

OutInspire

May 2005

Cairnhill Toastmasters Club, Club No. 1759-80

Issue 22



The Latest News!!!



Award Winners March 2005

Best Prepared Speech
Speaker:

Best Evaluator:

Best Table Topics:



DCP Progress

Goals	Achieved
2 CTMs	2 CTM
2 ADDITIONAL CTMs	0 CTM
1 ATM	0
1 ADDITIONAL ATM	0
1 CL, AL, or DTM	1 CL
1 ADDITIONAL CLs, ALs, or DTM	1 CL
4 NEW MEMBERS	4 members
4 ADDITIONAL NEW MEMBERS	4 members
4 OFFICERS TRAINED TWICE	YES
SUBMITTED ON TIME (SEMI DUES & OFFICER LIST)	YES

Notice

This is a back-dated issue. Thus there is no message from the President.

Crash Course in Personal Development
(Adapted from "Crash Course in Personal Development" by Brian Clegg)

In this article, we are going to concentrate on three root causes that influence your ability to take control and make the most of your life: being able to handle time, stress and other people. Traditionally these factors have been classified separately as time management, stress management and negotiation skills. This article serves to bring to your awareness the cornerstones of personal development and incite your motivation to learn more about them.

Time management

Time management is a discipline that everyone acknowledges is worthwhile while simultaneously ignoring it. There seems to be something in the human spirit that rebels against time management, despite realizing the benefits. It's like eating the right food – we might acknowledge the benefits of eating lots of fruit and vegetables, we can even enjoy eating fruit and vegetables – but still pig out on junk food.

This ability to ignore time management is very sad. There are plenty of variations on the theme of 'so much to do, so little time to do it in'. Few of us have time to get everything completed. Few of us manage to effectively balance work and home life, business and pleasure, stress and stress relief. Good time management is more than a nit-picking discipline that will appeal to those who like everything in its place, it is a vehicle for getting more done and having a better life. If only it can be made practical.

Time management is mostly common sense. So why is it such a problem? It's as if there's something inside us that rebels against it. In fact, there's a whole bunch of reasons that conspire to make our time management fail. One is a leftover from our teens. Most teenagers spend a fair amount of time being told what to do, when to do it, and they don't like it. Because time management can be seen as an imposed control on our time, it kicks in the urge to fight back, to refuse stubbornly what is obviously good for you just for the sake of it.

Another problem is laziness. Like it or not, most of us are lazy. We can't be bothered with the whole thing. We aren't very enthusiastic about change. And anyway, it's just an admin matter, isn't it? It's not exciting, important stuff, like creating or selling or whatever we like doing best – it's routine. Yawn.

Then there is the swamps and alligators problem. The old saying goes something like 'when you are up to your armpits (substitute part of the anatomy of your choice) in alligators, it's hard to think about draining the swamp'. Thanks to a lack of time management, we never get the time, because there's always some new crisis, some new pressure.

Finally, there's the misconception that is fostered by some well-meaning approaches to time management. The fallacy that time management is

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Quote of the Month

Mindfulness

"Whatever we are waiting for – peace of mind, contentment, grace... it will surely come to us, but only when we are ready to receive it with an open and grateful heart"

-- Breathnach, 1996

Motivation / Inspiration

"Reflect on your present blessings, on which every man has many, not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some."

-- Charles Dickens

closely related to having a neat, tidy desk and a well-ordered filing system. The fact is, the way we work most effectively is a very personal thing. You can't take a 'one size fits all' approach to working. For some, having a clear desk and everything labelled and in its place is an essential – but it would be a mistake to say that this is the solution for everyone.

Stress Management

Stress is a recognized killer and a major contributor to workplace illness. Companies are worried about stress because of reduced effectiveness; individuals can find that the impact of stress blights their health and happiness. Yet stress is a complex phenomenon. It can't be painted in black and white. We all need a degree of stress to drive us on to achieve. Neither total lack of stress nor stress to excess is good for you.

At the physical level, we have a pretty good understanding of what stress is about. When the brain senses a demand for exertion, it signals the release of various hormones from glands around the body. These active agents, like adrenaline, prepare the body for action. Muscles tense up, the heart beats faster, the blood supply is concentrated where it is needed, moving away from 'low need' areas like the digestion and the skin. All this is designed to provide a wave of energy to enable you to react appropriate to the trigger: to fight or to run away. To survive.

Sometimes, that survival urge is real 0 escaping a burning building or an attack. More often it is a driver to et the extra mile. You might be an athlete or an actor, a manager giving a business presentation or a fire fighter. In any role, stress can make all the difference. Everyone who has ever gone on stage knows too well that feeling in the pit of the stomach that says 'Why am I here?' – but without that stress there wouldn't be the huge return that makes it all worthwhile.

If things were that simple, stress management would be about getting more stress, but the reality is quite different. Our bodies were designed for stress as a special case, where all too often it's the norm. Also, when we get the surge of adrenaline and other hormones, we don't usually do anything to make use of those changes to our body. We can't fight or run away – we just have to sit and take it. This happens with stresses as widely separated as the rigours of driving and bringing up children.

One-off examples of such stresses aren't as much of a problem, it's the combination of stress without a physical response and frequent, almost constant exposure that does the real damage. Someone who is constantly on the edge of stress can be easily tipped into over-reaction – road rage is a classic example – by trivial incidents. And the body simply isn't built for long-term, stress-heightened activity. Without an outlet, the outcome can be an increased risk of heart disease and other medical conditions.

Negotiation

It's hard to imagine life without negotiation. Practically every business interaction, from the largest corporate merger to a meeting to decide the site of a new desk, depends on negotiation. So does arranging ground rules with your children. In fact there are few human transactions where there isn't room for discussion and modifications of terms.

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The good negotiator calls on a whole raft of skills. He or she needs to be an effective communicator, combining the abilities to sell and to listen. The negotiator must be able to balance tactical and strategic considerations. Good business negotiators know their company inside out – and know just as much about the other side too. As if this isn't enough, good negotiators also need flexibility – the ability to explore what is possible, changing goal from a hypothetical summit to a more reachable hill.

There is good news and bad news here. Many of the skills of negotiation cannot be learned without practice. But this doesn't mean that you have to plunge into a corporate merger as a virgin negotiator. Every day you are negotiating – at home, on the way to work, in the office. Negotiation is a natural part of life.

But why negotiate at all? From either side of a negotiation, there is a practical need. If you are selling (in the widest sense of the word), you want to get the best price with the best terms. If you are buying you also want the best price and terms, but strangely this now means something quite different. Some negotiations are more about finding an agreed version of reality.

Negotiations can be distinguished from other forms of social interaction by the fact there is a specific, pre-identified, desired outcome. It might be a purchase or a pay deal, it might be where to go for dinner or how late a child can stay out a night. The desired outcome is to reach agreement on the subject – but each party in the negotiation has his or her own slant on what would be the best flavour of outcome. Each is trying to move the result into his or her own preferred solution space.

It should never be forgotten, though, when dealing with negotiations that this remains a social interaction between human beings. Mechanical 'negotiations' can be disastrous. The unbending application of a series of rules can make a negotiation run out of control, never getting to a conclusion. Negotiation is not a pure science – it is a blend of logic and emotion, of gut feel and calculation. Neither the human nor the calculated side is enough on its own. There is a need for both.