, you need to set goals; develop positive beliefs about your ability to perform academic tasks; and maintain these beliefs while faced with the many disturbances, distractions, occasional failure experiences, and periodic interpersonal conflicts in your life. You will have difficulty managing your behavior if you do not have confidence in your ability to succeed. In turn, you develop confidence in your ability by learning how to use different learning and study strategies that lead to academic success.

MOTIVATIONAL PROBLEMS

Many of my students frequently state in class or in written assignments: “I have no motivation” or “I need to get motivated.” Unfortunately, I find that many students do not understand the meaning of these statements. Actually, everyone is motivated. Educational researchers have found that many different patterns of beliefs and behaviors can limit academic success. Therefore, many different types of motivational problems can be identified in any group of students.

WHAT IS MOTIVATION AND WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE IT?

Student motivation in the college classroom involves three interactive components (adapted from Pintrich, 1994). The first component is the personal and sociocultural factors that include individual characteristics, such as the attitudes and values students bring to college based on prior personal, family, and cultural experiences. The second component is the classroom environment factors that pertain to instructional experiences in different courses. The third

component is internal factors or students’ beliefs and perceptions. Internal factors are influenced by both personal and sociocultural factors and classroom environmental experiences. Current research on motivation indicates that internal factors (i.e, students’ beliefs and perceptions) are key factors in understanding behavior. Most of the attention in the chapter is given to the internal factors of motivation. I begin this section with a discussion of what behaviors determine students’ motivation and then discuss how personal and sociocultural, classroom environmental, and internal factors influence motivated behavior.

Motivated Behavior

If you want to understand your own motivation, you might begin by evaluating your behavior in the following three areas:

Choice of behavior

Level of activity and involvement

Persistence and management of effort

Students make choices everyday about activities and tasks in which to engage. Many students choose to learn more about a subject or topic outside of class, whereas others limit their involvement to class assignments. As an undergraduate, I had a roommate who slept until noon each day. This behavior would not have been problematic if his classes were in the afternoon. Unfortunately, all his classes were in the morning. Another student I knew could not say no when someone asked if she wanted to go to a movie or have pizza, even though she had to study for an exam or write a paper. Students do not have to be productive every moment. Having fun or wasting time is a part of life. However, the choices they make play important roles in determining the number of personal goals they will attain throughout life.

A second aspect of motivated behavior is level of activity, or involvement in a task. Some students are very involved in their courses. They spend considerable effort after class refining notes, outlining readings, and, in general, using different learning strategies to make sense of what they are learning. Other students are less engaged in their courses and do the minimal amount required to get by.

The third aspect of motivated behavior is persistence. The willingness of students to persist when tasks are difficult, boring, or unchallenging is an important factor in motivation and academic success. In many cases, students have to learn how to control their efforts and persistence in the variety of academic tasks they experience. Let's now examine the factors that influence motivated behavior.

Personal and Sociocultural Factors The attitudes, beliefs, and experiences students bring to college based on their personal and sociocultural experiences influence their motivation and behavior, and even their persistence or departure from college. When you walk into your first college class, you bring all your precollege experiences with you, such as your study and learning strategies, attitudes and beliefs about your ability to succeed in college, your coping strategies, and the level of commitment to meet personal goals. All of these attributes will influence the way you interact with the college environment. If you receive a low grade on a paper or exam, will you remind yourself of your ability to succeed, or will you say something like: "Here we go, just like high school. I don't know if I can do well in this course?" All your past experiences with stressful situations and the way you handled them will influence your ability to deal with new stressful situations in your college environment. You also are influenced by your family and cultural experiences. Family characteristics such as socioeconomic levels, parental educational levels, and parental expectations can influence motivation and behavior. For example, first-generation and ethnic minority students have a more difficult time adjusting to college

than do second- or third-generation college students (Ratcliff, 1995). Transition to college can be difficult for any student, but when an individual has family members who have experienced this transition, he or she is less likely to feel lost in a new or unfamiliar environment or unsure about what questions to ask. Also, Reglin and Adams (1990) reported that Asian American students are more influenced by their parents' desire for success than are their non-Asian American peers. They pointed out that the desire by Asian American students to meet their parents' academic expectations creates the need to spend more time on academic tasks and less time on nonacademic activities. In what ways has your family influenced your goals, motivation, and behavior?

Here is a list of some other student characteristics that can influence adjustment and involvement in college (adapted from Jalomo, 1995):

- Married students with family obligations
- Single parents
- Students who never liked high school or who were rebellious in high school
- Students who were not involved in academic activities or student groups during high school
- Students who are afraid or feel out of place in the mainstream college culture
- Students who have a hard time adjusting to the fast pace of college
- Students who lack the financial resources to take additional courses or participate in campus-based academic and social activities in college

Stereotype Threat. A distressing research finding is that African American and Latino students from elementary school through college tend to have lower test scores and grades, and tend to drop out of school more often than White students (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). In addition, regardless of income level, they score lower than White and Asian students on the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT). For years, educators have been concerned with these statistics, especially when capable minority students fail to perform as well as their White counterparts.

Professor Claude Steele (1999) and his colleague (Aronson, 2002) believe they have identified a possible explanation for this dilemma. They think the difference in academic performance has less to do with preparation or ability and more to do with the threat of stereotypes about the students' ability to succeed. They coined the term **stereotype threat** to mean the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm a stereotype. The following is an explanation of this phenomenon.

Stereotypes can influence an individual's motivation and achievement by suggesting to the target of the stereotype that a negative label could apply to one's self or group. For example, the commonly held stereotype that women are less capable in mathematics than men has been shown to affect the performance of women on standardized math tests. When female students were told beforehand of this negative stereotype, scores were significantly lower compared to a group of women who were led to believe the tests did not reflect these stereotypes (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). In another

investigation (Levy, 1996), half of a group of older adults were reminded of the stereotype regarding old age and memory loss while the other half were reminded of the more positive stereotype that old people are wise. The older adults performed worse on a test of short-term memory when they were presented with the negative stereotype than when they were reminded of the more positive stereotype. Why do you think the women and older adults scored lower under the stereotype threat condition?

Now let's review the research as to how stereotype threat may help to explain the low achievement of certain minority group members. There exists a stereotype that many African American and Latino students may not have the academic ability to succeed in college. As a result, many minority students may feel at risk of confirming this stereotype and wonder if they can compete successfully at the college level. Thus, just the awareness of the stereotype can affect a student's motivation and behavior. Steele and Aronson (1995) asked African American and White college students to take a difficult standardized test (verbal portion of the Graduate Record Examination). In one condition, the experimenters presented the test as a measure of intellectual ability and preparation. In the second condition, the experimenters reduced the stereotype threat by telling the students that they were not interested in measuring their ability with the test, but were interested in the students' verbal problem solving. The only difference between the two conditions of the experiment was what the researchers told the students: the test was the same; the students were equally talented and were given the same amount of time to complete the exam.

The results of the experiment indicated a major difference for the African American students. When the test was presented in the nonevaluative way, they solved about twice as many problems on the test as when it was presented in the standard way. Moreover, there was no difference between the performance of African American and White test takers under the no-stereotype threat condition. For the White students, the way the test was presented had no effect on their performance. The researchers believed that by reducing the evaluative condition, they were able to reduce the African American students' anxiety, and, as a result, they performed better on the exam.

Aronson (2002) pointed out that in numerous investigations, researchers have found that the stereotype threat condition doesn't reduce effort, but makes individuals try harder on tests because they want to invalidate the stereotype. Not all individuals are equally vulnerable by stereotype threat. Individuals who are more vulnerable include those who care most about doing well, people who feel a deep sense of attachment to their ethnic or gender group, and individuals who have higher expectations for discrimination in their environment. Students under the stereotype threat condition appear more anxious while taking a test. In addition, they also reread questions and recheck their answers more often than when they are not under stereotype threat. As a result, students placed in a stereotype threat condition become poor test takers!

Are you vulnerable to stereotype threat as a member of a minority group, a woman, an older student who has come back to college a number of years after graduating from high school? Can student-athletes experience stereotype threat? Could the stereotype threat “absentminded professor” influence your instructor’s behavior? Has stereotype threat influenced your motivation or behavior in any way? Are you aware of such influence?

What can educators do about reducing the influence of stereotype threat? Aronson (2002) pointed out that stereotype threat appears to be especially disruptive to individuals who believe that intelligence is fixed rather than changeable. In this course, you are learning that academic performance can be improved through the use of different learning and motivational strategies. Do you believe that you can become a more successful student and compete with other students at your college or university? There also is some evidence that stereotype threat may be reduced through cooperative learning and other forms of direct contact with other students.

In a successful program that improved the academic achievement of a group of African American freshman at the University of Michigan (Steele et al., 1997), students lived in a racially integrated “living and learning” community in a part of a large dormitory. The students were recognized for their accomplishment of gaining admission to the university and participated in weekly rap groups to discuss common problems they all faced. In addition, they participated in advanced workshops in one of their courses that went beyond the material in the course. All of these activities were useful; however, the weekly rap sessions appeared to be the most critical part of program. The researchers believed that when students of different racial groups hear the same concerns expressed, the concerns appear to be less racial. The students also may learn that racial and gender stereotypes play a smaller role in academic success than they may have originally expected.

It is important to realize that the researchers exploring the impact of stereotype threat are not saying that this phenomenon is the sole reason for underachievement by certain minority students. We have already discussed a number of other important academic and motivational factors that can make a difference between a successful and unsuccessful college experience. Nevertheless, stereotype threat must be considered an important factor in understanding underachievement of certain minority students. Directions: What attitudes and beliefs have you brought to college that could influence your motivation and academic behavior?

Understanding Motivation

As you consider the various components of academic self-management, you may find that you have no difficulty managing your motivation. You may exhibit a great deal of effort on tasks, persist even under difficult situations, and maintain positive beliefs about your academic abilities.

Classroom Environmental Factors

Many classroom environmental factors influence student motivation. These include types of assignments given, instructor behavior, and instructional methods. Ratcliff (1995) reported that a successful transition to college is related to the quality of classroom life. In particular, student motivation and achievement is greater when instructors communicate high expectations for success, allow students to take greater responsibility for their learning, and encourage various forms of collaborative learning (i.e., peer learning or group learning).

In an interesting book, *Making the Most of College*, Light (2001) interviewed hundreds of college seniors to identify factors that made college an outstanding experience. Here are some findings about college instruction that appeared to motivate students: First, the students reported that they learned significantly more when instructors structured their courses with many quizzes and short assignments. They liked immediate feedback and the opportunity to revise and make changes in their work. They did not like courses when the only feedback came late or at the end of the semester.

Second, the students reported that they liked classes where the instructors encouraged students to work together on homework assignments. They mentioned that some of their instructors created small study groups in their courses to encourage students to work together outside of class. This activity helped students become more engaged in their courses.

Third, many students found that small-group tutorials, small seminars, and one-to-one supervision were the highlights of their college careers. They highly recommended that undergraduate students find internships and other experiences where they can be mentored by faculty members.

Fourth, students reported the beneficial impact of racial and ethnic diversity on their college experiences. They reported how much they learned from other students who came from different backgrounds— ethnic, political, religious, or economic.

Fifth, students who get the most out of college and who are happiest organize their time to include activities with faculty members or with other students regarding seeking help and meeting with your professors). Most students need recommendations from faculty members for graduate study or jobs. Yet, they often fail to meet with their instructors to get a letter of recommendation. Light (2001) pointed out the advice he gives all his advisees: “Your job is to get to know one faculty member reasonably well this semester. And also to have that faculty member get to know you reasonably well”. He reported that as his first-year advisees approach graduation, they tell him that this advice was the most helpful suggestion they received during their freshman year.

Internal Factors

Students’ goals, beliefs, feelings, and perceptions determine their motivated behavior and, in turn, academic performance. For example, if students value a task and believe they can master it, they are more likely to use different learning strategies, try hard, and persist until completion of the task. If students believe that intelligence changes over time, they are more likely to exhibit effort in difficult

courses than students who believe intelligence is fixed. In this section I'm going to explain why the answers to the following questions can provide insight to your own motivation:

How do I value different academic courses and tasks?

What are my goals?

What is my goal orientation?

Do I believe I can do well on different academic tasks?

What are the causes of my successes and failures?

How do I feel about my academic challenges?

Notice that all of the questions deal with beliefs and perceptions. Students can learn a great deal about their motivation by examining how their beliefs and perceptions influence them.

How Do I Value Different Academic Courses or Tasks? Values and interests play an important role in academic behavior. They affect students' choices of activities, as well as the level of effort and persistence they put forth on a task or assignment. For example, Satisfied Sheila enjoys intellectual challenges, as demonstrated by her interest in poetry. Unfortunately, she fails to incorporate her interests in her school courses and assignments.

Students in a given course may have different reasons for enrolling. Let's consider three students in a chemistry course. The first student decides to take the course because it fulfills a general education requirement. She has very little interest in the subject. The second student is enrolled in the course because she enjoys learning about science and would like to pursue a career in the health sciences. The third student wants to learn chemistry because doing well can help her get on the dean's list and feeling competent is an important value in her life.

All three of these students want to succeed but may behave differently during the term. At times, their different value orientations may influence them to make different decisions regarding their effort and persistence in the course. For example, during final exams, students often have to make decisions concerning where to place their greatest effort. Students who are taking a course just to complete an elective may decide to spend more time during finals on a course where higher achievement is more important.

Students who limit their involvement or effort in a particular class are not necessarily lazy or unmotivated. Instead, they are motivated to participate in different things such as athletics, social organizations, family activities, or relationships rather than academics (Stipek, 1998). College students do not develop a personal interest in or high value for all their courses. Some required or elective courses are more interesting than others. The task, however, is to manage motivation to successfully complete courses, even when there is little interest in them.

What Are My Goals? I begin my "learning to learn" course by asking students about their goals. Each year I find many differences in the abilities of students to articulate their goals. Some students

have clear and well-defined goals. They know why they are in college and what they are attempting to attain. At the other end of the spectrum, some students have not even defined their personal goals and are not sure why they are in college. Some of my students who are raising families or who have returned to college after some absence appear to have more specific goals than do some students who come directly from high school. How would you explain this difference?

Think about a musician, athlete, or businessperson who wants to excel in his or her area of expertise but has no specific goals to direct his or her behavior. It is very difficult to be motivated without personal goals. It is important to set goals in different life areas because such goals serve to motivate behavior. Goals enhance performance in five major ways (Locke & Latham, 1990):

Effort: The goals you set for yourself influence what you attend to and how hard you try to maximize your performance. The more difficult the goal, the harder you are likely to work to attain it.

Duration or persistence: When you work on a task without a goal, you are likely to allow your attention to drift, become more easily interrupted, and even stop working without completing the task. When you have a goal in mind, you have a more clearly defined point in the performance that defines when it is time to quit or withdraw from the task (i.e., when the goal is attained).

Direction of attention: Goals direct your performance toward the task at hand and away from unrelated or irrelevant tasks.

Strategic planning: To accomplish a goal, you need to develop an action plan or strategy. Goal setting encourages strategic planning, because the presence of a goal encourages you to decide how to proceed.

Reference point: When you identify where it is you are headed (i.e., have a goal) and receive feedback on where you are, you can evaluate your performance and determine what further actions need to be taken (if any). In fact, it is your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with this evaluation that may have the greatest impact on your motivation.

Have you identified some goals you would like to attain this term or year? If so, do you have goals in any of the following areas: academic, social, occupational, or personal? How has your success or failure in attaining previous goals influenced your motivation in different areas of your life?

What Is My Goal Orientation? Educators have determined that students have different reasons or purposes for achieving in different courses. Dweck and Leggett (1988) believe that the achievement goals students pursue “create the framework within which they interpret and react to events” (p. 256). They have identified two types of achievement goals: **mastery** and **performance**. A mastery goal is oriented toward learning as much as possible in a course for the purpose of self-improvement, irrespective of the performance of others. A performance goal focuses on social comparison and competition, with the main purpose of outperforming others on the task.

Think about how you approach different classes. Are you interested in learning as much as you can in a class, or is your major goal simply doing better than the majority of students so you can attain a satisfactory grade? Of course, in some classes you may value both learning and getting good grades because you can have multiple goals in school. It is not uncommon for students to have a mastery goal orientation in one class and a performance goal orientation in another. It is also possible to have a performance and mastery goal orientation in the same class.

An analysis of the distinction between mastery and performance goals in Table 3.1 shows how students define schooling and learning in different ways. The goal orientation that students adopt in a course influences the effort they exhibit in learning tasks and the type of learning strategies they use. Thus, when students adopt a mastery goal orientation, they are more likely to have a positive attitude toward the task (even outside the classroom), monitor their own comprehension, use more complex learning strategies, and relate newly learned material with previously learned material. In contrast, students who adopt a performance orientation tend to focus on memorization and other rote learning strategies and often do not engage in problem solving and critical thinking. In general, they do not think about what they learn, but rather look for shortcuts and quick payoffs. Students with performance goals want to look competent (e.g., Safe Susan) or avoid looking incompetent (e.g., Defensive Dimitri).

In general, the research suggests that adopting a mastery goal orientation has positive academic outcomes (Ames, 1992). However, it has been found that performance goals, but not mastery goals, were related to academic performance in introductory college classes (Harackiewicz, Barron, Carter, Lehto, & Elliot, 1997). The researchers argued that in large lecture classes where instructors' grade on a curve and success is defined as outperforming others, performance goals can lead to academic success. Another important issue to consider is that multiple-choice tests often are used in such settings and may assess more factual rather than deeper understanding of the material. Thus, the grading method and/or type of tests used may create a performance-oriented classroom environment. In the same investigation, the researchers found that mastery goals predicted interest in the introductory class, whereas performance goals did not. We have an interesting dilemma: each goal was related to one indicator of success (academic performance or interest) but not the other. In this situation, it appears that students who endorsed both goals were most likely to like the course and achieve well.

Do I Believe I Can Do Well on Different Academic Tasks? Values and goals determine students' reasons for engaging in different tasks. Another important belief is **self-efficacy**, which refers to the evaluation students have about their abilities or skills to successfully complete a task (Bandura, 1982). The key question that determines self-efficacy is: "Am I capable of succeeding at this task?"

Educational researchers have found that efficacy beliefs are important predictors of student motivation and self-managed behaviors (Schunk, 1991). Students with high efficacy are more likely

than their low-efficacy counterparts to choose difficult tasks, expend greater effort, persist longer, use more complex learning strategies, and experience less fear and anxiety regarding academic tasks.

Self-efficacy is situation specific. A student may have a high self-efficacy for completing a term paper in a psychology course but a low sense of efficacy regarding his or her performance on multiple-choice questions that test knowledge of different learning theories. A student may judge him or herself to be very competent at basketball but not at tennis. We have efficacy beliefs about each task we undertake.

I mentioned that my primary goal is to help you become a more successful learner. An important step is to help you feel more competent to excel in the different academic tasks you experience. Setting goals is one way to enhance your sense of efficacy. As you work on academic tasks, you should determine your progress by analyzing your performance according to your goals. Recognizing that you are making progress toward your goals can validate your initial sense of self-efficacy and maintain your behavior as you move toward goal attainment. Learning how to use different learning strategies is another way to enhance your sense of efficacy.

Monitoring your self-efficacy on tasks can focus attention on your beliefs about the effectiveness of your study methods. Zimmerman, Bonner, and Kovach (1996) suggested a procedure that can be used for quizzes or homework assignments. Before taking your next quiz or exam, read all of the questions and estimate your ability to answer the questions on a 10-point scale. The lower the score, the less competent you feel; the higher the score, the more competent you feel. Compare your actual score on the quizzes or exams with your efficacy scores. Your self-efficacy ratings can operate like a thermostat, providing information you can use to modify or change your learning and study behavior. For example, how would you explain a situation in which your efficacy ratings are always higher than your actual test scores, or where your efficacy ratings are always lower than your actual test scores?

Self-efficacy monitoring helps you gain accuracy in predicting your learning. If you misjudge your self-efficacy, you might attempt to adjust your future standards. If quizzes or exams are more demanding than you expect, you may need to study harder to succeed. Rating your efficacy too low or being overly optimistic about your performance can be detrimental to your academic success. The more accurate your perceptions of competence or efficacy, the more likely you will be to use the information to make appropriate changes in your learning and study strategies.

What Are the Causes of My Successes and Failures? When an event occurs, individuals can interpret it in different ways. Consider two college students of equal ability in the same class who just received a C on a term paper. The first student is very upset because he does not think the instructor's grading was fair. He decides that there is not much he can do to obtain a high grade in the course. The second student determines that the grade reflected the amount of time he spent completing the task and decides that he needs to work harder in the future.

Why did the two students of equal ability interpret their experiences differently? One explanation is that the two students made different attributions about their performances on the term papers. An **attribution** is an individual's perception of the causes of his or her success or failure. Attribution theory helps explain why individuals respond differently to the same outcomes.

The most common attributions for academic performance are ability ("I did well because I am smart" or "I did poorly because I am not capable") and effort ("I studied hard for the test" or "I did not study hard enough"). However, students often make other attributions, such as "I was lucky or unlucky," "The task was easy or hard," "I was tired," "I did not feel well," or "The instructor was unfair."

Weiner (1986), a leading motivational researcher, believes that how students perceive the causes of their prior successes and failures is the most important factor determining how they will approach a particular task and how long they will persist at it. For example, students who attribute their past successful performances to their ability are more likely to welcome similar challenges in the future because they anticipate doing well again. However, students are less likely to be optimistic about future tasks if they attribute their prior successes to luck or the generosity of the instructor.

Students who believe their failures are because of their own lack of effort are likely to try harder in future situations and persist on difficult tasks. Also, students who believe that success is a result of their own doing (i.e., controllable) are more likely to do the things that are necessary to attain success. These students are more likely to seek assistance from their instructor if they do not understand the material and will attend extra-help sessions when necessary. In contrast, students who believe their successes and failures are uncontrollable (e.g., because of luck or the generosity of the teacher) are less likely to seek the help they need.

How Do I Feel About Academic Demands? Anxiety can negatively impact academic performance in many ways. Ottens (1991) identified four interrelated characteristics of academically anxious students:

Disruption in mental activity

Psychological distress

Misdirected attention

Inappropriate behaviors, of which procrastination is most common

Recent research has focused on the relative independence of two dimensions of test anxiety: worry versus emotionality. Worry is the major factor in the disruption of mental activity, whereas emotionality is more related to physiological distress. Worry reflects the cognitive aspects of anxiety—the negative beliefs, troubling thoughts, and poor decisions. Emotionality refers to the unpleasant affective reactions, such as tension and nervousness. Each of these dimensions can have differential effects on students. Although both dimensions can have a debilitating effect, the worry dimension has a stronger negative relation to academic performance than the emotional dimension. One reason for this

finding is that emotionality tends to decrease once test taking begins, whereas worrisome thoughts often continue throughout the test and may be experienced for a period of time in advance of the examination. Also, achievement suffers because attention is affected during test taking, when the task requires remembering or retrieving what was learned.

Covington (1992) has proposed a useful interaction model of test anxiety, where he shows the effects of anxiety at three stages— appraisal, preparation, and test taking. Students' motivation to succeed or avoid failure is determined in the test appraisal stage by whether they judge the upcoming test to be a challenge or a threat. In the test preparation stage, students begin studying while thinking about such things as their ability, expectations, and the futility and effectiveness of their study. They start thinking such thoughts as: "Will I do well on the exam?" or "Will it be worthwhile to spend a great deal of time studying?" Students threatened by failure may become involved in avoidance behaviors such as irrational goal setting (e.g., to review the five most difficult chapters in one night, or procrastination that will further erode their study effectiveness. Finally, in the test-taking stage, students attempt to retrieve what they have learned, often faced with great physical tension and worry. Anxiety, at this stage, interferes with the retrieval of information. As the semester progresses, the processes repeats itself every time there is an examination. More specifically, the type of attribution to the feedback on the first test— either success or failure— influences how one will achieve on the next test. For example, if a poor performance is attributed to low ability, then shame is likely to occur and the effectiveness of study preparation is likely to be seen. This process can vary in duration from a few hours to weeks or even months.

Let's look at a specific example of how the process may operate. Phil arrives at college wanting to be a pharmacist, a career choice that pleased his parents and impressed his friends. Unfortunately, Phil didn't take all the science courses in high school that would have better prepared him for this major. As a result, he starts his freshman year taking three science courses. To make matters worse, Phil is a chronic procrastinator who put off tasks until the last minute because he relies on his superior intellect to get him through difficult tasks. Phil learned early in the semester that he couldn't wait until the last minute to study for exams like he did in high school. He received two Cs and a D in his first-semester grades. He decided not to be discouraged and that he would show his parents and friends that he could succeed by working very hard the second semester.

Now, let's see how anxiety influences his behavior during the three stages— appraisal, preparation, and test taking.

Appraisal Stage. As he sits in the first session of his psychology course in the second semester of his freshman year, he listens to the instructor review the course requirements. Suddenly, he feels very uncomfortable and starts thinking whether he will flunk out of school. He becomes preoccupied with the thought that he will be found out as incompetent.

Preparation Stage. The first exam is approaching, and Phil needs to start studying. The problem is that he again has procrastinated and knows that he will have difficulty reviewing all the material. Most important, however, he begins to doubt whether he can succeed and is preoccupied with worry. He has difficulty concentrating on reading his textbook; he starts thinking that perhaps he is not smart enough to become a pharmacist; he wonders if he would do better if he had a more interesting teacher. As a result of his negative perceptions, he spends little time studying and more time watching television and playing video games. The result is that he is unprepared for his examination.

THEME 5. TIME-MANAGEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

What is time?

It may seem odd to suggest that you should have a philosophy of time, for no one has ever really defined it. As St Augustine remarked long ago, 'I know what time is until someone asks me.' Where the great minds of the world have failed we are unlikely to succeed.

But we do *know* what time is. We experience it. We measure it. As it is invisible and indefinable we use metaphors to grasp some of its aspects. Time is money – yes, it is a limited and valuable resource, but it is actually more precious and cannot be stored in the bank.

Time is our lives as measured out in years, months, days, hours, minutes and seconds. What could be more important to you than using this free gift of time effectively, generously and wisely?

Can you manage time?

To manage means to control. It comes from the Latin word *Manus*: a hand. The French developed *Manage* for handling war horses (what we now call dressage). It was soon applied to handling other things (shops, tools, money).

In modern use *managing* implies:

1. Efficiency

Ensuring that things or organisations run smoothly, like highperformance machines.

2. Effectiveness

Being economical and prudent about the use of means (resources) to accomplish ends.

It is the second aspect of managing that concerns us most here. Obviously you cannot control time in the sense of stopping it, slowing it down or speeding it up. But you can apply it economically to the tasks you have to accomplish.

Can you lead time? Again, obviously not, for time cannot be led by the hand. But we talk about someone leading their lives. Lead comes from the old North European word for a journey, road, path or course of a ship at sea. You can navigate both your life and the work that you are doing by identifying your values, aims and objectives.

Checklist – is your philosophy clear?

All navigators need some stars to steer by. Have you successfully carried out some fundamental thinking about your own key values?

- _ Write down a brief description of your role at work as a professional/ manager/leader
- _ Do you accept that if you are in a position requiring leadership, you need time to think about the task, the team and each individual?
- _ Does your philosophy of business include a clear understanding of the corporate purpose?
- _ Have you thought through the ethical implications and social responsibilities of your role as a leader-manager?
- _ Have you worked out a proper and healthy balance for yourself between your professional life and commitments on the one hand, and your personal and family life on the other?

The ten principles of time-management

- 1) Develop a personal sense of time
- 2) Identify long-term goals
- 3) Make medium-term plans
- 4) Plan the day
- 5) Make the **best** use of your **best** time
- 6) Organise office work
- 7) Manage meetings
- 8) Delegate effectively
- 9) Make use of committed time
- 10) Manage your health

Keeping a time log

One important way by which you can develop a personal sense of time is to keep a time log, recording how your time is actually spent over a period of say, a week. The principle of a time log or audit is to divide each day for the next week or two into fifteen minute intervals. At the end of each hour record how the previous hour was spent.

Keeping a time log may sound to you like a tedious chore, but there is a reason for it. There is often a gap between what we think we are doing and what we are actually doing. Why not take an objective or experimental approach, like that of a scientist, to find out where your time is really going? You may be in for some surprises.

Keep a time log with you for the next week and record how each hour was spent. Be honest. If your fifteen minute coffee break turns in to thirty minutes, log it. You need to know where your time is going. At the end of the day summarise the time spent. After keeping the logs for three or four days you may begin to notice opportunities for improvement. Could some tasks be delegated? What would

happen if they were not done at all? Are you giving the really important tasks the correct priority? Having identified how your time is truly spent you can then proceed to invest it more beneficially for the future.

How do you value other people's time?

Developing a personal sense of time includes developing a personal sense of the value of other people's time. How do you rate as a manager – or mismanager – of other people's working capital of time? To discover your attitudes to other people's time, complete the following exercise. If a statement describes your attitude or behaviour check Yes if not, check No. Tell the truth!

Attitudes and behaviours to other people's time

1. I look upon the time of those who work for me as an extension of my own, to do with as I please.
2. I frequently interrupt meetings in their offices, as I have first priority on their time.
3. I regard job descriptions – that each position in an organisation has its own proper duties, responsibilities and authority – as a bureaucratic nonsense.

When telephoning anyone I never check to see if my call is an unwanted interruption at that particular moment.

5. I enjoy the sound of my own voice and I know that I am rather long-winded at meetings.
6. In the last month I can think of at least one occasion when I have kept someone waiting needlessly without telling them why.
7. I am aware of the quantity of time that my people put into their work (how many hours a day), but not the quality of the time they give.
8. I have never reflected on the fact that other people's time is as precious to them – or ought to be – as my time is to me.
9. I do not show potential or actual customers that I value their time. It's their money I am after!
10. I frequently miss agreed deadlines, I say that I will do things and then don't do them, and have to be chased by others accordingly.

The following scale will help you to interpret your present level of personal awareness of other people's time based on your current attitudes and behaviours:

'No' answers

8-10 You are sensitive and thoughtful. Keep it up!

5-7 You are very good, but in some respects could be better.

2-4 Get some feedback and advice from friends and colleagues.

0-1 Beyond redemption! A radical self-review of your attitude is needed.

Summary

_ Time – human time – is the most precious natural resource you have.

_ Time is well-managed if:

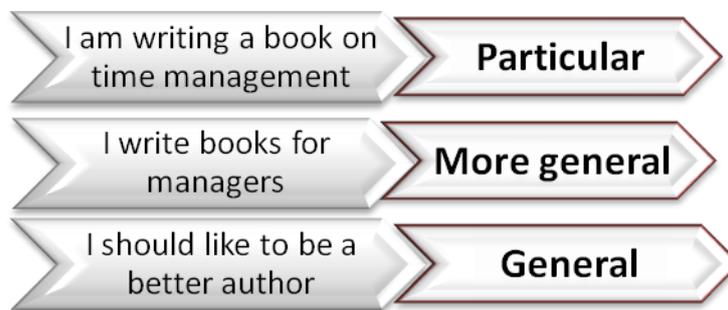
- things that ought to run smoothly are doing so
- desired ends are being achieved by the economical use of time.

_ Time is well-led if those ends are carefully thought through in terms of purpose, aims and objectives in a rapidly changing world.

_ Your personal sense of time should include an awareness of the value or importance of other people's time as well as your own.

There are basically two ways of thinking about the results or end points towards which you have chosen to direct your activity. The first ranges them from the **particular** to the **general**. The second method groups them according to **time** – from **short-term** through to **long-term**.

Example of particular to general



Example of short-term to long-term



Obviously there is some flexibility in these time-related terms: what is long-term for some managers would be middle-term for others.

First define your purpose

Many organisations today have found that it makes sense to define their purpose or mission. A proper statement of corporate purpose should answer the questions:

- _ Why does this particular organisation exist?
- _ To what end is all the effort and time being expended?

Wording a statement of corporate purpose that is both simple and inspiring is no easy matter. It also needs to answer the basic philosophical questions, that both takes into account and yet transcend the particular interests of the various stakeholders, and reflect the core ethical stance of the organisation. What we must be clear about however is the answer to the question.

Then define your strategic aims

How far you tend to look ahead in organisations depends roughly upon your position. It is the responsibility of strategic leaders to ensure that their organisations are taking a longer-term view. That involves thinking hard about these questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. What are our present strengths and weaknesses?
3. Where do we want to be in (say) five years time?
4. How are we going to get there?
5. How can we improve general capabilities?

This kind of strategic thinking (which applies to personal life as well) will tend to give you either a **direction** (or set of directions) in which you should be going, or a **goal** (or set of goals).

Example

‘Our aim is to move up-market into the higher price range of package holidays’. ‘Our goal is to take over ownership of The Times by the year 1999.’

As a principle, the further you look ahead the more likely you will be thinking in terms of directions or aims rather than goals or objectives. For the further away it is, the less likely you are to hit a precise target. This is equally true of course in your career and personal life. On the other hand, if you are not successful in turning your corporate (or personal) purpose into more definite directions or aims, clearly identified as being worthwhile (= worth time and effort), and then converting those into much more tangible **goals, targets** or **objectives**, you will be nothing but a manager of good intentions.

The next section explains **how to do it**.

Now you have come this far it should be fairly easy for you to identify the five or six **key areas** (as a rule of thumb – not less than three, not more than seven) of your job.

List these below:

1.
2.
3.

Key areas – a definition

A key area is a major sub-section of your overall job for which you are responsible. It is an area in which your performance will be directly or indirectly measured. A good indicator of your key areas

will be your job description but remember apart from the obvious ones, it can also include things such as staff development.

Check understanding

Write down one of your objectives.

It is often a good idea to make a 'time budget' for your objectives. You have only 168 hours each week. A most common mistake in time management is to underestimate the time it will take you to achieve a particular result. With practice and experience you should be able to forecast realistically and accurately how much of your time a job will take.

The progress review

At the end of the middle-term (however long that may be – three, four, six or twelve months) you should review your performance. On the time front be especially watchful for excuses, as opposed to real reasons, as to why results were not achieved. The ability to review or evaluate your own work critically against the objectives you have set yourself is vitally important for your self-development as a leader/manager. It is not incompatible, of course, with having appraisal interviews with your boss. Indeed, research shows that the most effective appraisal interviews are those:

- _ Where prior objectives have been set and agreed.
- _ Where a measure of self-evaluation precedes the evaluation by others.

The longest journey begins with a single step. You will never achieve an **objective** if you do not break it down into manageable steps.

Each day should see you and your team some steps nearer to your projected and desired result. Here it is necessary to remind you of only one key point: do not leave day planning to the last minute.

Plan your day outline a week ahead and in detail on the eve of it.

The daily list

It is an essential discipline to compile a programme for the day. The daily plan is likely to take 15 minutes. In return for this investment you gain a sense of control, direction and freedom which is otherwise impossible.

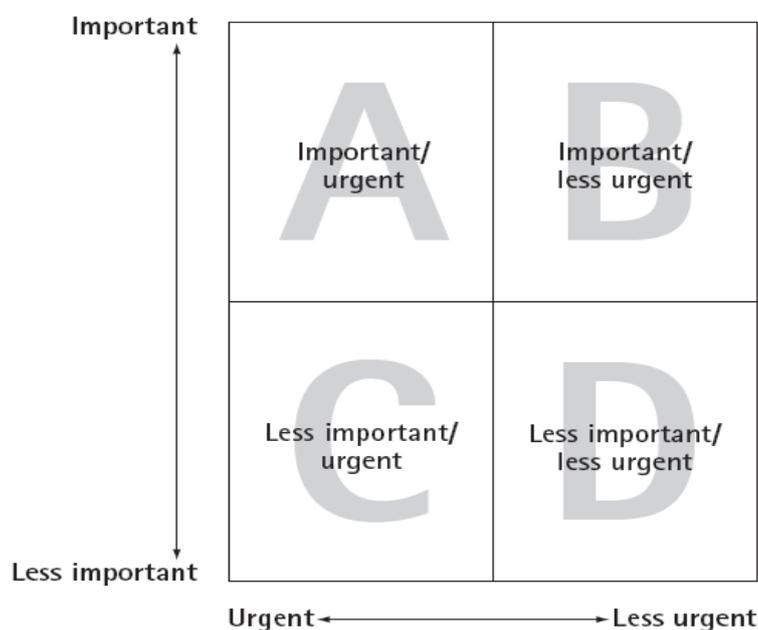
Set time limits for all tasks. Get into the way of always estimating the amount of time required to do each job, such as conducting an interview or writing a report.

Then establish your priorities. A priority is composed of two elements in various mixtures: urgency and importance. Some people find it useful to have a system of letters, numbers or stars to make the various orders of priority. A letter system for example might include:

- A** Do it now, do it well
- B** Plan it in, spend quality time
- C** Do it quickly, doesn't require quality time
- D** Do later or in some cases delegate

If you have worked according to your sense of priorities you will have done the important jobs, and that is what managing your time is all about.

Urgency/importance matrix



A few minutes of reflection will tell you that the quality of your attention or concentration varies at different times. If you are very tired or suffering from jet lag, for example, the quality of your decisions will tend to degenerate. On the other hand, you may notice that you habitually tend to be more mentally alert, or at least more creative, at certain times of the day.

You may remember in this context the Pareto Principle? It states that ‘The Significant items of a given group form a relatively small part of the Total’. For example, 20% of the buildings in London use up to 80% of the total electricity supplied to that city.

Time management is about the quality of your time as well as the quantity.

If you’re not around in five years, your business is going to suffer. Even a few weeks off being avoidably ill is going to involve you in a major waste of productive time. Depending on the nature of your illness, of course, you may be able to claw back some of this involuntarily committed time – committed to your hospital bed – using it in some constructive way. To give to your work and to others *high quality time* you must top up your energy levels. We all have to write cheques on our energy. But are you overdrawn? Do you make a practice of paying back

the bank – your body, mind and spirit?

Checklist – do you really manage your energy levels?

Please think about each question honestly. Ask your spouse or a good friend to verify your answers.

1. Do you get enough sleep? The norm is eight hours, slightly less as you grow older. You can function on much less, but your creativity is 15% down.

2. Do you apply common sense to diet? There is a broad consensus on what is good for us to eat and drink. The golden rule is moderation in all things.

3. Do you take exercise? What kind of exercise you take and when is a personal matter, but are you really taking sufficient exercise? Do you take holidays? ‘Don’t spare; don’t drudge’, said

Benjamin Jowett. Remember that you can do a full year’s work in 11 months but you cannot do it in 12 months. Do you take and enjoy full holiday time?

5. Do you allow time for reflection? It is a good idea to spend some time just meditating in a relaxed way about what you are doing in your work at present, even if it’s only for a few minutes each day.

To sum up, time management should be **fun**. It doesn’t have to be a complicated daily chore. Keep it as simple as possible. The good news is that you will never meet the perfect time manager. We all fall short. You are probably already very good at managing your time; in some respects, however, you realise that you now could be better. Why not make an appointment with yourself now in your year planner in about three months time, for a review of how you are getting on? The wonderful thing is that tomorrow’s 24 hours now await you – untouched and unwasted. You are now in a position to make more effective use of your time. The end result of organising or managing your self and time properly is that you should be in good order. The end result of being in good order is that you are able to spend your energies, talents and time most effectively on the things that matter to you, and to start linking your daily planning to longer-term goals and objectives.

THEME 6. SELF-DISCIPLINE. WILL-POWER DEVELOPMENT.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the power of self-discipline. To implement positive changes in our life we need to understand the true nature of self-discipline. Before we can develop self-discipline, we must first understand what it is and how it is defined by scientists and psychologists.

Theodore Bryant in his book *Self-Discipline in 10 days. How to go from thinking to doing* (2005) writes that the first step toward understanding what self-discipline is, lies in knowing what it isn't. And he states that *self-discipline is not:*

- A personality trait that either you have or you don't have.
- Forcing yourself to overcome your own resistance to action by using will power.

Self-discipline is:

- A skill that can be learned.

- Becoming aware of your subconscious resistances to action, then overcoming those resistances.

- The process of coordinating your conscious and subconscious psychological elements.

According to Theodore Bryant (2005), our personality is a network of individual but connected elements – desires, emotions, needs, fears, thoughts, intellect, memories, imagination and others. In all human beings these elements operate in various degrees of conflict. Sometimes our emotions pull us in one direction while our intellect pulls us in another. Sometimes our desires try to lead us down a certain path but our fears won't allow us to follow.

Self-discipline, then, is the skill to direct and regulate all the various parts of our personality so that rather than being immobilized by inner conflict; all of our psychological elements are pulling together in the same direction - toward your consciously chosen goals.

Self-discipline is the process of psychological self management, rather than a single personality trait. We can think of self-discipline as the director of a play who gives instructions to individual actors. Also we can think of self-discipline as the conductor of a symphony who insures that the individual musicians all are playing in harmony (Theodore Bryant, 2005).

When you're experiencing difficulty with self-discipline, the question to ask yourself isn't "How can I get myself to do what I should do?" Instead, ask yourself "How can I get myself to do what a part of me doesn't want to do?" Regardless of whether you're trying to stay on a diet, clean out the garage, or be more productive in your occupation, the secret to success revolves around your ability to recognize and deal with the part of you that offers resistance. While you're growing up you're told what to do by parents, teachers, and other authority figures. If you go on to college you're governed by professors. When you get a job, you have a boss. The discipline provided by these types of authority figures does not depend on whether we are in total agreement with what is asked of us. Usually, we are told what to do, how to do it, and when to have it done. Under these circumstances, we don't have to struggle with any inner resistance. Therefore our self-discipline muscle doesn't get exercised. Without exercise self-discipline becomes weak and flabby. Then, in situations where we are called upon to be our own boss, we seem powerless to overcome contrary inner influences, both conscious and subconscious. Therefore, the part of us that doesn't want to be disciplined takes control of our behavior.

The Self-Discipline Process

The self-discipline process occurs in 4 stages:

1. Decision
2. Preparation
3. Action
4. Completion/Maintenance

We need to satisfy the requirements of each stage before attempting the next stage. Otherwise, you are setting yourself up for unnecessary difficulties. By far, the most common mistake people make when attempting to use self-discipline is this: They select a goal and start at the Action Stage of the self-discipline process, before doing the necessary groundwork. That's like trying to build a penthouse before building the first floor. Starting toward your goal at the Action Stage, before taking specific steps in the Decision Stage and the Preparation Stage, is putting the cart before the horse; sure, you might eventually drive your goods to market but not without driving yourself and your horse half crazy. You will make self-discipline a lot easier for yourself by doing things in a certain order. This approach will save you a lot of time and trouble no matter what type of goals you choose, whether you are starting a business, losing weight, or finally getting the garage cleared out (Theodore Bryant, 2005).

Sharon Michaels (2007) is certain that weighing options, taking time and then acting wisely are powerful success traits. What exactly is the habit of self-discipline and how important is it to our personal and professional successes?

Self-discipline is also synonymous with self-control. Both self-discipline and self-control are founded in being able to delay gratification and control the impulse to act immediately. In other words, being able to focus on the bigger picture.

Answers.com defines **self-discipline** as the training and control of oneself and one's conduct, usually for personal improvement.

Self-discipline and self-control are powerful success tools. Sharon Michaels (2007) suggests the following structure of self-discipline process. Here are a few ways the use of self-discipline can help us go positively forward:

1. Goal achievement – Self-discipline is useful for achieving both short-term and long-term goals. To achieve goals, we must be able to focus on what we can do today to make sure that our plans for tomorrow come to fruition. Yes, you may have to delay some instant gratification today, but the future payoff is often well worth the wait.

2. Knowing how to focus on priorities – Self-discipline involves the ability to focus on what is important now and into the future. Setting priorities means asking yourself what is important for achieving balance in life. Often, when you act on impulse or without thinking about the consequences, life becomes off-balance and out of synch.

3. Finding workable solutions instead of temporary “quick-fixes” – Self-discipline often helps us to map out a workable emotional, physical and spiritual course of action. Taking the time to sort through the pro's and con's can result in positive solutions that are both empowering and motivating.

Is self-discipline important for success? We have found some thoughts and studies:

1. A study featured in the *“Journal of Environmental Psychology”* studied girls in various Chicago neighborhoods and concluded: “Self-discipline is an important personal characteristic. The greater a girl’s self-discipline, the more likely she is to do well in school, to avoid unhealthy or risky behaviors, and to behave in ways that make success more likely.”

2. "After all these years, my recommendation is this: Forget about self-esteem and concentrate more on self-control and self-discipline." Roy F. Baumeister, professor of psychology, Florida State University. (*Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 2005).

3. “Self-discipline is important in any endeavor of life. It’s best defined as the ability to regulate one’s conduct by principle and sound judgment, rather than by impulse, desire, or social custom.” John MacArthur.

4. “Self-discipline eventually becomes a habit, just like any other activity you do on a regular basis. That means making a conscious CHOICE to take a certain action (or to avoid taking certain other actions).”

According to Steve Pavlina (2008), there are five Pillars of Self-Discipline: Acceptance, Willpower, Hard Work, Industry, and Persistence. If you take the first letter of each word, you get the acronym “A WHIP” — a convenient way to remember them, since many people associate self-discipline with whipping themselves into shape.

According to Steve Pavlina, **self-discipline** is the ability to get yourself to take action regardless of your emotional state. Imagine what you could accomplish if you could simply get yourself to follow through on your best intentions no matter what. Picture yourself saying to your body, “You’re overweight. Lose 20 pounds.” Without self-discipline that intention won’t become manifest. But with sufficient self-discipline, it’s a done deal. The pinnacle of self-discipline is when you reach the point that when you make a conscious decision, it’s virtually guaranteed you’ll follow through on it.

Self-discipline is one of many personal development tools available to you. Of course it is not a panacea. Nevertheless, the problems which self-discipline can solve are important, and while there are other ways to solve these problems, self-discipline absolutely shreds them. Self-discipline can empower you to overcome any addiction or lose any amount of weight. It can wipe out procrastination, disorder, and ignorance. Within the domain of problems it can solve, self-discipline is simply unmatched. Moreover, it becomes a powerful teammate when combined with other tools like passion, goal-setting, and planning.

Methods to Improve and Develop Self-Discipline

Self-discipline is like a muscle

The philosophy of Steve Pavlina how to build self-discipline is best explained by an analogy. Self-discipline is like a muscle. The more you train it, the stronger you become. The less you train it, the weaker you become.

Just as everyone has different muscular strength, we all possess different levels of self-discipline. Everyone has some - if you can hold your breath a few seconds, you have some self-discipline. But not everyone has developed their discipline to the same degree. Just as it takes muscle to build muscle, it takes self-discipline to build self-discipline.

The way to build self-discipline is analogous to using progressive weight training to build muscle. This means lifting weights that are close to your limit. Note that when you weight train, you lift weights that are within your ability to lift. You push your muscles until they fail, and then you rest.

Similarly, the basic method to build self-discipline is to tackle challenges that you can successfully accomplish but which are near your limit. This doesn't mean trying something and failing at it every day, nor does it mean staying within your comfort zone. You will gain no strength trying to lift a weight that you cannot budge, nor will you gain strength lifting weights that are too light for you. You must start with weights/challenges that are within your current ability to lift but which are near your limit.

Progressive training means that once you succeed, you increase the challenge. If you keep working out with the same weights, you won't get any stronger. Similarly, if you fail to challenge yourself in life, you won't gain any more self-discipline.

Just as most people have very weak muscles compared to how strong they could become with training, most people are very weak in their level of self-discipline.

It's a mistake to try to push yourself too hard when trying to build self-discipline. If you try to transform your entire life overnight by setting dozens of new goals for yourself and expecting yourself to follow through consistently starting the very next day, you're almost certain to fail. This is like a person going to the gym for the first time ever and packing 300 pounds on the bench press. You will only look silly.

Also it is important not to compare yourself to other people. It won't help. You'll only find what you expect to find. If you think you're weak, everyone else will seem stronger. If you think you're strong, everyone else will seem weaker. There's no point in doing this. Simply look at where you are now, and aim to get better as you go forward.

Why is acceptance a pillar of self-discipline? The most basic mistake people make with respect to self-discipline is a failure to accurately perceive and accept their present situation. If you haven't consciously acknowledged where you stand right now in terms of your level of self-discipline, it's highly unlikely that you're going to improve at all in this area. Imagine a would-be bodybuilder who has no idea how much weight s/he can lift and arbitrarily adopts a training routine. It's virtually certain that the chosen weights will be either too heavy or too light. If the weights are too heavy, the trainee won't be able to lift them at all and thus will experience no muscle growth. And if the weights are too light, the trainee will lift them easily but won't build any muscle in doing so.

Similarly, if you want to increase your self-discipline, you must know where you stand right now. How strong is your discipline at this moment? Which challenges are easy for you, and which are virtually impossible for you?

The advice is to identify an area where your discipline is weakest, assess where you stand right now, acknowledge and accept your starting point, and design a training program for yourself to improve in this area. Start out with some easy exercises you know you can do, and gradually progress to greater challenges.

Without acceptance you get either ignorance or denial. With ignorance you simply don't know how disciplined you are — you've probably never even thought about it. You don't know that you don't know. You'll only have a fuzzy notion of what you can and can't do. You'll experience some easy successes and some dismal failures, but you're more likely to blame the task or blame yourself instead of simply acknowledging that the "weight" was too heavy for you and that you need to become stronger.

When you're in a state of denial about your level of discipline, you're locked into a false view of reality. You're either overly pessimistic or optimistic about your capabilities. And like the trainee who doesn't know his/her own strength, you won't get much better because it's unlikely you'll be able to hit the proper training zone by accident. On the pessimistic side, you'll only pick up easy weights and avoid the heavy ones which you could actually lift and which would make you stronger. And on the optimistic side, you'll keep trying to lift weights that are too heavy for you and failing, and afterwards you may either beat yourself up or resolve to try harder, neither of which will make you stronger.

Willpower Development

Willpower is your ability to set a course of action and say, "Engage!"

Willpower provides an intensely powerful yet temporary boost. Think of it as a one-shot thruster. It burns out quickly, but if directed intelligently, it can provide the burst you need to overcome inertia and create momentum.

Willpower is a concentration of force. You gather up all your energy and make a massive thrust forward. You attack your problems strategically at their weakest points until they crack, allowing you enough room to maneuver deeper into their territory and finish them off.

The application of willpower includes the following steps:

1. Choose your objective
2. Create a plan of attack
3. Execute the plan

With willpower you may take your time implementing steps 1 and 2, but when you get to step 3, you've got to hit it hard and fast.

Don't try to tackle your problems and challenges in such a way that a high level of willpower is required every day. Willpower is unsustainable. If you attempt to use it for too long, you'll burn out. It

requires a level of energy that you can maintain only for a short period of time... in most cases the fuel is spent within a matter of days.

So if willpower can only be used in short, powerful bursts, then what's the best way to apply it? The answer is hard work.

Most people will do what's easiest and avoid hard work — and that's precisely why you should do the opposite. The superficial opportunities of life will be attacked by hordes of people seeking what's easy. The much tougher challenges will usually see a lot less competition and a lot more opportunity.

Strong challenge is commonly connected with strong results. Sure you can get lucky every once in a while and find an easy path to success. But will you be able to maintain that success, or is it just a fluke? Will you be able to repeat it? Once other people learn how you did it, will you find yourself overloaded with competition?

When you discipline yourself to do what is hard, you gain access to a realm of results that are denied everyone else. The willingness to do what is difficult is like having a key to a special private treasure room.

The nice thing about hard work is that it's universal. It doesn't matter what industry you're in — hard work can be used to achieve positive long-term results regardless of the specifics.

Being healthy is hard work. Finding and maintaining a successful relationship is hard work. Raising kids is hard work. Getting organized is hard work. Setting goals, making plans to achieve them, and staying on track is hard work. Even being happy is hard work (true happiness that comes from high self-esteem, not the fake kind that comes from denial and escapism).

Hard work goes hand-in-hand with acceptance. One of the things you must accept are those areas of your life that won't succumb to anything less than hard work. Perhaps you've had no luck finding a fulfilling relationship. Maybe the only way it's going to happen is if you accept you're going to have to do what you've been avoiding. Perhaps you want to lose weight. Maybe it's time to accept that the path to your goal requires disciplined diet and exercise (both hard work). Perhaps you want to increase your income. Maybe you should accept that the only way it will happen is with a lot of hard work.

Your life will reach a whole new level when you stop avoiding and fearing hard work and simply surrender to it. Make it your ally instead of your enemy. It's a potent tool to have on your side.

In life there are many tasks that aren't necessarily difficult, but they collectively require a significant time investment. If you don't discipline yourself to stay on top of them, they can make a big mess of your life. Just think of all the little things you need to do: shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundry, taxes, paying bills, home maintenance, childcare, etc. And this is just for home — if you include work the list grows even longer. These things may not reach your A-list for importance, but they still need to be done.

Sometimes it's clear what needs to be done. Sometimes it isn't clear at all. But ignoring the mess won't help no matter what. If you don't know what needs to be done, the first step is to figure it out. This may require you to seek out information and educate yourself. In order to launch this blog last year, I had to figure out how to do it. I took time to educate myself by reading other blogs and evaluating various blogging tools. It wasn't difficult for me, but it required a significant time investment.

Put in the Time

There are many problems in life where the solution is largely a brainless time investment. If your email inbox is overloaded, this is not a challenging problem. By all means if you can find a way to avoid a time-consuming solution and find a faster or better way to bypass or eliminate the problem, take advantage of it. Delegate it, delete it — do whatever you can to remove the time burden. But if you know it's something that won't get done except via your personal time investment, like the ornery boxes in my home that refused to self-unpack, then just accept it and get it off your plate. Don't complain. Don't whine. Just do it.

Develop Your Personal Productivity

Disciplining yourself to be industrious allows you to squeeze more value out of your time. Time is a constant, but your personal productivity is not. Some people will use the hours of their day far more efficiently than others. It's amazing that people will spend extra money to buy a faster computer or a fuel efficient car, but they'll barely pay any attention to their personal capacity. Your personal productivity will do a lot more for you than a computer or a car in the long run. Give an industrious programmer a 10-year old computer, and s/he'll get much more done with it over the course of a year than a lazy programmer with state of the art technology.

Despite all the technology and gadgets we have available that can potentially make us more efficient, your personal productivity is still your greatest bottleneck. Don't look to technology to make you more productive. If you don't consider yourself productive without technology, you won't be productive with it — it will only serve to mask your bad habits. But if you're already industrious without technology, it can help you become even more so. Think of technology as a force multiplier — it multiplies what you already are.

Nothing in the world can take the place of Persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "Press On" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.
- Calvin Coolidge

What Is Persistence?

Persistence is the ability to maintain action regardless of your feelings. You press on even when you feel like quitting.

When you work on any big goal, your motivation will wax and wane like waves hitting the shore. Sometimes you'll feel motivated; sometimes you won't. But it's not your motivation that will produce results — it's your action. Persistence allows you to keep taking action even when you don't feel motivated to do so, and therefore you keep accumulating results.

Persistence will ultimately provide its own motivation. If you simply keep taking action, you'll eventually get results, and results can be very motivating. For example, you may become a lot more enthusiastic about dieting and exercising once you've lost those first 10 pounds and feel your clothes fitting more loosely.

When to Give Up

Should you always persist and never give up? Certainly not. Sometimes giving up is clearly the best option.

The value of persistence comes not from stubbornly clinging to the past. It comes from a vision of the future that's so compelling you would give almost anything to make it real. Persistence of action comes from persistence of vision. When you're super-clear about what you want in such a way that your vision doesn't change much, you'll be more consistent — and persistent — in your actions. And that consistency of action will produce consistency of results.

Can you identify a part of your life where you've demonstrated a pattern of long-term persistence? I think if you can identify such an area, it may provide a clue to your mission — something you can work towards where passion and self-discipline function synergistically.

THEME 7. SELF-LEADERSHIP.

Who was the best leader you ever worked for?

Why?

Who was the worst?

Again, why?

Take a moment to answer.

As you thought about the first two questions, you probably thought of some good leader you have known and mentally assigned words and concepts like *competent, trustworthy, positive, dependable, cared about people, or kept us informed*. The memory of a bad leader probably summoned a list of opposites: *incompetent (or only marginally capable), pessimistic, didn't care about anyone else, wouldn't share information*.

For both leaders, you probably remember specific behaviors that you thought were good or bad, and the behaviors probably followed a pattern. Over time, for better or worse, most leaders exhibit consistent patterns of leadership behavior. The pattern shapes their reputation (how they are known and

perceived by others), is considered a reflection of their character, and largely determines their standing and status with others.

Leader behaviors that are considered positive and constructive can be attractive and highly influential. The result is greater respect and trust, and stronger emotional connection between such leaders and their employees. These are behaviors that leaders should strive to develop in themselves, in the cadre of leaders below them, and in all their employees.

The word *develop* raises several questions: Can good leadership be developed, especially insofar as character is concerned? Can an adult's character be deliberately improved? If so, what attributes of character are most important to focus on in developing better leadership? Finally, are there specific approaches and methods that an organization can pursue?

The answer to all these questions is yes.

To Lead Is to Influence

Basketball Hall of Fame coach John Wooden said that a life not lived for others is not a life, and that there is no greater joy than doing something for others (Wooden, 1997). Rick Warren begins his best-selling book *The Purpose Driven Life* with the words, "It's not about you" (Warren, 2002).

These ideas go directly to the heart of what it means to lead.

Being a leader of character means that life is not so much about what you yourself can accomplish as it is about caring for and behaving so as to meet the needs of others in ways that bring out their best. To lead is to influence. An effective leader possesses the skills and abilities to influence others for the best—prompting, stimulating, motivating, persuading, dissuading, convincing, and encouraging. An effective leader is always thinking, "What impact does my behavior have on others?" "What might others think, feel, or do as a result of what I do?" "Is my behavior effective, ineffective, or neither?" "How can I behave differently to be more influential?" Of course, a leader's influence can be positive or negative. Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Saddam Hussein possessed the ability to influence, but their ultimate influence was basically self-serving and obviously negative. Others, such as Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and Florence Nightingale, also possessed the capacity to influence but used it more positively, focusing on the needs of others and not on themselves.

Effective and positive influence does not usually flow out of simply applying official authority, title, position, or regulations. Often an authoritarian approach is ineffective in motivating others to do what is needed. Effective leaders must develop skills in a range of other more positive ways to influence. In *Leadership in Organizations* (1989), Gary Yukl lists numerous tactics commonly used to persuade or convince others, among them ingratiating, exchanging (*quid pro quo*), building coalitions, making inspirational or personal appeals, consulting, legitimizing, and pressuring. Yukl suggests that managers can categorize these tactics as being either positive or negative. For example, pressuring and

micromanaging to achieve results (such as frequently checking on a direct report's progress on a specific assignment) will generally have negative consequences.

On the other hand, personal appeals based on a legitimate relationship between leaders and their leadership cadre (founded not just on title or position but also on common interests and values) can achieve significant results.

In the past, leaders were expected to influence their direct reports. Today, however, leaders are also expected to influence their superiors, board members, peers, customers, clients, suppliers, the news media, community officials, political leaders, government regulators, negotiators, environmental authorities, special interest groups, Wall Street analysts, and any number of other stakeholders. To meet these demands of leadership, rank is clearly not enough, and each group requires different tactics to be influenced and led both effectively and positively. Leaders need flexibility and many different skills to communicate credibly and interact with all these parties for maximum results. The principles found in this book address the kinds of influence that extend in all directions. The idea of leadership as influence also points to a difference between a focus on effectiveness and a focus on *success*. The difference is not just semantic. Of course, leaders should be successful, but a better gauge is whether they are truly effective in terms of influence.

Leaders can be considered successful when they achieve the goals and objectives for which they are responsible—that is, when they “make their numbers.” But suppose that in the course of making those numbers, half the workforce leaves the organization and morale of those remaining is low. Or suppose much greater success was possible if everyone in the organization had really taken part? True effectiveness means using leadership influence to unite the organization's efforts toward and past any single bottom-line moment. It means achieving goals and objectives in such a way that the team is still intact, morale is high, and people are lined up to get on the team.

By these criteria, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the victorious coalition forces in the first Gulf War, is an excellent example of an effective leader. His victory was one of historic proportion and he did it with less than three hundred U.S. deaths—very literally keeping the team intact. Even one soldier's death is one too many, but in contrast it was estimated there would be approximately ten thousand U.S. deaths in that conflict.

Leadership Character Can Be Developed

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, “A man's character is his fate.” There is truth in this fatalistic view. Every person's character is founded on early experiences and influences in childhood and adolescence.

These come from home life, schooling, interactions with peers, part-time or summer jobs, and spiritual institutions. They're provided by role models such as parents, grandparents, older siblings, teachers, coaches, spiritual leaders, and by society in general.

Such contacts and exposures largely determine people's patterns of behavior, their value systems, personal moral codes and creeds, convictions, principles, and beliefs. In these forms, a person's character accumulates over time.

But Heraclitus' view does not rule out character *development*— the idea that character can change through an ongoing, continual process of growth, maturation, and improvement. Leadership character involves for the most part learned behaviors, which can be observed and assessed by others. If you learn how to conduct yourself in a certain manner, your behavior will reflect a certain quality such as courage, caring, self-control, optimism, and ready communication.

None of these attributes is innate and all five of them lie at the heart of effective leadership.

You can develop the behaviors that define leadership character both in yourself and in others. A person may have a natural inclination or a genetic predisposition to behave in a certain way. Psychologist Carl Jung's "type theory" advanced the idea that we are all hardwired toward certain behavioral preferences. But Jung also believed that we can and do learn to behave contrary to our preferences (Jung, 1976).

All the behaviors involved in leadership character are ones that can be learned by adults regardless of age. As humans, we never lose the ability to learn. This is not to say that changing behaviors is always easy. A behavior that a person has practiced for several decades will not change overnight. However, a rational, emotionally healthy, and psychologically stable person of any age can see an advantage to changing certain behaviors and act upon that perception.

A basic thesis of many religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism, is that people can change their behavior to become more moral and virtuous. These religions contain moral codes and numerous writings on how to do this and apply the principles of their teachings. It is well documented that many people have made dramatic behavioral changes after having a major religious experience.

For centuries the military, through intense discipline and aggressive training, has taken civilians and prepared them to function on the battlefield. That transition is probably the most dramatic change of behavior possible. It is done routinely and in most every country with varying degrees of success.

The key, as I implied earlier, is to go about change in terms of adjusting behavior. Jean Piaget was among the first psychologists whose work focused on character development. He believed that all development evolved from action; people create their understanding of the world through their interactions with their surroundings (Piaget, 1965). He believed that through this process character, too, was developed. Although he worked primarily with children, his theory applies to adults just as well. Through the results of and feedback from their behaviors, through reason and reflection, people can determine which behaviors are appropriate and effective and which are inappropriate and ineffective. Through this process of personal discovery and problem solving, they can then adjust their future behaviors.

My own experience is that adults change their behavior to gain something positive or to avoid something negative. In the first instance, what they stand to gain looks more important to them than preserving an old behavior. For example, people reduce how much they eat because of how good they expect to look and feel after losing weight. Regarding the second instance (avoiding a negative consequence), in a former role as an executive coach, I had clients sent to me who were told by their employer that if they did not respond to my coaching and change their behaviors they would be terminated. It was amazing how motivated these coachees were to avoid that negative consequence.

Adjustment (as opposed to wholesale, instant change) is really the key word in developing better leadership behaviors. The development process helps leaders make adjustments to current behaviors that will lead to greater influence and effectiveness. The process begins with understanding about the impact of current behavior that comes from feedback, personal reflection and introspection, and other sources. Once leaders understand the impact of their leadership behaviors, either positive or negative, they can choose to change how they behave.

Constructive and Affirming Behaviors

Having defined leadership character in terms of behaviors that have a positive influence on others, I need to say more precisely what behaviors are truly constructive and affirming, highly influential, and ideally universal.

First are the behaviors implied in what is known as the “Golden Rule”: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. The Golden Rule is essentially universal, inasmuch as it is found in all the major religions in the world. It tells us to use the same behaviors toward others as we would want them to use toward us. At a minimum this means treating others with respect, dignity, and equality, being sensitive to their needs and emotions, listening to them, paying attention to them, and so on. As an exercise, try listing your own specific desires for how you want to be treated by others. Then think about how that list might serve in guiding your own behaviors as a leader.

Less well known is the “Silver Rule.” The Silver Rule says that we should *not* treat others the way we would *not* want to be treated. Whereas the Golden Rule is active, the Silver Rule is restrictive— not using behaviors on others that we do not want to be used on us.

For example, most of us don’t want to be

- Told a lie
- Deceived by false or incomplete information
- Injured by someone’s self-focused, thoughtless, rude, or insensitive behavior
- The subject of a negative rumor or gossip
- The victim of sexual innuendo, harassment, or assault
- Defrauded out of money, property, or goods
- Called stupid, ignorant, uneducated, or ugly

- Discriminated against because of race, religion, gender, or ethnic background
- Treated with disrespect, unwarranted distrust, or in an undignified manner

Many times when discussing patterns of behavior, the Silver Rule provides a clearer perspective and understanding than the Golden Rule. We know how frustrated and angry being treated in these ways can make us. We also know what we would think of someone who consistently did so. Yet another perspective is provided by the “Law of Reciprocity,” which says that the way *you* behave toward and treat others is the way they are likely to behave toward and treat *you*. Leaders who behave in an unseemly manner open themselves to this law.

It is really in everyone’s best interests to behave according to the Golden and Silver Rules in attitude, speech, and conduct. But it is also possible to go beyond them in the search for universally acknowledged positive and negative attributes of leaders. In 1993, The Wharton School of Management at the University of Pennsylvania began a global study on leadership and organizations (House et al., 2004). The researchers interviewed 17,500 middle managers in sixty-two countries and eight hundred organizations. Among other interesting findings, there emerged a list of fifteen leader attributes or descriptions universally acknowledged as positive: communicative, informed, courageously decisive, positive (optimistic), trustworthy, honest, just, dependable, team builder, motivator, encourager, dynamic, intelligent, a win-win problem solver, and planner. For leaders exploring which attributes to focus on for leadership behavior development, this list is a good place to start. There were also seven universally acknowledged *negative* attributes for leaders: loner, asocial, irritable, dictatorial, ruthless, noncooperative, and egocentric.

Many of the constructive and affirming leadership behaviors on the list may strike you as intuitive, much like the Golden and Silver Rules—and perhaps they are. But in most situations they are still very useful. However, sometimes leaders face dilemmas that require other orders of thinking. For example, leaders may need to choose behaviors based on ideas of the greater good, the lesser evil, reconciliation of competing values, or consistency with their own and the organization’s broader systems of values. These challenges require thinking of behaviors not just in terms of rules but also in terms of personal values that underlie behaviors.

Values, Needs, and Behavior

Public opinion and the majority viewpoint are seldom good starting points for making decisions and choosing behaviors. History shows that the majority view has often been totally wrong. Vivid examples in U.S. history include the support for slavery prior to the Civil War, racial segregation for the hundred years after the Civil War ended, and the denial of women’s right to vote as late as 1920.

Developing positive leadership behaviors requires some more independent concept of what drives individuals’ behaviors in the first place. It is generally accepted that each of us has two broad

types of drives: our values and our needs. Values generate needs, so I'll start with the former. In essence, values are those things that really matter to us, including our essential beliefs, attitudes, principles, and priorities.

How do people acquire values? Building on the work of Piaget, developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg proposed a theory of the development of moral reasoning and character. He saw the process as made up of six stages that an individual could achieve only in sequence, beginning in early childhood with relatively simple concepts of obedience and punishment and ranging up to an advanced stage of behavior based on values and independent conscience that most adults never actually reach. In Kohlberg's view each stage of moral reasoning represents a significant shift in the behavioral perspective of the individual, and the goal of character development is to help individuals build on experience to advance as far as possible in sequence upward through the stages.

Kohlberg's theory reinforces the concept of character and moral development as an ongoing, lifelong process. Other theorists have seen this development as a process in which, throughout our lives, our moral perceptions and values are formed and reshaped by various experiences, communications, rules, laws, conventions, moral teachings, rewards, recognitions, punishments, and so on (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1995).

Every day, consciously or unconsciously, we base choices, decisions, and actions on our personal system of values. Everything we say or do (including our habits) reflects that system. But some elements of a personal system of values are more enduring and central than others. On one hand we possess core values that seldom change.

These values are often related to family and other close relationships, health, security, and so on. On the other hand, we hold more transitory values that are important for the moment but change.

These values may be related to the circumstances of a current job, place of residence, hobby, recreational activity, and so on.

Leaders need to be as aware as possible of their own values. With awareness, we can see how well we integrate and manifest those values in our daily life. A useful tool for this purpose is "values clarification," a process that is well described in *Values Clarification: A Practical, Action-Directed Workbook* (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1995). It outlines seventy-six strategies for helping leaders understand their personal values system, ranging from "Rogerian Listening" to an exercise called "What's in Your Wallet?"

This self-assessment will assist you in identifying and clarifying your personal value system. Before you begin, think of yourself reading the entire story of your life. What has been really important to you? What has really mattered to you? What has lasting value to you? What do you really not want to lose or give up? What are some things you really love? Be as honest as possible. Then perform these steps in order:

1. Briefly review the following lists and circle those items in each area that you value. Use the blank lines to add any items that you feel are missing.
2. Rank the top five items in each list with one being the item most valued.
3. Look at the twenty-five items you ranked and come up with the top five things you value. The results will increase your self-awareness and may surprise you.

Values Related to Self:

Academic accomplishment and degrees	Appearance and image	A school
Education and intellectual growth	Physical fitness	A team
Knowledge	Recognition	Clothes
Achieving goals	Self-respect and esteem	House
Activity and action	Responsibility	Property
Affiliation and belonging	Wisdom	Attention
Courage	Social status	Approval
Decisiveness	Addictions	Sex
Affluence and economic security	Doing something well	Skills
Wealth	Athletic prowess	Vacations
Self-indulgence	Physical health	Memories
Balance	Emotional health	Car or cars
Hobbies and collections	Material possessions	Time
Creativity	Television programs	Gardening
Enjoyment	Movies and DVDs	Admiration
Music and singing	Golf or fishing	Love
Happiness and joy	Integrity	Fame
Humor and laughing	Reading	Writing
Influence and impact	Legacy	Speaking
Political party	A dream, goal, or vision	Researching
Self-actualization	Fulfillment	An idea
Personal development	Contentment	Dancing

Vocational Values:

Achieving goals	Activity	Balance
Promotion	Authority	Challenge
Affiliation and belonging	Collaboration	Duty
Autonomy and independence	Vision and goal	Dream
Change and variety	Competence	Courage

Achieving results	Creativity	Expertise
Compensation	Productivity	Trust
Family-like environment	Justice	Location
Diverse perspectives	Loyalty	Recognition
Variety of skills	Rewards	Status
Influence and impact	Self-respect and esteem	Responsibility
Developing others	Symbols of success	An idea or ideas
Doing something well	Time	Bonuses
An organization	Job security	Respect
Dignified treatment	Opportunities	Advancement
Position	Title	Office

Relationship Values:

Family	Friends	Fellowship
Camaraderie	Love	Support
Bonding	Sense of community	Loyalty
Diversity and perspectives		Developing others Sex
Respect	Dignified treatment	Goodwill
Sharing children's lives	Cooperation	Harmony

Community Values:

Helping others	Sense of community	Justice
Location	Duty	A cause
Neighborhood	An organization	Volunteering
Altruism H	Humanitarianism	Diversity
Service	Contributing time, money, resources	Publicity

Spiritual Values:

God	Tolerance	Respect
Religion	Balance	Integrity
Honesty	Morality	Ethics
Aesthetics	Meditation	Reflection
Introspection	Retreats	Moderation
Wisdom	Duty	Responsibility
Contentment	Fulfillment	Inner peace
Optimism	Forgiveness	Love

Hope	Faith	Heaven
An organization	A place	A facility

THEME 8. PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT.

“I turn off the TV or stereo so I can concentrate on what I am doing.”

“I go to the library to study before exams.”

“When I find that I don’t understand any material, I immediately make an appointment with my instructor.”

“I organize a study group before an examination.”

Another important aspect of self-management is the ability of learners to restructure their physical and social environments to meet their needs. Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986) found that high achievers reported greater use of environmental restructuring and were more likely to seek help from others than were low-achieving students. For the most part, environmental restructuring refers to locating places to study that are quiet or not distracting. Although this task may not appear difficult to attain, it poses many problems for students who either select inappropriate environments initially or cannot control the distractions once they occur.

Self-management of the social environment relates to an individual’s ability to determine when he or she needs to work alone or with others, or when it is time to seek help from instructors, tutors, peers, or nonsocial resources (such as reference books). Knowing how and when to work with others is an important skill often not taught in school.

Educational research indicates that high-achieving students are more likely than low-achieving students to seek help from instructors, just the opposite of what one might expect (Newman & Schwager, 1992). Newman (1991) stated: “Seeking help from a knowledgeable other person can be more beneficial than giving up prematurely, more appropriate than waiting passively, and more efficient than persisting unsuccessfully on one’s own” (p. 154).

It would seem logical that everyone would want to use all available resources and seek assistance from teachers and peers. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Some students do not seek help because they do not want to appear “dumb” or incompetent in the eyes of their peers or instructors (Newman & Goldin, 1990). Other students

Performance

“I evaluate the results of each of my exams to determine how I can better prepare for future exams.”

“If I find that I don’t understand what I’m reading, I slow down and reread the material.”

The final factor that you can manage is your academic performance. Whether writing a paper, completing a test, or reading a book, you can learn how to use self-management processes to influence the quality of your performance. One of the important functions of a goal is to provide an opportunity for you to detect a discrepancy between it and your present performance. This analysis enables you to make corrections in the learning process. When you learn to monitor your work under different learning conditions (e.g., test taking and studying), you are able to determine what changes are needed in your learning and studying behavior. It is interesting that successful students tend to be aware of how well they have done on a test even before getting it back from an instructor (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1988).

World-class athletes are good examples of individuals who learn how to self-manage their performance. For example, competitive skiers often imagine themselves going through each slalom gate before making an actual run and concentrate on remaining relaxed during their run (Garfield, 1984). After each run, they observe and assess their performance (both from their perceptions and on videotape) to determine what modifications are needed to reach greater accuracy on the next run. They often use subvocal speech or self-talk to guide their behaviors and maintain attention to avoid distractions that may interfere with their performance.

When you learn how to monitor and control your own performance, you become your own coach or mentor. You can practice skills on your own, critique your own performance, and make the necessary changes to meet your goals at a high level of success.

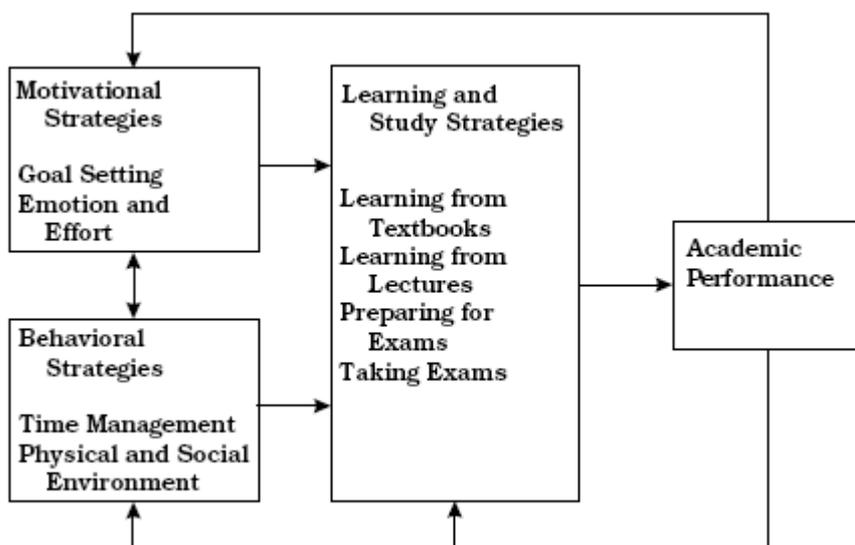


FIG. 1.2. Academic self-management.

The main factor influencing the effectiveness of your learning these skills is your ability to manage the various elements of your behavior. I group goal setting and management of emotion and effort under motivational strategies, and time management and management of physical and social

environment under behavioral strategies. It is important to note that behavioral and motivational self-control are interrelated. The academic performance box in Fig. 1.2 represents the performance dimension aspect of self-management.

The process I described here places a great deal of responsibility on you, the learner. I wish there were an easy way to become a more successful learner. Unfortunately, I do not know any other way. Educational research clearly indicates that students who take charge of their own learning are more likely to achieve at a higher level than students who fail to take this responsibility (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994).

In each chapter, you will acquire important strategies to assist in managing your learning behavior. For each strategy discussed, you will learn *why* it is important, *when* it can be used, and *how* it can be implemented. The key to success in this course is practicing the different strategies so they become automatic. As you practice, you will be able to learn more material in less time than you did prior to using these new strategies. In other words, you will learn to study smarter, not harder.

You are not alone on your journey to become a more successful student. Your instructor and peers will provide support and encouragement. You will be asked to complete various individual and group exercises and assignments as you read this book. You will find that working collaboratively with peers and giving and receiving feedback will be a valuable experience throughout the course.

Finally, you will only be taught strategies that thousands of students have found useful in learning academic material. After learning and practicing a strategy, only you will decide whether it is worth the effort and time to use it regularly in school. If the strategy proves useful, you will use it. Likewise, if you do not find the strategy helpful, you will modify it or disregard it. Try each new strategy before you reach any conclusions. Do not make the mistake of rejecting something new before you have the opportunity to see how it works.

Key Points

- 1 Successful learners use specific beliefs and processes to motivate and control their own behavior.
 - 2 Some students fail to recognize the differences between high school and college learning during the first weeks in college.
 - 3 Students can self-manage six key components of academic learning that can influence their achievement level: motivation, methods of learning (i.e., learning strategies), use of time, physical environment, social environment, and performance.
- 1 The self-management cycle involves four interrelated processes: self-observation and evaluation, goal setting and strategic planning, strategy-implementation monitoring, and strategic-outcome monitoring.

2 An important part of becoming a more successful student is developing the ability to monitor knowledge, recognize when something is not understood, and do something about it.

THEME 9. HUMAN MEMORY. THE INFORMATION-PROCESSING SYSTEM

As we begin our study of learning and human memory, I think it would be helpful to discuss some of the flaws of human memory that all individuals experience. Many of my students think their memories are flawless and they can remember all, or at least most, of the essential information needed to function successfully in their lives. Unfortunately, no matter how young or old you are, they are certain memory flaws that can affect your behavior.

In his book *The Seven Sins of Memory*, Schacter (2001) explored the nature of memory's imperfections. We can all recall the problems we have in forgetting different types of information. For example, we often fail to recall information in a textbook, or forgot our bank passwords or PIN identifications for the many Web sites we use on the Internet. This type of forgetting, called *transience*, is only one of the seven flaws in our memory. Transience refers to the situation when individuals fail to remember a fact or idea. It is a weakening or loss of memory over time.

A second flaw in our memory is called *absent-mindedness*. It involves the breakdown between attention and memory. It often occurs when we are preoccupied with distracting concerns like placing sunglasses down at a friend's home and forgetting to take them when you leave. Although this type of memory problem occurs more often in older adults, it is prevalent as well in individuals of all ages.

A third flaw is called *blocking*. It is the unsuccessful search for information that we may be desperately trying to retrieve, such as the name of an attractive woman or man we met at a party the previous night.

Have you ever been in a situation where you are with a friend and see another person who knows you and you are embarrassed because you can't think of the person's name, and thus can't introduce your friend to that individual? You start the conversation hoping that the individual will introduce himself or herself to your friend.

A fourth flaw is called *misattribution*. It involves assigning a memory to the wrong source or incorrectly remembering that someone told you something that you actually read about in a newspaper. You are sure that a friend told you something, but find that he or she never mentioned a thing about the topic. We often see this flaw on television programs in cases of mistaken eyewitness identification.

A fifth flaw is called *suggestibility*. It refers to memories that are implanted because of leading questions, comments, or suggestions. Numerous examples of this flaw are special concerns in legal situations where suggestive questioning by law enforcement officials can lead to errors in eyewitness identification. This flaw also has been identified in cases of child abuse where psychotherapists have elicited memories of traumatic events that never occurred.

A sixth flaw is called *bias*. It involves the editing or changing of previous experiences based on what we now feel rather than what happened in the past. Schacter (2001) pointed out that we think of memories as snapshots from family albums that are retrieved in the exact way they were stored. Unfortunately, our memories do not work in the same manner as a photo, because we recreate or reconstruct our experiences rather than retrieve exact copies of them. Sometimes, in the process of reconstructing memories, we add feelings, beliefs, or even new information we obtained after the experience. Barbara Streisand's song "The Way We Were" illustrates bias as it relates to recollections of close personal relationships. Do the lyrics remind you of any personal experiences where you might view the situation or relationship differently now than you did in the past?

Memories

May be beautiful, and yet

What's too painful to remember

We simply choose to forget;

For it's the laughter

We will remember

Whenever we remember

The way we were.

The last flaw in our memory is *persistence*. It refers to remembering what we would prefer to omit from our memory. Have you ever had problems sleeping because you can't stop thinking about a poor grade on an examination or bad interview you had? I bet you can still remember a certain negative experience in your life and how you recalled the experience repeatedly in the days and weeks after it occurred, even though you would have liked to forget it.

Can you think of situations where you experience one or more of these memory flaws? If so, share them with your classmates when you discuss this chapter in class or with your study group. Let us now turn to the major focus of this chapter, the memory problem of transience.

HOW DOES THE INFORMATION-PROCESSING SYSTEM EXPLAIN LEARNING?

Have you ever wondered why you remember certain information and why you cannot even remember the important ideas in a course you completed a few months or weeks ago? Many learning experts believe how individuals learn provides the answer to this question.

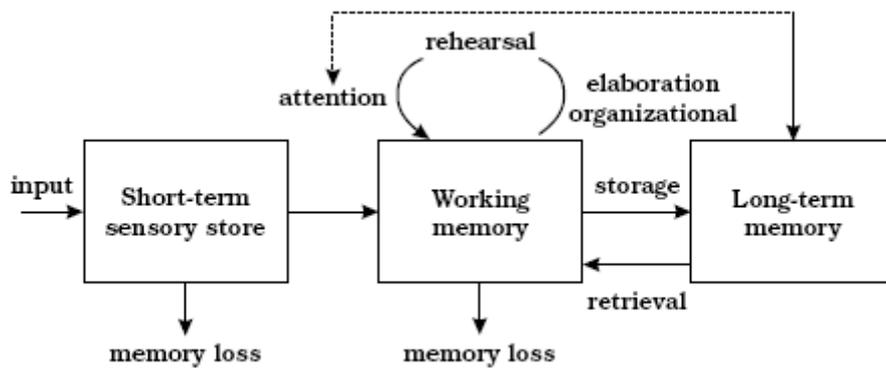


FIG. 2.1 A model of the information-processing system.

Psychologists provide many different theories and explanations of human learning. One way to understand how information may be acquired or lost is to understand the **information-processing system** (see Fig. 2.1). This model is used to identify how humans store, encode, and retrieve information. Storage is the process of placing information into memory. **Encoding** is the process used to change information in some way before it is stored, because information is not stored exactly as it is presented. For example, when an individual reads a textbook, he or she derives meaning from the words read and stores the meaning rather than the specific words on the page. Sometimes when a person reads, he or she remembers the information by changing the words to an image of the event. **Retrieval** refers to the process of remembering or finding previously stored information. Sometimes it is easy to recall information, other times, it takes considerable thought and effort to remember.

Three important points are emphasized in this chapter:

- 1 Learning involves getting information into long-term memory (LTM), a component of memory that holds knowledge and skills for long periods of time.
- 2 Much of what we think we have learned is soon forgotten or never really learned in the first place.
- 3 The specific strategies used to store information in LTM affect the likelihood that the information will be remembered. In other words, how we learn often determines what we remember.

Short-Term Sensory Store

As shown in Fig. 2.1, the flow of information begins with input from the environment, such as the visual perception of words in a text. This information enters the **short-term sensory store** (STSS). Information in the STSS is stored briefly until it can be attended to

by the working memory (WM). Everything that can be seen, heard, or smelled is stored in the STSS, but it only lasts for a matter of seconds before it is forgotten.

Many of the stimuli humans experience never get into our WM because we do not attend to them. We are constantly barraged with stimuli from our environment. For example, by the time an individual wakes up, gets dressed, and walks or drives to class, he or she observes hundreds, or perhaps thousands of objects that cannot be recalled. If you drove to class today, do you remember the color or make of the car next to which you were parked? Do you remember the student who sat next to you in your first class? What did he or she wear? If you found the person attractive or interesting, you may be able to answer these questions, because you may have been attentive to such details. However, the fact is that we are not attentive to most of what we see or hear in our daily lives.

If you have not attended to information, there is little concern about retention or retrieval, because no information will have been acquired. When you attend a lecture and your attention fades in and out, you will fail to recall some of the important information presented by the professor. This is why it may be important for you to improve your attention.

Think about reading a textbook. As you read, you begin thinking about the party you are planning to attend next Saturday. When your mind goes back to the book you realize that you covered two pages but don't remember a thing. You read but you do not remember anything, because you were not paying attention to the words in the textbook. When students say that they can attend to many things at one time, they really mean that they can switch their attention from one task to another. It is difficult to read a textbook and watch a TV show simultaneously. Information is missed from both sources.

In summary, unless special attempts are made to attend to and record information, much of the material in lectures and textbooks is never stored in memory. Therefore, the information is never learned. A similar situation occurs when you are introduced to someone and 10 seconds later you cannot remember the person's name. The problem is not that you forgot the name but that you never learned it in the first place. When you mention to friends that you forgot important information during an exam, you need to consider whether the real problem was learning or forgetting.

Working Memory

Working memory is the active part of the memory system and has been described as the center of consciousness in the IPS. Whenever we are consciously thinking about something or actively trying to remember a forgotten fact, we are using our WM.

Working memory screens and decides how to handle different stimuli. Three events can happen when material gets into the WM (Eggen & Kauchak, 1997):

It can be quickly lost or forgotten.

The content can be retained in WM for a short period of time by repeating it over and over (i.e., rehearsing).

The content can be transferred into long-term memory by using specific learning strategies.

The WM is limited in two ways—capacity and duration. At any one time, the WM of an adult can hold only five to nine chunks of information. This limitation is referred to as the “7 _ 2 Magic Number” (Miller, 1956). New information coming into WM will, if it catches the attention of the student, tend to crowd out old information already there. If information is believed to be important, it should not be left in WM, because it will be soon forgotten.

A number of control processes operate at the WM level and provide it with some flexibility in dealing with information. **Chunking**, or grouping information, is one way of keeping more than nine pieces (7 _ 2) of information in WM. For example, it is usually easier to remember a number such as 194781235 if the numbers are grouped in threes (194 781 235), because the original nine units are reduced to three chunks. When we read a word, we think of it as a single unit rather than as a collection of separate letters. For example, a sentence can be thought of as a single unit, or chunk, instead of a series of letters and words. By organizing information into larger chunks, the WM can handle more information, because the organization reduces memory load. Although our WM uses chunking strategies automatically and unconsciously, these strategies also can be learned.

Long-Term Memory

Long-term memory stores all the information we possess but are not immediately using. It is generally assumed that storage of information in the LTM is permanent. That is, the information does not fade from LTM, nor is it ever lost except perhaps as a result of senility or some other physical malfunction. Learning experts view the problem of forgetting as the inability to retrieve or locate information from memory rather than the loss of information.

Information enters the LTM through the WM. Although information must be repeated or rehearsed to stay in working memory, it must be classified, organized, connected, and stored with information already in LTM if it is to be easily retrieved at a later time. It takes time and effort to move information into long-term storage.

LTM can be compared to an office with filing cabinets. Each cabinet is labeled, and there are dividers within each drawer. Memories are placed in specific folders, in specific sections, and in specific drawers. Unless the material is carefully classified and placed in the correct file, it can easily be misfiled. Once material is misfiled, or poorly classified and filed, it is difficult to retrieve. It is believed that the human mind stores information in a similar manner. Therefore, the better we classify and organize information when we learn it, the better able we are to retrieve it when it is needed (Ormrod, 1998). Here is how one student made the connection between how information is stored in LTM and retrieval:

I view long-term memory like a well-organized closet where there is a place for shirts, sweaters, jackets, pants, and so on. When I need something, my categorization and organization help me to find it

quickly. If I just threw clothes into my closet, I would spend more time trying to recall what items I had and spend more time locating them. When I fail to organize and make sense of content in a course, I always have difficulty retrieving the information on exams.

In some courses, students bring a great deal of prior knowledge to class because they may have already taken a course in the subject or have done some reading in the area. In other courses, students may have little or no prior knowledge of the subject matter. As might be expected, prior knowledge plays an important role in learning. For example, compare the ease or difficulty of taking lecture notes when you read prior to the lecture with another time when you did not read the material prior to the lecture. The more information you know before you attend a lecture, the easier it is to take notes and understand the material. This is why instructors ask you to complete reading assignments before lectures.

THEME 10. EMOTIONAL STABILITY.

What Are Emotions?

Simply put, emotions are the ability of humans to evaluate and understand or interpret what is happening at any given moment. That does not mean that the understanding and interpretation of your emotions is correct. Emotions are the **responses you make to situations**, whether that response is an accurate interpretation of events around you or not. Some common emotional responses you may have experienced in your life are:

- Fear
- Bravery
- Frustration
- Anger
- Hope
- Excitement
- Love
- Despair

Your emotions are both positive and negative. Positive and negative emotions are essential in life in order to understand how things are going. But our **emotions alone are not enough**. You must enhance yourself in all areas, including education, intelligence, wisdom, organization, and positive energy. With a well rounded life, you will have better emotional stability, allowing you to correctly interpret situations.

In the comics and movies about Spider Man, Spider Man has a 'spider sense', which tingles and lets him know when he is in danger. Spider Man gained this ability after being bitten by a special radioactive spider. Your **emotions serve as a guide** in your life. Emotions are helpful because they provide additional clarification beyond instinct. Are you entering a part of town that has had crime? Your emotions will stimulate you to be more aware of what is around you. Talking to a car salesman and if you are on the ball, your emotions will help guide you to not get ripped off. **Proper use of emotions** will help you in the following situations:

- Sensing when harm may come to you or others around you
- Knowing when to talk to someone who may need your assistance
- Knowing when not to speak in a situation
- In your employment, the best times to ask for a raise or other compensation
- To not respond negatively anytime you feel threatened

Your emotions must be controlled, or you will become a slave to them, forming harmful addictions and other negative habits. My wife and I have a cat named 'Sneaker'. She is a good cat. She comes up to us and purrs and likes to be petted. However, nearly all the time if we pick Sneaker up or pet her for more than a few seconds, she hisses at us like a King Cobra with too much caffeine. Wouldn't it be wonderful if that cat could gain some emotional stability and maturity?

We as humans are sometimes not too far from Sneaker, the hissing cat. How often do we immediately throw a hissy fit if something does not go our way? Ask yourself the following questions and see how you respond:

- When someone criticizes me, what do I do?
- When something seems to be going well, what do I do?
- Do I control my spending by only focusing on the essentials?
- Do I judge people frequently?
- Do I get angry and irritated easily?
- Am I accepting of other people?

A lot can be determined about how you are controlling your emotions by seeing how you react to things on any given day. Did your boss tell you to make it snappy and you are ticked off because of it? Did you only get a \$1 raise instead of \$2 and now you are grumpy for life? Or did a friend of yours in a playful mood slap you in the face, and now you are all bent out of shape and stiff as a board? **Emotional maturity** is our ability to control our emotions and recognize the things in life that we can change, and to recognize those things we cannot change and steer clear of investing too much time in the things we cannot change.

There are many **different emotions**. I want to focus on the following emotions which I believe are very important to understanding and controlling. These emotions are negative in nature, but I will show you how you can take simple steps to overcome them.

Often, the following causes fear:

- Asking for a promotion at your job
- Negotiating a better deal for a house, car, or other expensive item
- Asking a girl/guy out that you are interested in
- Speaking in public
- Confronting someone about something they are doing that is harmful or wrong
- Admitting when you make a mistake

Fear prevents progress. There is no simpler way to put it. Therefore, anytime in your life when you are seeking to make a difference or better your life, look at what is stopping you from doing it. It is likely fear is at the top of the list. To overcome your fear, take your right hand, and your right pointer finger, and touch your nose. Go ahead do it. I am waiting... Good, now that you have done that ask yourself, "Was that so hard?". Of course not! Your nose is not going to say, "Eeeeew, get away you slimey filthy finger." So there is no fear of rejection.

Your **fear of rejection** is a major reason for not attempting anything in life that is new or proactive. Quelling this fear does not take reading countless self help books or studying the works of professionals. It takes one simple thing: a choice. You will or you will not overcome your fear. You will or will not be worried about being rejected anymore. And then you will stand up, walk to the place where you are afraid and overcome your fear by making the choice to speak the words that you are having such a hard time doing. Ask your boss for a promotion. Tell him/her why you are qualified. So what if they say no. What have you lost, except that you now know you tried.

Doubt

Doubt stunts growth. Doubt prevents us from succeeding at anything. The reality is that our doubt is nothing more than a combination of a lot of emotions working together, along with experiences that have happened in life, to come to the conclusion that something cannot be done or that something is not true. In some cases, coming to the conclusion that something can or should not be done is a good idea. But this is in the case of obvious things such as jumping off a cliff or doing something foolish. In most cases, doubt prevents us from experiencing new things in life.

Doubt causes hesitation. As I sit here typing this website on my computer, I too have to deal with doubt. The doubt tells me: there's plenty of stuff out there on self improvement, you don't need to waste your time. My response to this is: bite me doubt, I am going to day after day after day, work on this website and make it help thousands of people come to the realization that they can succeed and be

happy. Face doubt with this same determined attitude and you will no longer have doubt controlling your life.

Frustration

Frustration is ignorance to a solution. Ever seen a married couple, particularly a couple who has been married for a while, trying to work on something together? Generally the results are not very pretty. You have one spouse that believes something should be done one way and the other spouse believes it should be done the other way and both have a slew of ideas about how something should be done, and at this point, it does not matter who is right. What matters is that there is a culmination of so much self centeredness and unwillingness to step back, take a deep breath and realize that getting help and another perspective is a good thing. This causes a rift, and eventually snowballs into major marital problems.

Most frustration can be solved by doing the following:

- Stop what you are attempting to do immediately - just completely stop
- Take a deep breath and look around you
- Open your mind and think carefully about what is going on
- Share your thoughts with others and get their opinions as well
- Study books and other resources about what you are trying to do
- Eat a LARGE slice of humble pie and recognize the need for assistance
- Exercise patience and enjoy the opportunity to work with others
- Put a smile on your face and begin again what you are attempting to do

Anger is amplified disappointment to expectations not being met. Anger/hate are very powerful emotions and the consequences of them not being controlled are very evident in the world today. People shooting other people, stealing, lying, cheating, and on and on. Making a simple choice to control anger can do wonders for solving many problems in life. But making that choice is not enough. The following are a list of simple things that if everyone would do, so much negative conflict would be removed.

- Seek to understand other people and why they do things
- Examine yourself and try to understand why you do things
- Uplift and encourage other people
- Accept that you cannot control everything
- Always approach any potential conflicts first with love and understanding
- Find the strengths of others and play to those strengths
- Understand anger only worsens situations

Follow these simple steps. Don't worry that your teenage son is out of control. Don't worry that your spouse seems to be ignoring and not paying attention to you. Instead, take the time to communicate with those people you have issues with and ask them what their purpose in life is. **Seek to understand** their reason for being. Don't just get angry because they are not doing things like you would - they should not be! They are not you! Find their strengths, and positively encourage and include them. You will be very surprised at the good you can bring out of people by just seeking to understand, encourage, and helping them.

Understand the Emotions of Yourself and Others

It is important to understand what makes yourself and other people tick. Put a pizza in front of me and I will want to gobble it up. Put that pizza in front of others and they will be repulsed by it. Taking the time to figure out the emotions of yourself and others takes a lifetime. The key is to **learn how people react**. Some people do not like to be criticized at all and will clam up if you attempt to criticize. Other people are a bit more emotionally mature and can take even harsh criticism. Take the time to learn about those around you and what they are able to handle and not able to handle. Doing this will help build your relationship with that person and increase your sphere of influence with them!

THEME 11. STRESS-MANAGEMENT

'Stress' is a word which is rarely clearly understood and there is no single definition of the term. It means different things to different people. Indeed, almost anything anyone can think of, pleasant or unpleasant, has been described as a source of stress, such as getting married, being made redundant, getting older, getting a job, too much or too little work, solitary confinement or exposure to excessive noise. Stress can be defined in many ways, thus:

- The common response to attack (Selye, 1936);
- Any influence that disturbs the natural equilibrium of the living body;
- Some taxation of the body's resources in order to respond to some environmental

circumstance;

- The common response to environmental change;

A psychological response which follows failure to cope with problems;

- A feeling of sustained anxiety which, over a period of time, leads to disease;
- The non-specific response of the body to any demands made upon it.

The CBI defines stress as that which arises when the pressures placed upon an individual exceed the perceived capacity of that individual to cope. According to the TUC, stress occurs where demands made on individuals do not match the resources available or meet the individual's needs and motivation. Stress will arise if the workload is too large for the number of workers and time available.

Equally, a boring or repetitive task which does not use the potential skills and experience of some individuals will cause them stress. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (1995) defined work stress as 'pressure and extreme demands placed on a person beyond his ability to cope'. In 1999, the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) stated that 'stress is the reaction that people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them'.

According to Cox (1993), 'stress is now understood as a psychological state that results from people's perceptions of an imbalance between job demands and their abilities to cope with those demands'.

A further definition is 'work stress is a psychological state which can cause an individual to behave dysfunctionally at work and results from people's response to an imbalance between job demands and their abilities to cope'. Fundamentally, workplace stress arises when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other forms of pressure connected with their jobs, but encounter difficulty, strain, anxiety and worry in endeavouring to cope.

Defining stress

A consideration of the above definitions of 'stress' produces a number of features of stress and the stress response, for example, disturbance of the natural equilibrium, taxation of the body's resources, failure to cope, sustained anxiety, a non-specific response, pressure and extreme demands and imbalance between job demands and coping ability.

Fundamentally, a stressor (or source of stress) produces stress which, in turn, produces a stress response on the part of the individual. No two people respond to the same stressor in the same way or to the same extent. What is important is that, if people are going to cope satisfactorily with the stress in their lives, they must recognize:

- The existence of stress;
- Their personal stress response, such as insomnia or digestive disorder;
- Those events or circumstances which produce that stress response, such as dealing with aggressive clients, preparing to go on holiday or disciplining employees;
- Their own personal coping strategy, such as relaxation therapy.

Degradation of human performance

Human performance is directly affected by the environment in which people work and sound levels of working environment promote optimum levels of performance. Many factors influence the human system and performance can degrade as a result of a wide range of stressors, and in some cases the system breaks down. Degradation of performance is particularly associated with the following stressors.

Diurnal (circadian) rhythm

Body rhythms tend to follow a cyclical pattern linked to the 24-h light–dark cycle and sleeping–waking cycle, that is diurnal rhythm. Interruptions in this rhythm, as experienced by, for example, casual workers, shift workers and night workers, can cause stress on operators resulting in reduced operational performance as much as 10 per cent below average performance.

In the case of night workers, adjustment may take place after 2–3 days and goes on increasing up to a period of approximately 14 days provided that the individual continues both to live and work on a night-time schedule, and does not return to normal daytime living at weekends.

Rotating shift patterns, for example, a week on night work followed by a week on day work, or the operation of 12-h shifts rotating from, for instance 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., noon to midnight and 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. on different weeks, can result in high levels of stress on operators and their families.

Fatigue

Fatigue commonly results from working excessive hours without rest breaks and adequate periods of sleep.

Lack of motivation

Where there is no stimulation from management in terms of performance targets and the rewarding of employees for achieving these targets, employees rapidly become demotivated and their performance deteriorates.

Lack of stimulation

Many jobs are boring, repetitive and demotivating resulting in a lowered level of arousal on the part of operators. Stimulation of performance can be achieved by job rotation, productivity bonus schemes (provided the rewards are seen to be fair to all). As stated above, a stressor causes stress. Stress is commonly associated with how well or badly people cope with changes in their lives – at home, within the family, at work or in social situations. The causes are diverse, but include:

- **Environmental stressors**, such as those arising from extremes of temperature and humidity, inadequate lighting and ventilation, noise and vibration and the presence of airborne contaminants, such as dusts, fumes and gases;

- **Occupational stressors**, associated with too much or too little work, overpromotion or underpromotion, conflicting job demands, incompetent superiors, working excessive hours and interactions between work and family commitments; and

- **Social stressors**, namely those stressors associated with family life, marital relationships, bereavement, that is, the everyday problems of coping with life.

The physiology of stress

Stress could be defined simply as the rate of wear and tear on the body systems caused by life. The acknowledged father of stress research, Dr Hans Selye, a Vienna-born endocrinologist of the

University of Montreal, in his book *The Stress of Life* corrected several notions relating to stress, in particular:

- Stress is not nervous tension.
- Stress is not the discharge of hormones from the adrenal glands. The common association of adrenalin with stress is not totally false, but the two are only indirectly associated.
- Stress is not simply the influence of some negative occurrence. Stress can be caused by quite ordinary and even positive events, such as a passionate kiss.
- Stress is not an entirely bad event. We all need a certain amount of stimulation in life and most people can thrive on some forms of stress.
- Stress does not cause the body's alarm reaction, which is the most common misuse of the expression. What causes the stress reaction or response is a stressor. A number of common factors emerge from the definitions of stress outlined earlier and the above comments. Fundamentally, stress is a state manifested by a specific syndrome of biological events. Specific changes occur in the biological system, but they are caused by such a variety of agents that stress is, of necessity, non-specifically induced. Some stress response, however, will result from any stimulus. Quite simply, a stressor produces stress. Stressors may be of an environmental nature such as extremes of temperature and lighting, noise and vibration (environmental stressors). Stress may be induced by isolation, rejection, change within the organization or the feeling that one has been badly treated (social stressors). Thirdly, stress can be viewed as a general overloading of the body systems (distress).

Effects of stress on the individual

No two people necessarily manifest the same stress response. However, many of the outward signs of stress are readily recognizable. Stress fundamentally initiates a number of changes in body processes which are complex and involve several levels, such as:

1. **Emotional:** characterized by tiredness, anxiety and lack of motivation;
2. **Cognitive:** resulting in increased potential for error and, in some cases, accidents arising through error;
3. **Behavioural:** changes in behaviour resulting in poor or deteriorating relationships with colleagues, irritability, indecisiveness, absenteeism, smoking, excessive eating and alcohol consumption;
4. **Psychological:** the individual complains of increasing ill health associated with headaches, general aches and pains, and dizziness. These contribute to raised blood pressure, heart disease, a reduced resistance to infection, skin conditions and digestive disorders.

Classification of the causes of stress at work

Stress affects people at work in many ways and the causes of stress are diverse. These causes can be associated with elements of the physical; environment, such as open plan office layouts, the way the

organization is managed, relationships within the organization and even inadequate work equipment. The causes can be classified as follows.

2.1.1 The physical environment

Poor working conditions associated with the following can be frequent sources of stress in the workplace:

- Insufficient space to operate comfortably, safely and in the most efficient manner;
- Lack of privacy which may be disconcerting for some people;
- Open plan office layouts, resulting in distractions, noise, constant interruptions and difficulty in concentrating on the task in hand;

The causes of stress

- Inhuman workplace layouts requiring excessive bending, stretching and manual handling of materials;
- Inadequate temperature and humidity control, creating excessive discomfort;
- Poor levels of illumination to the extent that tasks cannot be undertaken safely;
- Excessive noise levels, requiring the individual to raise his voice; and
- Inadequate ventilation, resulting in discomfort, particularly in summer months.

The organization

The organization, its policies and procedures, its culture and style of operation can be a cause of stress. Culture is defined as ‘a state or set of manners in a particular organization’. All organizations incorporate one or more cultures, which may be described as, for example, friendly, hostile, unrewarding or family-style. Stress can be associated with organizational culture and style due to, for instance:

- Insufficient staff for the size of the workload, resulting in excessive overtime working;
- Too many unfilled posts, with employees having to ‘double up’ at tasks for which they have not necessarily been trained or instructed;
- Poor co-ordination between departments;
- Insufficient training to do the job well, creating uncertainty and lack of confidence in undertaking tasks;
- Inadequate information to the extent that people ‘do not know where they stand’;
- No control over the workload, the extent of which may fluctuate on a day-to-day basis;
- Rigid working procedures with no flexibility in approach; and
- No time being given to adjust to change, one of the greatest causes of stress amongst employees.

The way the organization is managed

Management styles, philosophies, work systems, approaches and objectives can contribute to the individual stress on employees, as a result of:

- Inconsistency in style and approach by different managers;
- Emphasis on competitiveness, often at the expense of safe and healthy working procedures;
- Crisis management all the time, due to management's inability, in many cases, to plan ahead and to manage sudden demands made by clients;
- Information being seen as power by some people, resulting in intentional withholding of key information which is relevant to tasks, procedures and systems;
- Procedures always being changed due, in many cases, to a failure by management to do the basic initial research into projects prior to commencement of same;
- Over-dependence on overtime working, on the presumption that employees are always amenable to the extra cash benefits to be derived from working overtime; and

The need to operate shift work which can have a detrimental effect on the domestic lives of employees in some cases.

Role in the organization

Everyone has a role, function or purpose within the organization. Stress can be created through:

- Role ambiguity
- Role conflict
- Too little responsibility
- Lack of senior management support, particularly in the case of disciplinary matters dealt with by junior managers, such as supervisors, and
- Responsibility for people and things which some junior managers, in particular, may not have been adequately trained to deal with.

Relations within the organization

How people relate to each other within the organizational framework and structure can be a significant cause of stress, due to, perhaps:

- Poor relations with the boss which may arise through lack of understanding of each other's role and responsibilities, attitudes held, and other human emotions, such as greed, envy and lack of respect.
- Poor relations with colleagues and subordinates created by a wide range of human emotions.
- Difficulties in delegating responsibility due, perhaps, to lack of management training, the need 'to get the job done properly', lack of confidence in subordinates and no clear dividing lines as to the individual functions of management and employees.
- Personality conflicts arising from, for example, differences in language, regional accent, race, sex, temperament, level of education and knowledge.

- No feedback from colleagues or management, creating a feeling of isolation and despair.

Career development

Stress is directly related to progression or otherwise in a career within the organization.

It may be created by:

- Lack of job security due to continuing changes within the organization's structure.
- Overpromotion due, perhaps, to incorrect selection or there being no one else available to fill

the post effectively.

- Underpromotion, creating a feeling of 'having been overlooked'.

Ambition, where the employee's personal ambitions do not necessarily, tie up with management's perception of his current and future abilities.

- The job has insufficient status.
- Not being paid as well as others who do similar jobs.

Personal and social relationships

The relationships which exist between people on a personal and social basis are frequently a cause of stress through, for instance:

- Insufficient opportunities for social contact while at work due to the unremitting nature of tasks;

- Sexism and sexual harassment;
- Racism and racial harassment;
- Conflicts with family demands; and
- Divided loyalties between one's own needs and organizational demands.

Equipment

Inadequate, out-of-date, unreliable work equipment is frequently associated with stressful conditions amongst workers. Such equipment may be:

- Not suitable for the job or environment;
- Old and/or in poor condition;
- Unreliable or not properly maintained on a regular basis, resulting in constant breakdowns and

down time;

- Badly sited, resulting in excessive manual handling of components or the need to walk excessive distances between different parts of a processing operation;

- Of such a design and sited in such a way that it requires the individual to adopt fixed and uncomfortable posture when operating same; and

- Adds to noise and heat levels, increasing discomfort and reducing effective verbal communication between employees.

Individual concerns

All people are different in terms of attitudes, personality, motivation and in their ability to cope with stressors. People may experience a stress response due to:

- Difficulty in coping with change;
- Lack of confidence in dealing with interpersonal problems, such as those arising from aggression, bullying and harassment at work;
- Not being assertive enough, allowing other people to dominate in terms of deciding how to do the work;

The main sources of work stress

Another way of categorizing stressors is on the basis of their source. Certain stressors impact on people through their senses, such as extremes of temperature, odours, noise, light and ventilation. Other stressors cause changes in thoughts and feelings, such as fear, excitement, arousal, ambiguity, threat and worry. A third group is associated with changes in body state, such as those created by illness, inputs of drugs, chemicals and alcohol.

Irrespective of the magnitude of each of these stressors, they create some form of impact and have a cumulative effect bringing the individual closer to his tolerance level for peak performance. Excessive input of stress takes the person beyond that peak tolerance level leading to some form of stress response.

The sources of stress vary considerably from person to person. However, a number of the more common sources of stress can be considered. These are:

- **Task-related factors:** work beyond the individual's mental capacity, information overload, boredom
- **Interpersonal factors:** day-to-day interaction with people, abuse and harassment
- **Role ambiguity:** the individual has no clear idea of what is expected of him
- **Role conflict:** opposing demands made on an individual by different people
- **Little or no recognition** for a good job done
- **Personal threat:** actual threats to a person's safety, fear of redundancy or dismissal
- **Environmental factors:** noise, excessively high or low temperatures, inadequate lighting and ventilation, dirty workplaces, inadequate work space.

Employers' responsibilities and duties in relation to stress

A number of strategies can be considered in dealing with work-related stress, namely:

- recognizing evidence of stress
- prevention of stress
- management of stress
- rehabilitation.

Recognizing evidence of stress

There are numerous manifestations of an organization under stress. These include high levels of sickness absence, poor timekeeping, alcoholism, poor relationships between managers and employees, evidence of bullying and harassment, high staff turnover and poor communication, all of which are covered in other chapters.

Prevention of stress

The old maxim, 'Prevention is better than cure' is significant in this case. One of the starting points in identifying and subsequently preventing stress in employees is through a personal stress audit shown later in this chapter. Personal stress audits (or self-reporting questionnaires) are an important means of identifying common causes of stress, monitoring stress levels and identifying the measures necessary at organizational level to alleviate the problem.

As with any form of monitoring system, feedback and management action following this audit is important. This may take the form of information, instruction and training for management and employees, stress management courses, the development and promotion of a policy on stress at work, perhaps produced as a sub-policy to the Statement of Health and Safety Policy, and encouraging employees to report and discuss stressful elements of their work with their managers. Above all, the organization has to recognize the existence of stress at work and the fact that stress is a common feature of many workplace activities and tasks.

Management of stress

Again, emphasis is placed on education and training. Everyone has their own personal stress response, such as insomnia, loss of appetite or greatly increased appetite, lowerback pain, headaches and general fatigue. In this case, employees need advice on identifying their own personal stress response and the measures necessary to coping with it. Two HSE publications provide excellent guidance on dealing with stress. *Tackling Work-Related Stress: A Guide for Employees* (HSE, 2003) is aimed at employees in all work sectors. It describes work-related stress, personal strategies for dealing with same and measures to take after a stress-related illness. *Tackling Work-Related Stress: A Manager's Guide to Improving and Maintaining Employee Health and Well-being* on the other hand, is aimed at managers in organizations employing over 50 employees. It provides practical advice on measures managers can take to assess and control the risks from work-related stress.

Rehabilitation

This third level of action is directed at treating people who have suffered some form of psychiatric injury or mental health problems and can take the form of Employee Assistance Programmes. These programmes incorporate a number of elements, including counselling on stress-related issues in people's lives, setting of personal objectives, including those to promote a healthier lifestyle, measuring stages of improvement in reducing, for instance, anxiety and depression, and

prompt referral of affected individuals for specialist treatment. There is evidence to show that most people developing mental illness will make a complete recovery over a period of time and will, subsequently, return to work.

Duties of senior management: The human factors-related approach

The last decade has seen increased emphasis on human factors in the workplace. The original HSE publication *Human Factors and Industrial Safety* defined ‘human factors’ as a term used to cover:

- the perceptual, physical and mental capabilities of people and the interaction of individuals with their job and the working environments;
- the influence of equipment and system design on human performance; and
- the organizational characteristics which influence safety-related behaviour.

This guidance document refers to the areas of influence on people at work as being the organization, the job itself and personal behavioural factors. These areas of influence are directly affected by the system for communication within the organization, together with the training systems and procedures in operation, all of which are directed at preventing human error.

This entails examining these areas of influence on people at work with particular reference to the organizational arrangements for dealing with health issues, the design and structure of jobs, and personal factors, such as the attitudes, motivation, personalities and perceptions of individuals. Any examination of this type must take into account the potential for stress.

There are a number of ways for managing the stress in one’s life. We are all unique and what works well for one person may be completely ineffective for another. Here is a range of ideas for responding to stress, each of which has worked well for someone, somewhere.

1. Become more knowledgeable about stress

- Understand the process and effects of stress
- Identify your major sources of stress – situations, people, etc.
- Anticipate stressful periods and plan for them
- Develop a repertoire of successful stress management techniques and practise them

Learn to identify the opportunities for personal growth inherent in periods of stress

- Find the level of stress that is best for you, remembering that both insufficient and excessive stress are potentially harmful.

2. Take a systematic approach to problem solving

- Define your problem specifically; divide it into manageable components that can be dealt with easily

- Gather sufficient information about the problem and put it into perspective
- Discover why the problem exists for you
- Review your experience with the present problem or similar ones

- Develop and evaluate a set of alternative courses of action
- Select a course of action and proceed with it.

3. Come to terms with your feelings

- Differentiate between your thoughts and your feelings
- Do not suppress your feelings; acknowledge them to yourself, and share them with others
- Learn to be flexible and adaptive
- Accept your feelings.

4. Develop effective behavioural skills

- Don't use the word *can't* when you actually mean *won't*
- When you have determined what needs to be done with your life, act on your decisions
- Use free time productively
- Be assertive
- Manage conflicts openly and directly
- Avoid blaming others for situations
- Provide positive feedback to others
- Learn to say 'No'
- Deal with problems as soon as they appear; if you procrastinate, they may intensify!
- Evaluate the reality of your expectations, avoiding both the grandiose and the catastrophic
- Learn to let go of situations and take breaks.

5. Establish and maintain a strong support network

- Ask for direct help and be receptive when it is offered
- Develop empathy for others
- Make an honest assessment of your needs for support and satisfaction with the support you

currently receive

- List six people with whom you would like to improve your relationship and, in each case, identify one action step you will take toward such improvement

- Rid yourself of dead and damaging relationships
- Maintain high-quality relations
- Tell the members of your support network that you value the relationships shared with them.

6. Develop a lifestyle that will buffer against the effects of stress

Regularly practise some form of vigorous stretching and/or recreational exercise

- Engage regularly in some form of systematic relaxation
- Use alcohol in moderation or not at all
- Do not use tobacco
- Obtain sufficient rest on a regular basis

- Eat a balanced diet
- Avoid caffeine
- Avoid foods high in sugar, salt, white flour, saturated fats and chemicals
- Plan your use of time both on a daily and long-term basis
- Seek out variety and change of pace
- Take total responsibility for your life
- Maintain an optimistic attitude
- Do not dwell on unimportant matters.

7. Concentrate on positive spiritual development

- Adopt the attitude that no problem is too monumental to be solved
- Engage regularly in prayer or meditation
- Establish a sense of purpose and relaxation
- Seek spiritual guidance
- Learn to transcend stressful situations
- Believe in yourself
- Increase your awareness of the interdependence of all things in the universe.

8. Plan and execute successful lifestyle changes

- Expect to succeed; approach projects one step at a time
- Keep change projects small and manageable
- Practise each change rigorously for 21 days; then decide whether to continue with it
- Celebrate your success. Reward yourself.

5.2 Personal coping strategies

A number of techniques and treatments are available to enable people to cope better with the stress in their lives. These include:

5.2.1 Relaxation training

This incorporates training people in deep relaxation techniques, relaxation during daily activities and emergency anxiety control. Such techniques incorporate aspects such as breathing control, physical (muscular) tension control and mind calming, including meditation.

- Choose a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.
- Lie down comfortably and ensure you are warm enough because as you relax your body temperature will fall slightly.

Close your eyes and take three deep breaths in and sigh. This relaxes the diaphragm and therefore your breathing.

- Mentally go through your body physically tightening and then relaxing each part. Feel for areas of tenseness and then feel them relax on your 'out' breaths.

- Ignore outside noise interruptions by thinking of a lovely colour or a beautiful place or the sound of water. Let your mind and body float. If stray thoughts occur, just let them pass through your mind. For some people, the use of relaxation tapes, incense or aromatic oils can all aid relaxation.

- To recover, gradually deepen your breathing, start moving your muscles gently and as you 'awake' very gently arouse yourself. Get up by rolling on to your side and sitting before standing to avoid dizziness.

- When you are fully awake, stretch and take three deep breaths. After a few minutes you will feel refreshed and really alert. Ideally follow the relaxation period with a walk in the fresh air.

Physical exercise

A combination of physical exercises, such as walking, cycling, swimming, dance and aerobic exercise, together with those which raise the pulse and breathing rates significantly, such as squash, running and badminton, provide an excellent programme for stress control.