



THE Learning Advantage

Mobley's Musings: Distracted by Uncertainty

Lately, I find myself forgetting things I wouldn't normally forget and leaving my desk to get something only to come back without whatever I went looking for. My clients are telling me they too seem to be less focused than usual.

And yet, the need to be present in the face of the current uncertainty has never been more important. Did I bring a mask to go grocery shopping? Did I wash my hands? Did I touch my face? Who may have touched something in my home, like a package or my mail? We must all be vigilant in this new normal. No longer is it safe to operate on autopilot.

While we think we are coping with stay-at-home orders and social distancing guidelines, our subconscious may be screaming, "When do we get to go back to work? How will I pay my mortgage and my kids' tuition? What if someone I love gets the virus or I do?" Although we may not be actively thinking about our fears, they're still there, just out of conscious awareness. Keeping them at bay takes effort. And trying to ignore our feelings takes even more effort.

Better to feel the feelings and capture them in words. Write down what you fear and make a list of what you would do if your fears came to fruition. Often when we look rationally at our concerns, we find we can handle them. And creating a plan for what we would do if the worst happens may keep us from being distracted by uncertainty.

Sandy



Ask Sandy

Helping staff accept change

Many of my clients are having to redirect staff from their current projects to tasks that are mission-critical. Most employees recognize the need to change, but some may resist setting aside their pet projects. How can managers help staff transition to new tasks?

People often are more willing to let go of a project when they see how a new assignment will benefit others. Managers should point out

the importance of the new project to the company's success or to their clients. But they also need to explain how the new assignment will benefit staff members personally. Even if the project they were working on was challenging and helped them build skills needed to get promoted, managers should emphasize that taking on the new work is in their best interest. For example, being assigned to mission-critical work may gain them higher visibility, a reputation for being flexible, new skills, and possibly more job security.

While many people are motivated by positive rewards, others are motivated by avoiding negative outcomes. For this group, managers should point out potential negative results if customers don't get their needs met in a timely way, such as the loss of their business. Again, it is important to personalize those negative outcomes if efforts aren't redirected. When a downturn hits and furloughs or lay-offs are needed, those people working on projects that aren't considered important will be at risk. And managers are more likely to keep flexible, positive workers than those who are resistant to change.

Learning for Leaders: Be clear on why the change is needed for both the organization and the individual.

Coaches Corner: Help clients identify what motivates their employees and target messages to reach each one.

If you have questions you'd like Sandy to address in future newsletters, email them to sandy@learningadvantageinc.com

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For Individuals

June 17 Unhappy at Work June 18 Group Coaching

July 22 Strength & Passions July 23 Group Coaching

August 13 Right Environment August 14 Group Coaching

For Coaches

July 9 Strengths & Passions

August 12 Right Environment

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Resilience: A Necessary Quality for Leaders

I see the word resilience showing up when the topic is the economy, companies, and people. Being resilient is like having a "get out of jail free" card in Monopoly. When we feel trapped or without options, resilience brings out creativity and positivity, and before we know it, we have found options and possibilities for success.

According to Daryl Conner, an organization development consultant and author of *Managing at the Speed of Change*, some people have more resilience "points" than others. They may have gained their points by experiencing a lot of change as a child, both positive and negative. Perhaps their family moved several times or a parent was frequently out of the picture. Regardless of how many points we have, Conner contends we can increase our resilience by fully processing negative experiences. When we go back and review them through the lens of learning rather than defeat, we see that the experiences gave us new skills, confidence and success in ways we may not appreciate if we don't revisit the incidents.

When I think about the elements of resilience the first thing I think of is creativity, the ability to think outside the box. When an entrepreneur noticed his soccer-playing daughter and her friends didn't have mouth guards, he created a company to make them quickly and economically. He expanded his business by marketing mouth guards to dentists whose patients grind their teeth in their sleep. When the coronavirus pandemic caused mouth guard sales to plummet, he retooled his factory to make personal protective gear for hospital workers. When one door closed, he created a new one.

Another element of resilience is flexibility. Flexibility makes us open to alternative approaches to achieving our goals. When gyms and health clubs closed, many trainers developed online training. I started taking online yoga classes, and now I love the ability to work out on my schedule, not the health club's.

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