Positive leadership.

Creating a climate that fosters high-performance behaviors.

Lee Newman, Ph.D.

NTO Conference

6 September 2023

BUSINESS SCHOOL

Context: the future of work… (arriving now!)

Business Transformation

AI

Project Economy

Skills Economy

Socio-Political Factors

Rise of Purpose

Well-Being

…

…DISRUPTION.

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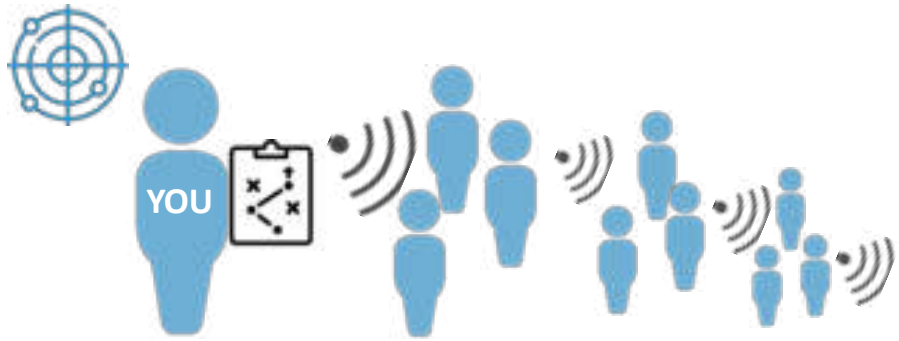
Leading…

Credit: *Thanks to Steven D'Souza for showing me this video*
Note: "Pot of Gold" added by me. ☺

As leaders you can't have all the answers…

Disruption, constant change → uncertainty, ambiguity



This is not a viable model…

IGNITING THE NEXT BEST YOU

LONDON
BERLIN
MADRID
ROME
PARIS
BARCELONA

ie
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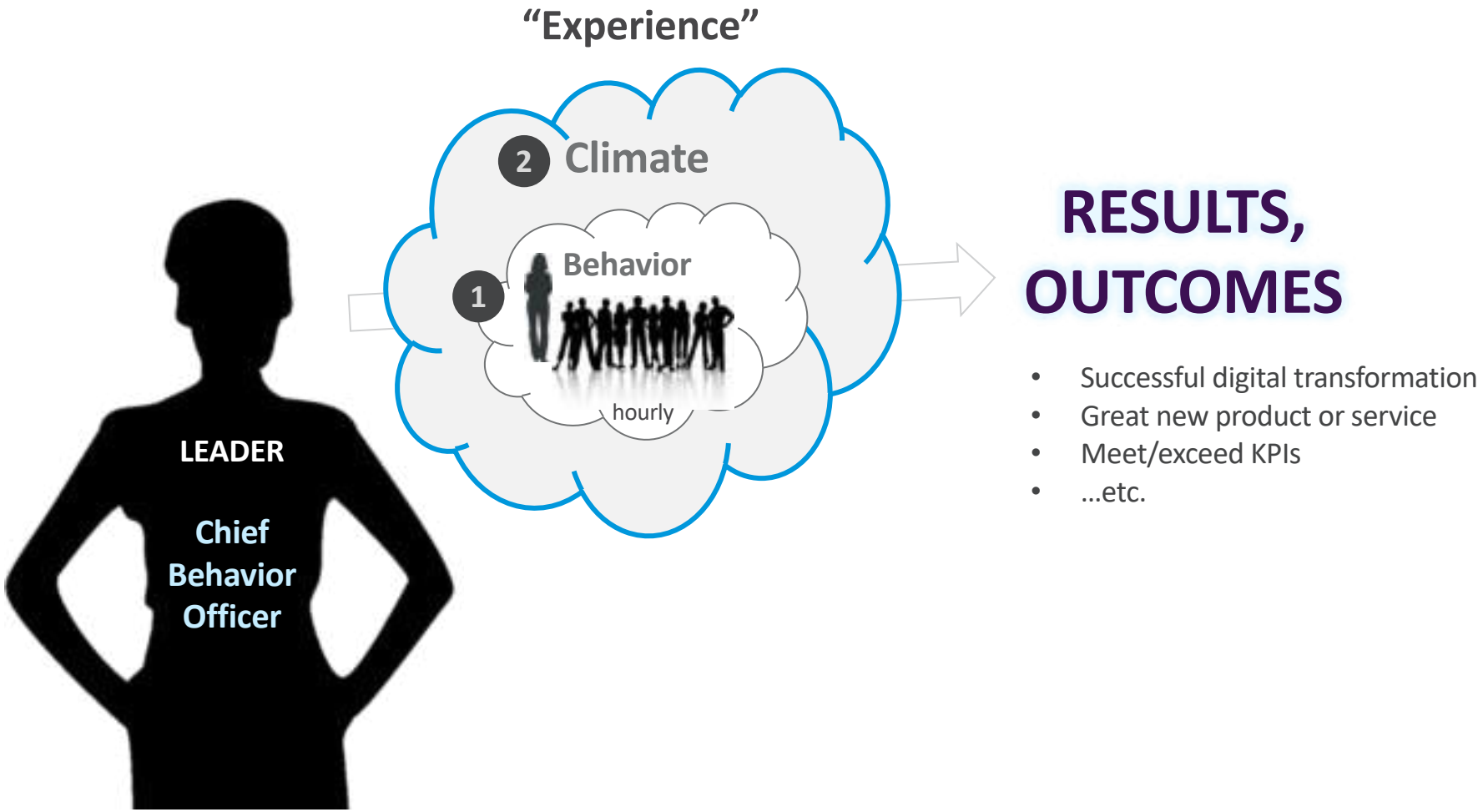
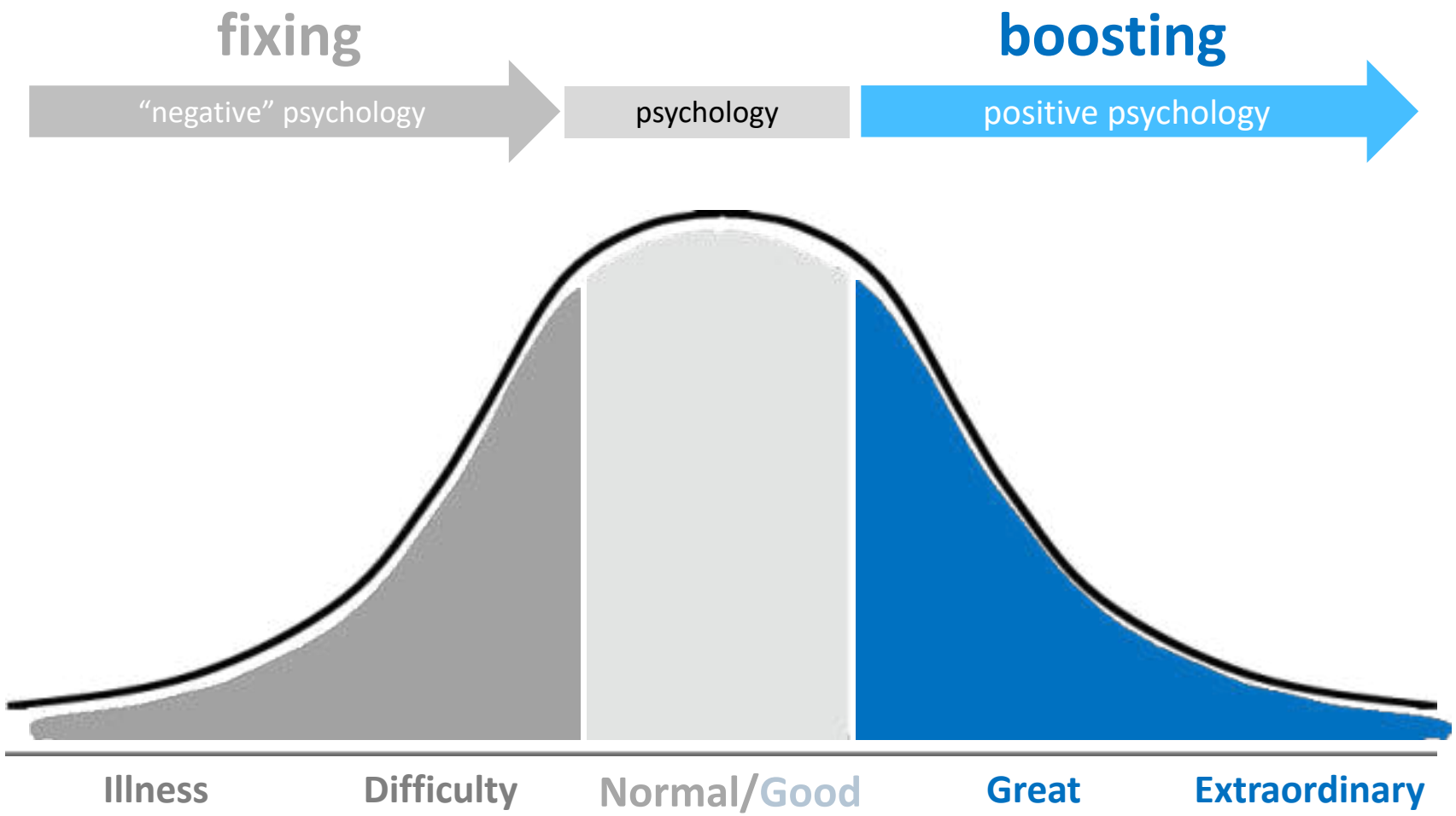
What do we really lead?

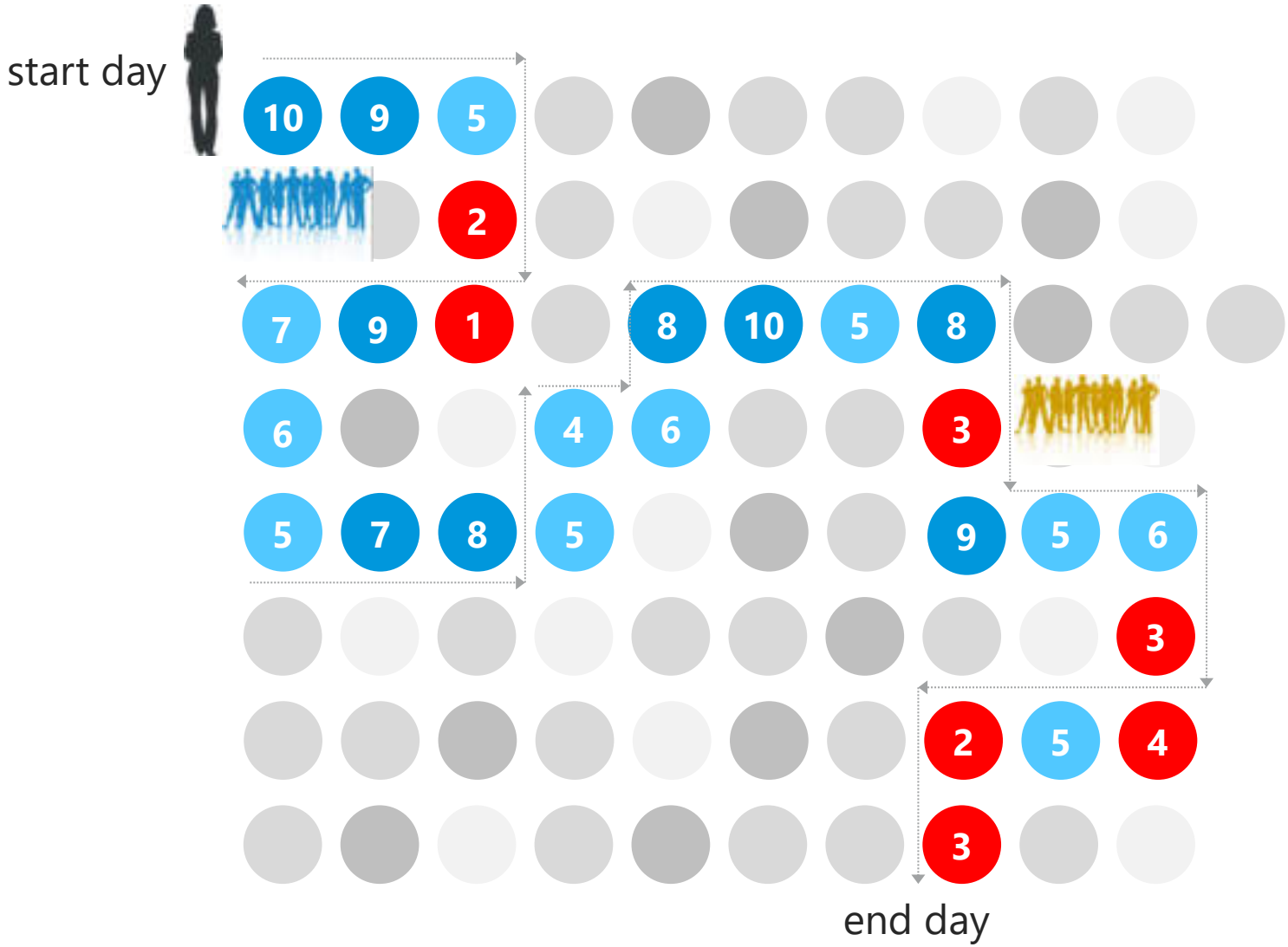


Positive psychology, a science focused on high performance.

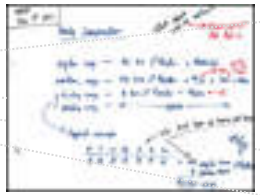


Our moments at work (and in life)…

Behavioral moments matter for performance.



Challenge: mindware.



Whiteboard

Social
Radar

Willpower
& Self Control

Habit Factory

Attention

Hard Drive

Emotions

Perception

Body

We all have many limitations in our mindware...

Too Small

Whiteboard

Lose Control

+ poor multi-tasking

Willpower
& Self Control

Comparative

Social
Radar

Low Power

+ filter + hard to shift

Attention

Noisy

Hard Drive

Emotions

Rigid

Habit Factory

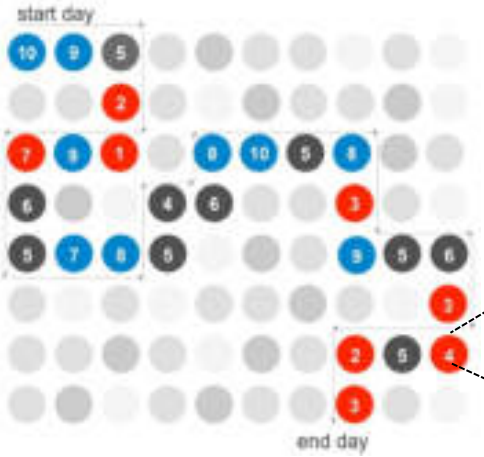
Interpretive

Perception

Sneaky

Body

Integrating the pieces...



what do you do?

daily stressors

Mindware & Limitations

TED Ideas worth spreading

How to escape education's death valley

12,574,727 views | Sir Ken Robinson | TED Talks Education • April 2013

"Climate Control"

People who …

Immovable

Movable

Move

Suggestion: Watch from minute 16:00 to end.

From “climate control” to “experience design”.

From CX to EX.

Harvard Business Review

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Design Your Employee Experience as Thoughtfully as You Design Your Customer Experience

by Denise Lee Yohn

Forbes

A Framework For How Any Company Can Design Amazing Employee Experiences

Jacob Morgan, CONTRIBUTOR

FULL BIO

Over the past few months I've been working on a series of articles all around the employee experience which I define as being a combination of three distinct environments (physical, cultural, and technological). I've been

¿Afecta la inestabilidad política a sus

EX is now a mainstream topic.

positive and **negative**

emotions

matter, **more** than we realize.

Emotions *strongly* influence our mindware.

positive and negative

emotions

broaden our behavior…

- better **memory** for details
- see **more possibilities**
- more **creative**
- see more **self-other** overlap
- better **perspective** taking
- more **trust**
- better **negotiations**
- **bounce-back** from stress

narrow our behavior…

- tends to **narrows attention**
- **negative interpretations**
- favors **habitual routines**
- focus on **differences** during conflict
- leads to **rumination**
- slower **bounce-back** from stress

primary source: Fredrickson & Branigan (2005). *Cognition & Emotion, 19*, 313-332.

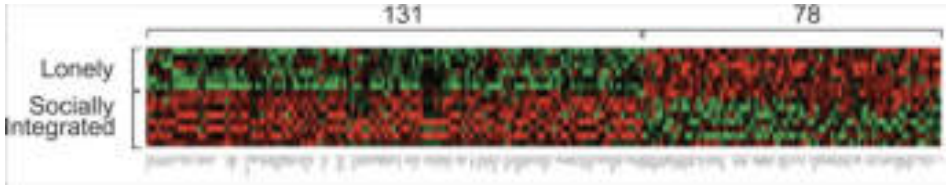
And positivity adds up…

…in the long term.

Higher P/N over time, builds your resources.

Fredrickson (2004). *Phil Trans Royal Society London*.

physical	**(health, longevity)**
intellectual	(problem solving, creative thinking)
social	(supportive relationships)
psychological	(resilience, optimism)



Example: higher P/N changes genetic expression in your immune system

Integrated / Happier → Die of Virus → Viral System Activated

Isolation / Difficulty → Die of Infection → Inflammation System Activated
(long term, aids cancer, heart disease, neuro degeneration)

source: Irwin & Cole, Nature Reviews Immunology, 2011; Cole et al., Genome Biology, 2007 via Frederickson

Can we measure this?

Yes, it's like taking daily emotional temperature.

Moments at Work

- conflict in meeting
- great presentation
- cryptic email from boss
- stress over deadline
- …etc.

P

- Joyful
- Gratitude
- Serene
- Interested
- Hopeful
- Proud
- Amused
- Inspired
- Awe
- Love

N

- Angry
- Disgusted
- Sad
- Fearful
- Guilty
- Ashamed
- Embarrassed
- Scornful
- Hateful
- Stressed

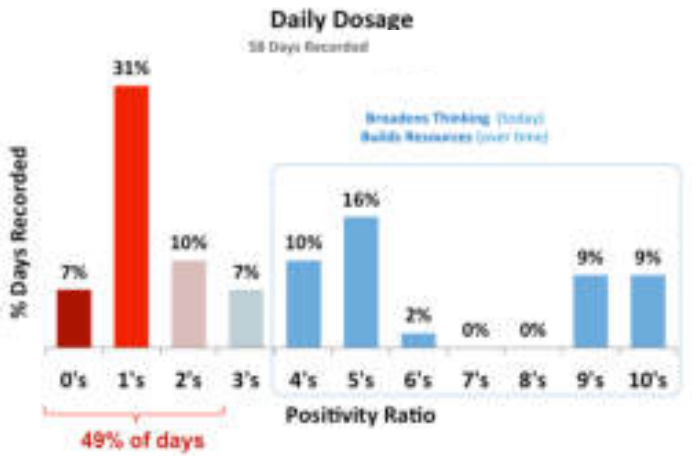
Positivity Ratio: $\frac{\text{Positive (emotions)}}{\text{Negative (emotions)}}$ (range: 0 to 10)

try it here (anonymously): http://bit.ly/dailypositivity

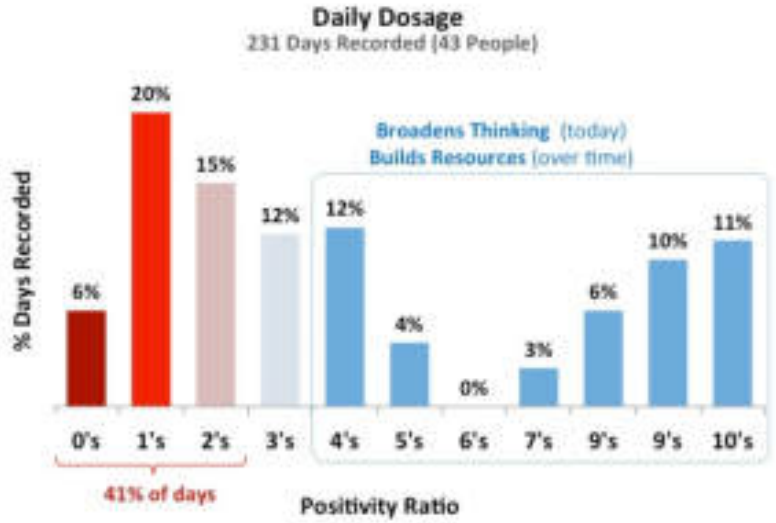
source: *Positivity* (2009), Barbara Frederickson

Some of my data from the workplace.

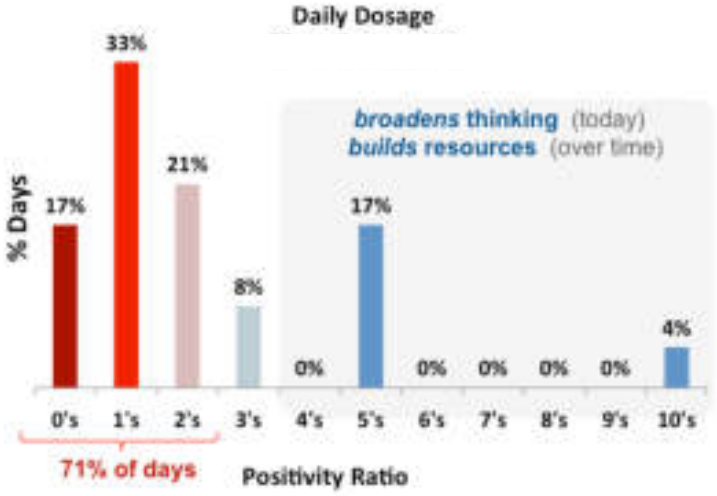
Global Financial Services



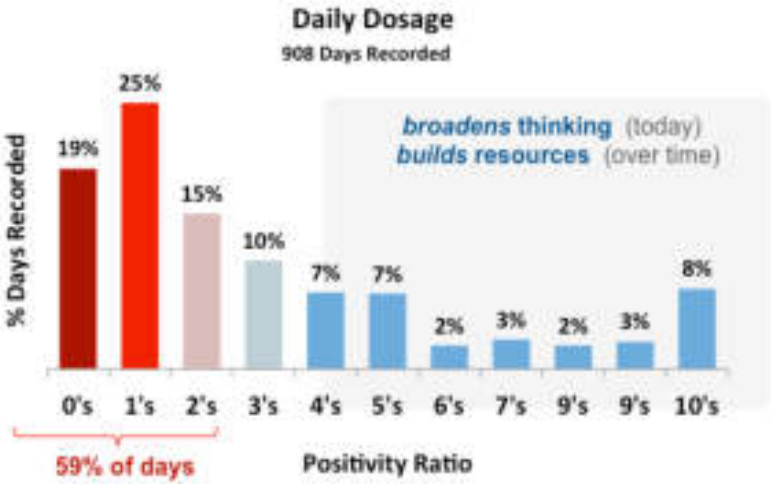
National Bank



Industrial Co - HIPOs



Junior-Mid Professionals



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world 0.0 …

5:30 pm

stress
deadlines
results

Mindware & Limitations

what's your default behavior?

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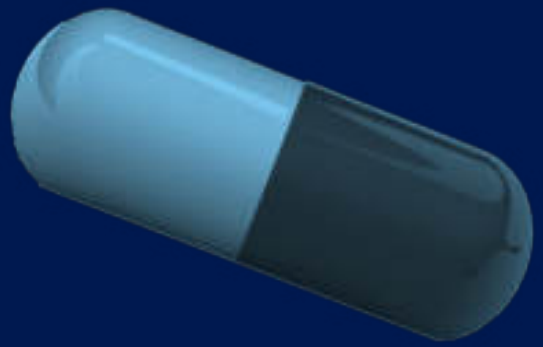
TO THINK ABOUT….

What are some examples in workplace that **generate** blue and red pills?



Q What “behavioral muscles” might you strengthen to become a better person/professional?

#1
51%

Better **controlling my emotions** in difficult or stressful situations.

1566 Respondents

CAREER LEVEL

6%	Pre/Early (0-4)
11%	Mid (5-9)
33%	**MID-SENIOR (10-20)**
45%	**SENIOR (20+)**
5%	Other

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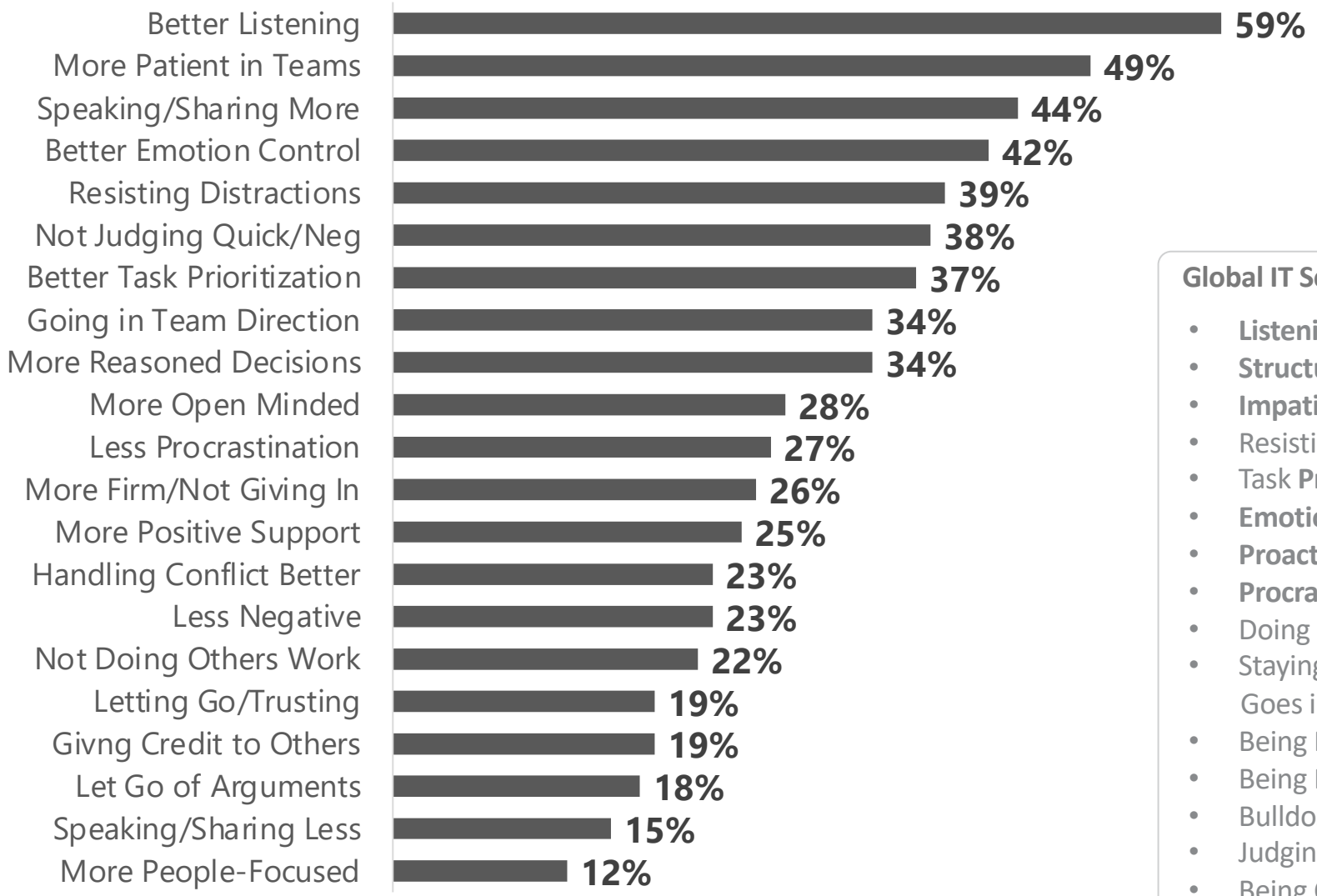
100 senior managers at global bank.

These results change little across companies.



Global IT Services Company

• **Listening**	51%
• **Structured Communications**	47%
• **Impatience** in Teams	46%
• Resisting **Distractions**	35%
• Task **Prioritization**	35%
• **Emotional Regulation**	33%
• **Proactive Engagement** (more assertive)	29%
• **Procrastination**	28%
• Doing Others Work	28%
• Staying Motivated When Team Goes in Direction You Don't Like	28%
• Being More Firm/Assertive	27%
• Being More Controlled in Conflicts	23%
• Bulldozing Over Others in Meetings	20%
• Judging others Too Quickly/Negatively	19%
• Being Closed Minded	15%
• …	

source: Lee Newman, Behavioral Fitness Diagnostic

Bad news: by default, **negativity** tends to rule.

"negativity bias" / "loss aversion" is deeply rooted in our behavior.

"2-3x" *

Power of negatives relative to positives.

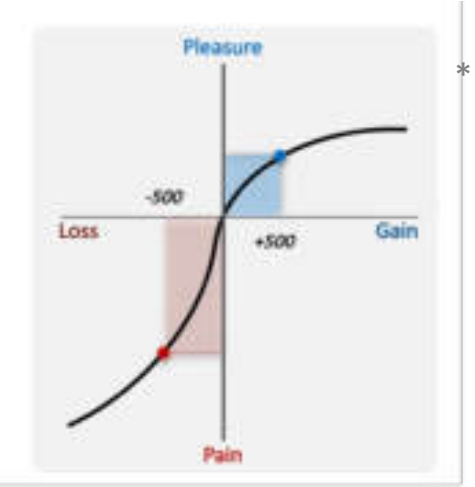
- what's **right** about____?
- **solutions** (vs. problems)
- what did ___ do **well**?
- who's should be **thanked**?
- what if we **win** the ____?
- we could **transform** ___ if we…

- what's **wrong** with ____?
- **problems** (vs. solutions)
- what did ___ **not** do?
- who's **fault** is it?
- what if we **lose** the ____?
- prefer **known** vs. unknown
- prefer **stable** vs. dynamic

* Source: Kahneman & Tversky (1979), *Econometrica.*

Negativity makes change and innovation difficult to lead.

"Negativity bias" / "loss aversion" is deeply rooted in our behavior.

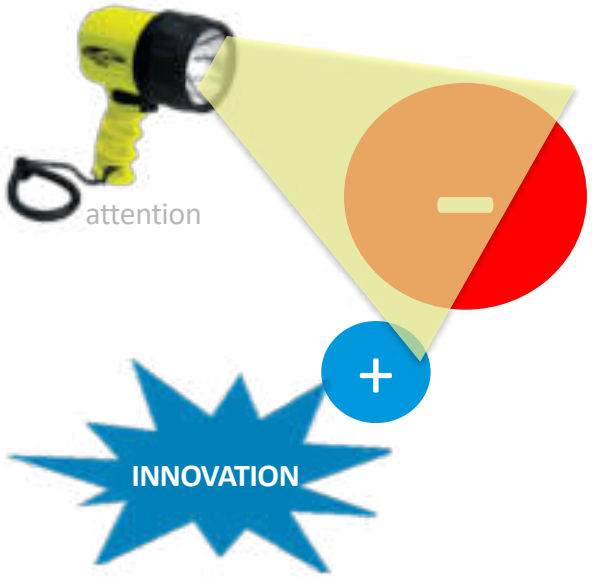


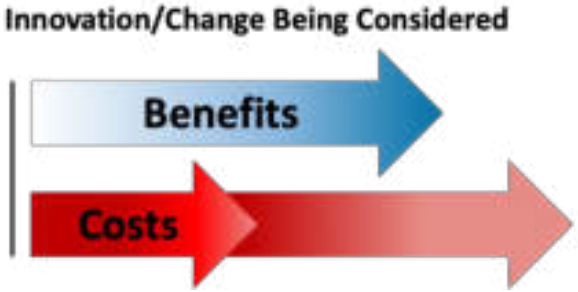
*

"2-3x"

Power of negatives relative to positives.

So, where do we put more attention?

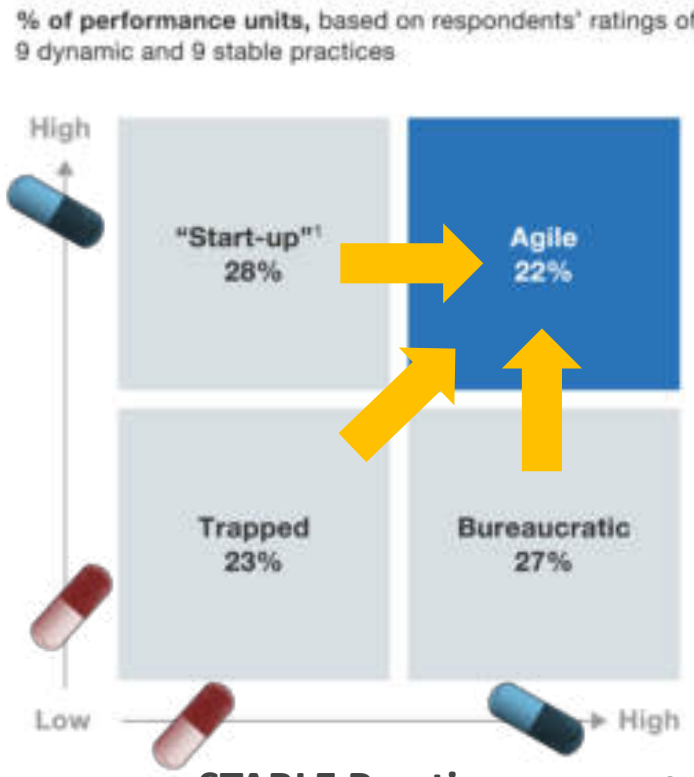




Innovation and agile behavior is not the norm.

DYNAMIC Practices
(i.e., those that enable speed, responsiveness, adaptation)

- Sensing and seizing opportunities
- Rapid iteration and experimentation
- Information transparency



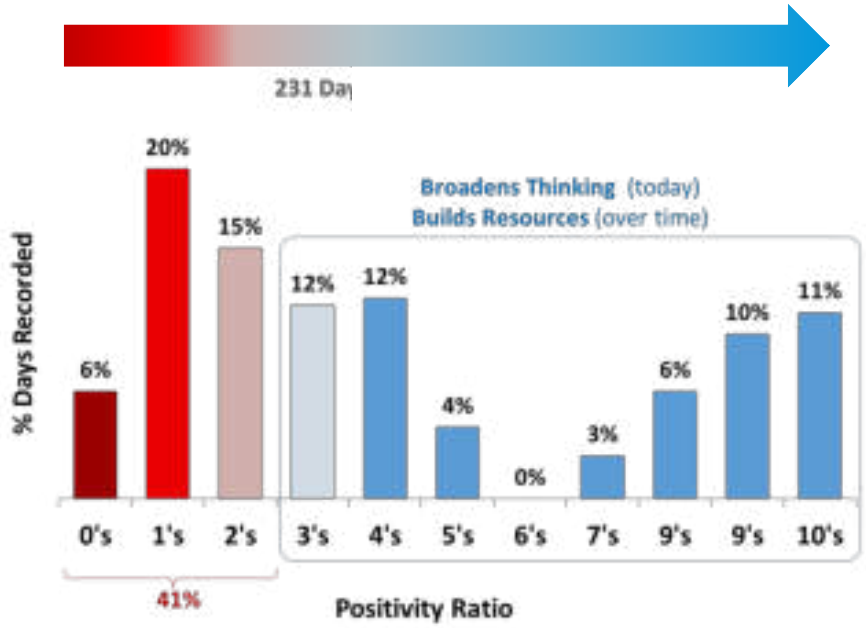
STABLE Practices
(i.e., those that enable efficiency, reliability, scale)

- Performance Orientation
- Standardized Ways of Working
- Shared Vision & Purpose
- Cohesive Community

source: McKinsey Global Survey (2017; across regions, industries, functions, levels).

Your leadership mission as a “Chief Behavior Officer”....

Designing Experiences: behavioral changes to create a climate in which each of us and our colleagues perform at our best.



“climate” control

“experience” design (EX)

As leaders you can have huge impact on ***climate*** for others.

direct supervisor

70% of variance
employee engagement

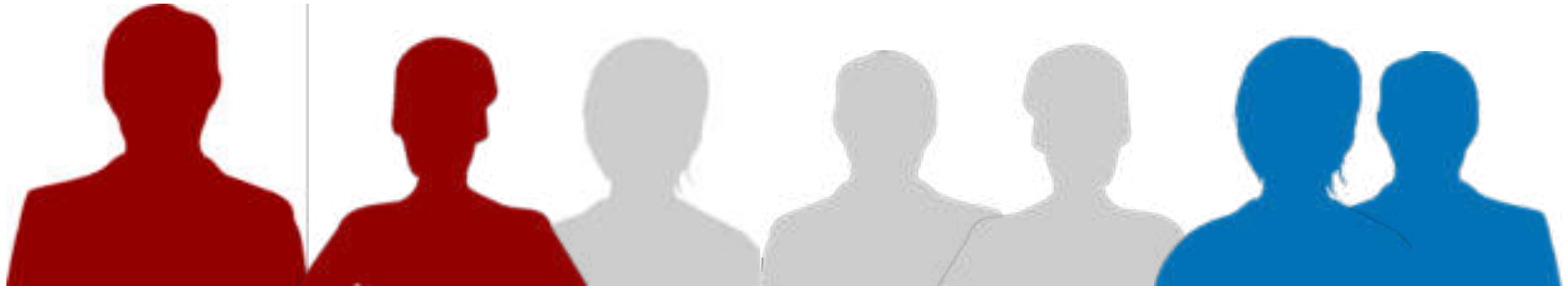
Source: Gallup, *State of the American Manager (2015)*

Global employee engagement data...

only 21% fully engaged

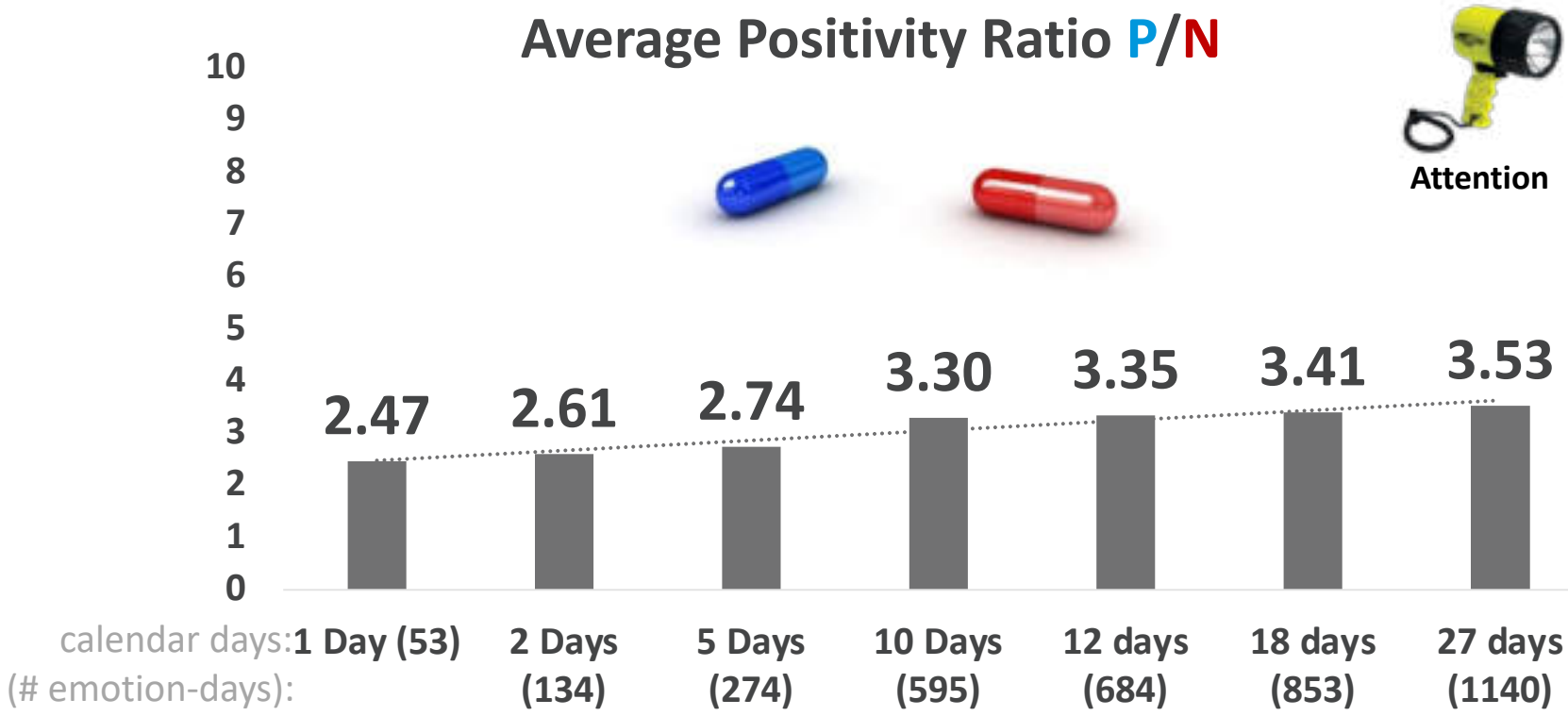
Source: Gallup State of the Global Workplace 2022

Are we igniting our people?



tools
positive leadership

Mere awareness helps improve positivity. why?



Try it yourself! http://bit.ly/dailypositivity

What drives intrinsic (deep) motivation?

AUTONOMY

+

MASTERY

+

PURPOSE

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Deci & Ryan (2008) Self-Determination Theory

Design work around strengths as much as possible.

GALLUP **CliftonStrengths**

Cappfinity **Strengths Profile**

VIA Character Strengths

Strengthscope **StrengthScope**

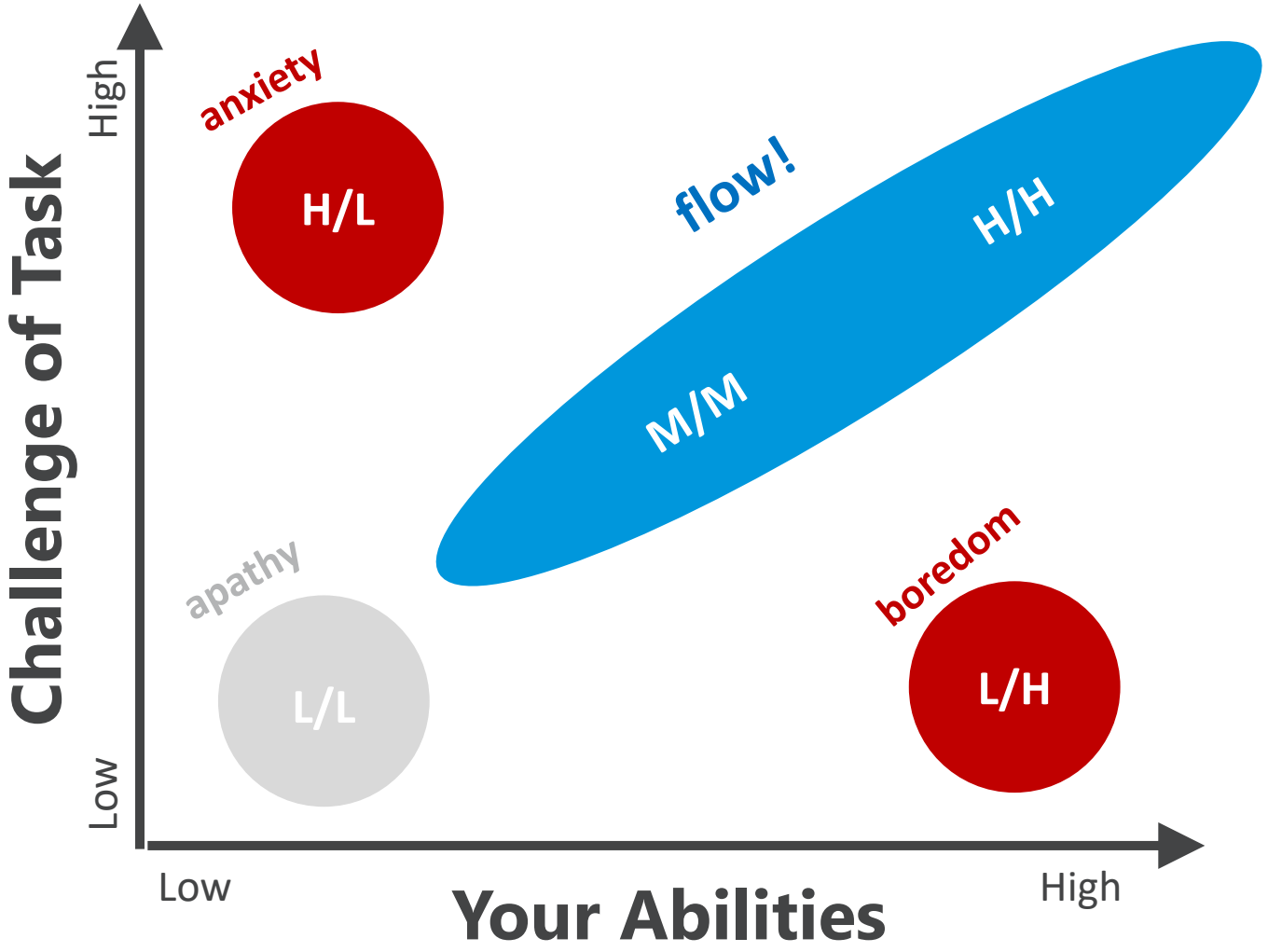
knack? **Knack.it**

Q. What's the link to P/N?

1. Identify individual strengths.
2. Develop strengths; avoid abusing strengths.
3. Design roles/responsibilities around strengths.
4. Use strengths to circumvent weaknesses.

Evidence: Seligman, Steen, Park, Peterson, C., *American Psychologist* (2005).

Engage employees in their work by designing roles around strengths.



Adapted from Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 2000

Focus on positives.

they happen all the time, but we may not always notice.

3 good things

	what happened?	**why?** (your role in it; why feel good)
1		
2		
3		

Evidence: Seligman, Steen, Park, Peterson, C., *American Psychologist* (2005).

Reduce useless negativity.

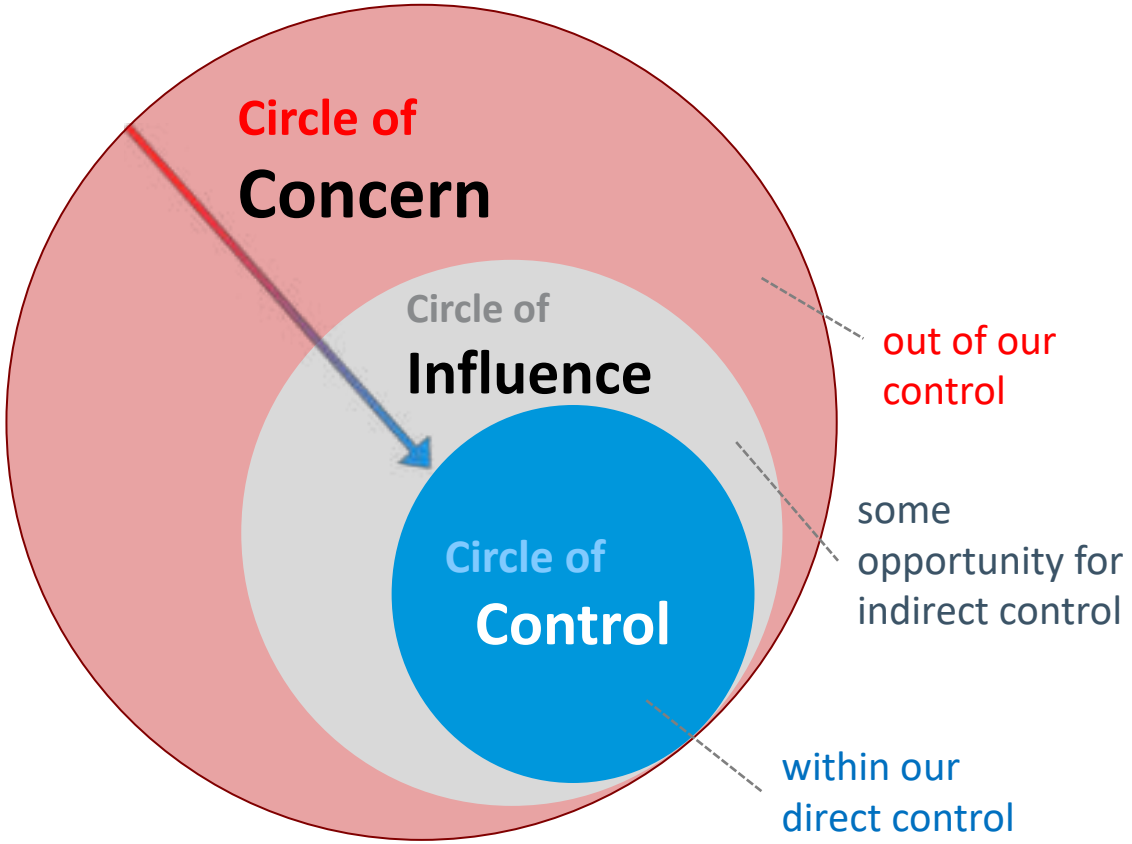
Where **do** and where **should** you spend your energy?

Q1. What aspects of the world, others, yourself, common situations frequently bother/concern you?

Q2. What amount of energy/time **do** you give to these concerns? (large, med, small)

Q3. What type of control do you have over each concern? (none, indirect, direct)

Q4. What amount of energy/time **should** you give to these concerns? (large, med, small)



source: Adapted from Steven Covey, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Turn conflict into "game changing moments" for professional growth.

Discomfort…

…a catalyst for growth. It reveals our concerns, our gaps, and provides a launchpad for self-improvement, innovative risk taking, and "game changing moments".

…but this works when people are working in **safe**, **positive** environment… where there is trust.

Summary: daily behaviors are what drive performance.

Our days are long, demands are high, mindware is limited...

Emotional climate influences our mindware, and you can **IGNITE** your people by **leading climate** and focusing on **positive experience**.

leading conditions (for yourself, others)

Positivity: Positive ⬆ / Negative ⬇

higher quality thinking + more productive behaviors

innovation + performance

Thank You.

Lee Newman
lee.newman@ie.edu

leenewman

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