

# FOSTERING RESILIENCE, MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE



JENNIFER CUMMINGS, PH. D.

**ADVERSITY IS REAL**



... but so is **resilience**

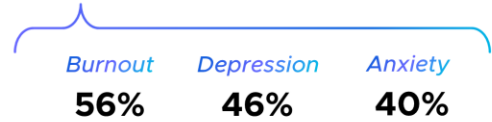
# The State of Workplace Mental Health in the U.S. in 2021



## THE ISSUE

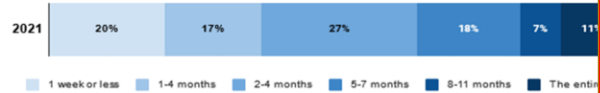
### Mental health challenges are near-universal.

**76%** reported experiencing at least one symptom of a mental health condition in the past year.



### Mental health challenges are increasingly the norm.

**36%** of symptoms cumulatively lasted five months to an entire year. **80% lasted one month or longer.**



### Employees are leaving their jobs for their mental health.

**50%** of full-time U.S. workers have left a previous roles due, at least in part, to mental health reasons.

This number rises to...

- **81% of Gen Z respondents**
- **68% of Millennial respondents**
- **32% when considering voluntary departures**

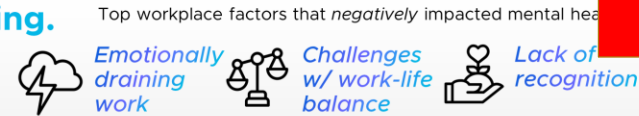
### Productivity losses are growing.

On average, workers reported performing at **72%** of their full capability in the past year when considering their mental health.

On average, respondents missed **8 days** of work due to mental health.

### The way we're working isn't working.

**84%** reported at least one workplace factor that negatively impacted their mental health.



### underrepresented communities are disproportionately impacted

- Workers tended to be:
- More likely to report mental health symptoms.
  - More negatively impacted by the work environment.
  - More likely to have leave jobs for mental health.

### Talking about mental health at work is increasingly the norm.

**65%** have talked about their mental health to someone at work in the past year.



### Culture efforts are on the rise.

As an org. priority, advocates for mental health, equipped to support mental health

**+32%** **+27%** **+21%**

## SPOTS

### Companies are investing more into workplace mental health—sort of.

Mental health resources *offered* by companies grew:

**Paid time off** **Mental health days** **Mental health training**

**+55%** **+41%** **+33%**

But the greatest growth in accommodations *used* by employees focused on day-to-day support:

**Extended or more frequent breaks** **Adjustments to communications with others** **Time for therapy during the workday**

**+550%** **+333%** **+300%**

### Advocate for mental health.

- The most desired "resource" for mental health was an *open culture* about mental health at work.
- The most common obstacle to self-care was *leaders not promoting* mental health at work.

Only **49%** got a positive or supportive response when they talked about mental health at work.

### Cultivate healthy work practices.

**53%** said their work or work environment had a negative impact on their mental health.

### Investment pays off.

Those who felt supported by their employer with their mental health overall were:

**~Half** as likely to report symptoms lasting 5 – 12 months.

**3x** more likely to be comfortable talking about mental health to their manager and HR.

**2.5x** more likely to intend to stay at their company for 2+ years.

**5.6x** more likely to trust their company and its leaders.

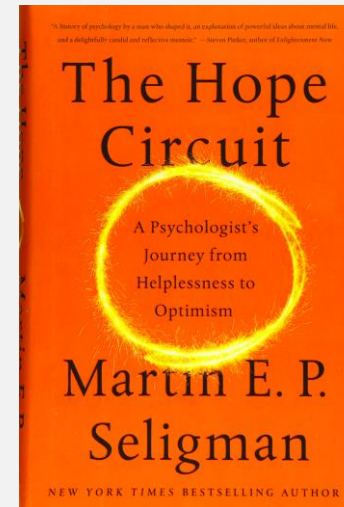
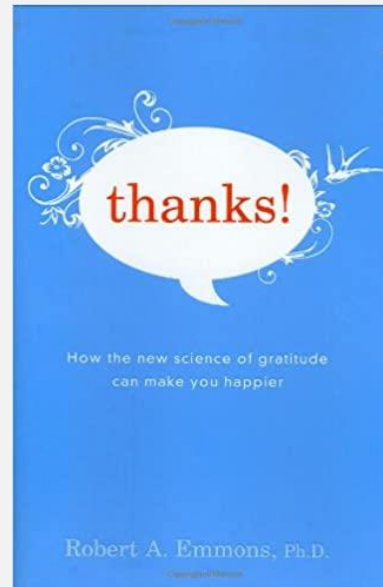
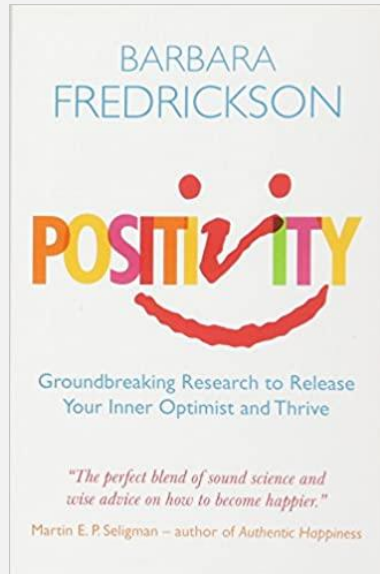
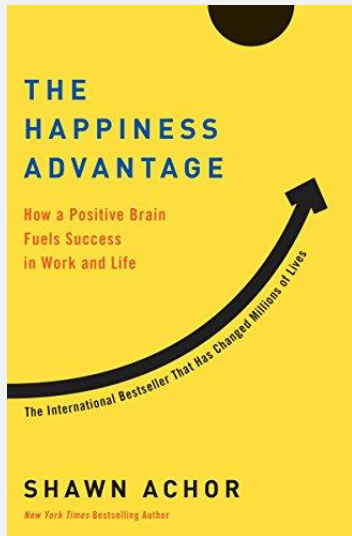
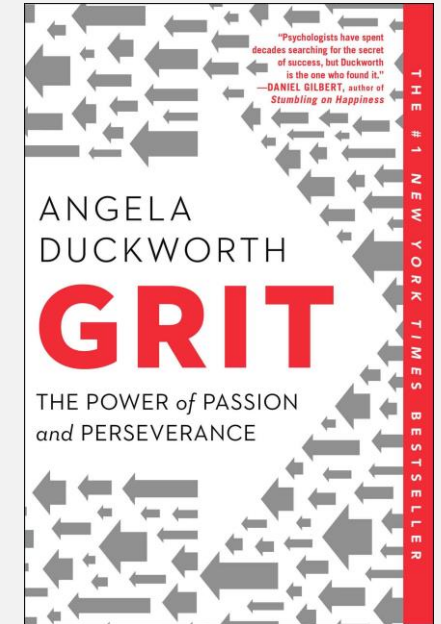
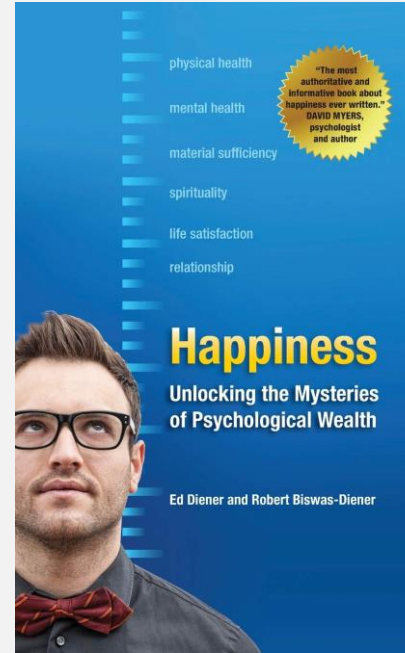
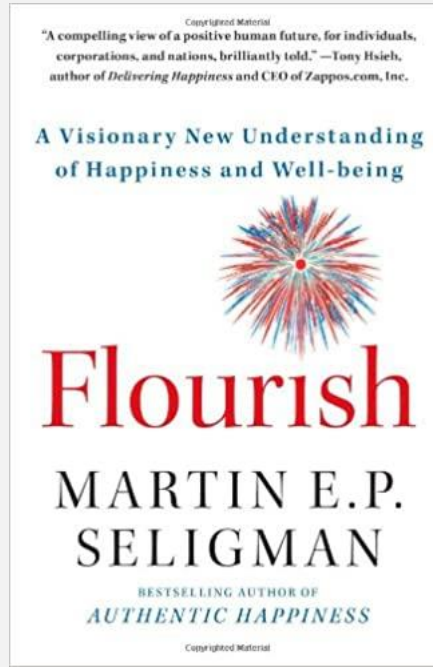
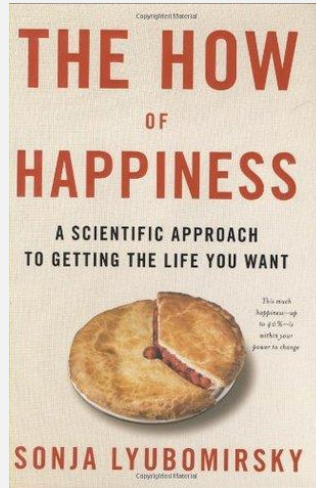
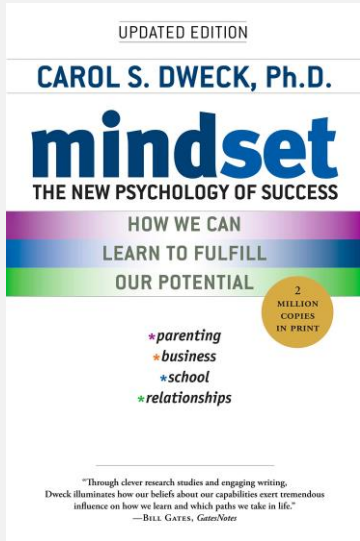
Get the full report

Read Mind Share Partners' 2021 Mental Health at Work Report in partnership with Qualtrics and ServiceNow.

[BIT.LY/msp-2021-report](https://bit.ly/msp-2021-report)

## MAKING IT A PRIORITY

- **71%** think their employer is more invested in their mental health than in the past
- **81%** say how employer supports mental health is important in considering whether they'll work for them



SEEK PROFESSIONAL CARE WHEN NEEDED



## WHAT CAN MANAGERS DO?

- Manager training for mental health (during work hours and periodically)
- Senior leadership should encourage
- Training may be F2F or virtual
- Training is not intended to make manager become mental health-care providers (not trying to diagnose or treat mental disorders)
- We do want to be prepared to respond helpfully with encouragement, resources, and additional behavioral suggestions
  - WHO Guidelines on Mental Health at Work

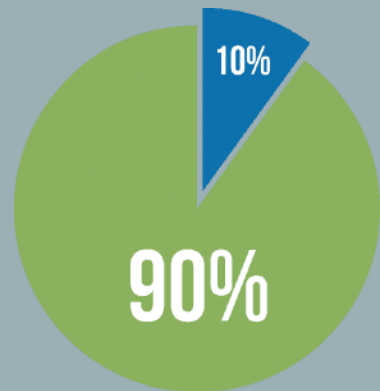
## WHAT CAN MANAGERS DO?

- Model healthy thinking and behaviors
- Implement processes and rituals that promote positivity, resilience, and connection in the workplace



## EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE...

- \* DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN
- \* ISN'T JUST FOR THE STRONG
- \* TAKES DAILY EFFORT IN HOW YOU THINK AND WHAT YOU DO



# WHAT DEPLETES YOU?



- Loneliness/isolation
- Lack of sleep or exercise
- Overwork or idleness
- News/politics
- Social media
- Self-criticism
- Being around negative people
- Trials, trauma, heartbreak
- Conflict, contention, grudges
- Negative thoughts and emotion
  - worry, anger, fear, depression, guilt, discouragement



- **25% of job successes are predicted by IQ**
- **75% of job successes are predicted by...**
  - **Optimism**
  - **Social support**
  - **Seeing stress as a challenge instead of a threat**

HR DIRECTOR: “WE NEED MORE  
POSITIVITY AND KINDNESS.”

CEO: “THAT’S NOT WHO WE ARE.”



## OPTIMISM

- Is NOT
  - Feeling happy all the time
  - Ignoring reality
- IS
  - Being grateful for what you DO have
  - Acknowledging negatives but focusing on what you CAN do, believing your behavior matters and will eventually pay off



- 1985: poor staff retention; training not helping
- Seligman suggests screening and hiring for optimism
- 2 years later, optimistic employees sold 31% more than pessimists
- Optimists who failed aptitude test outsold their more pessimistic counterparts by 19% in year one and 57% in year two.

(Seligman & Schulman, 1986; Seligman, 2011)



SUCCESS  $\neq$  HAPPINESS

HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE:

*“Your brain at positive performs better than at negative, neutral, or stressed”* Shawn Achor, Harvard

- 31% more productive
- 37% better sales
- Doctors 19% better at reaching diagnosis
- Intelligence, creativity, energy level increase
- Dopamine makes you positive and turns on learning center of your brain

SUCCESS  $\neq$  HAPPINESS

HAPPINESS LEADS TO SUCCESS

The happiness problem:

- Feel happy and grateful for a moment, then refocus on problems, complaints, worries, next obstacle, next goal
- Your brain changes what success is, so you never get there





# OPTIMISM

**“Life inflicts the same setbacks and tragedies on the optimist as on the pessimist, but the optimist weathers them better.”**

Seligman, 2006: 3 | 2

## Optimists...

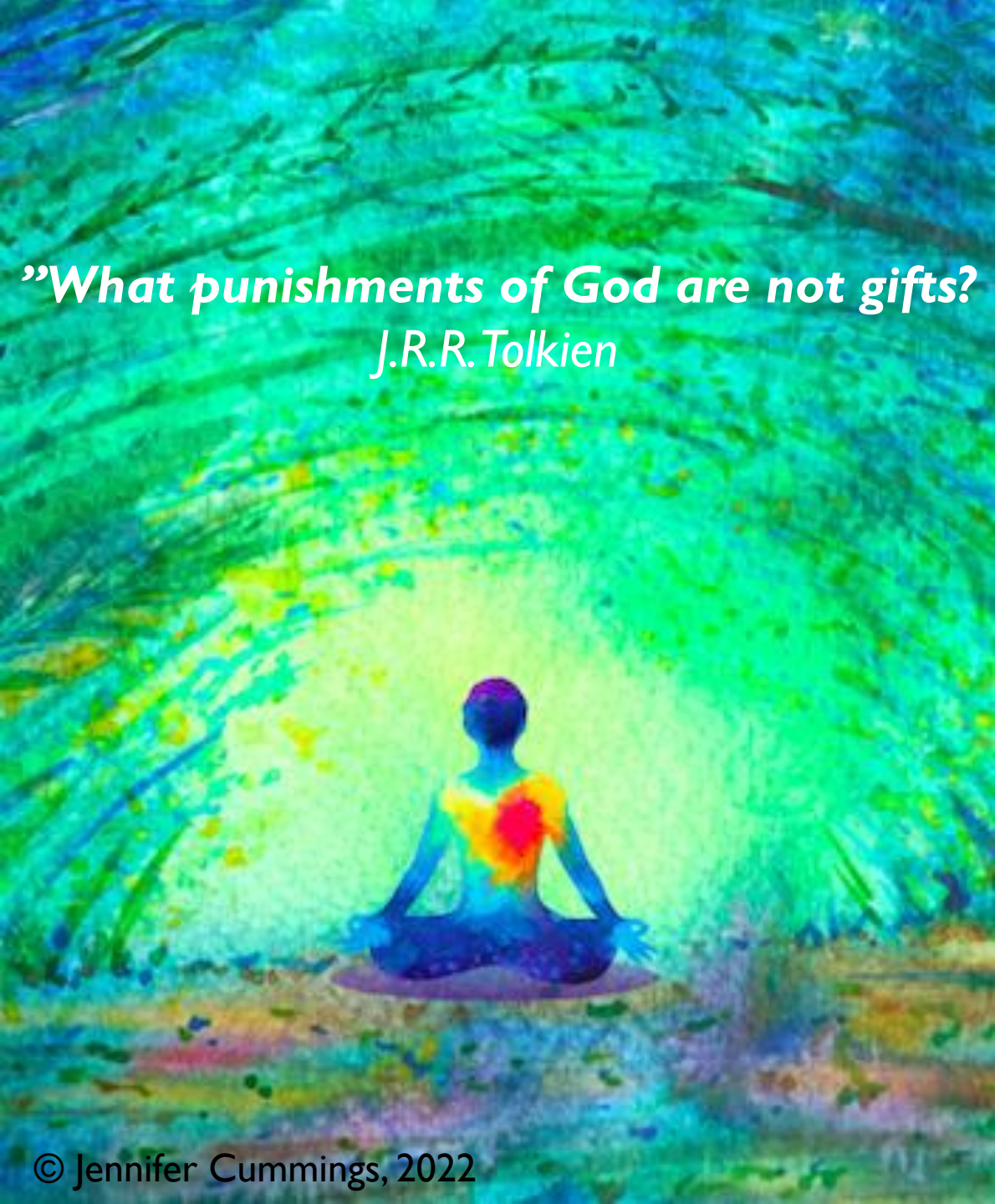
- Temporary
- Specific
- Universal

## Pessimists...

- Permanent
- Pervasive
- Personal



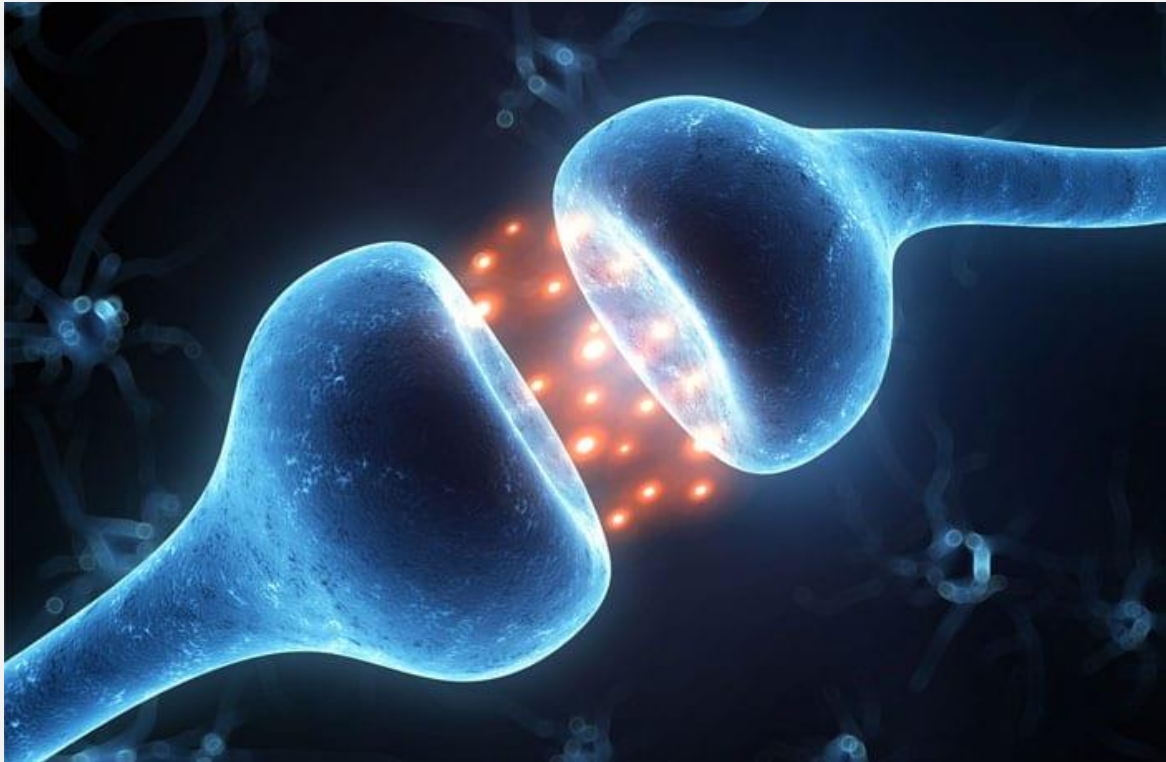
KEY FACTOR IN BUILDING OPTIMISM...



*”What punishments of God are not gifts?  
J.R.R.Tolkien*

# GRATITUDE

- Rewires your brain to see the positive in life
- Key to well-being
  - lower blood pressure
  - improved immunity and quicker recovery from illness
  - more effectively cope with stress
  - strong link to mental health, more so than even optimism
  - reduces lifetime risk for depression, anxiety, substance abuse
  - boosts self control - increases patience
  - better sleep – duration and time falling asleep
  - increases romantic relationship survival rate
  - increases relationship connection and overall satisfaction



More gratitude = more dopamine

EVERY TIME A PERSON  
EXPRESSES OR RECEIVES  
GRATITUDE, DOPAMINE  
RELEASES IN THE BRAIN.

When a person expresses or receives gratitude, dopamine (a neurotransmitter) releases and forms a connection between the behavior and feeling good.

# HOW DOES GRATITUDE AFFECTS US MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY?

- 3 student groups:

GROUP 1: Wrote a gratitude letter to another person every week for three weeks



**Better mental health  
four and 12 weeks  
after the intervention  
ended**

GROUP 2: Wrote about their thoughts and feelings about negative experiences



**Gratitude + counseling =  
more effective than  
counseling alone**

GROUP 3: Didn't write anything



## IS THE GOAL TO FEEL HAPPY ALL THE TIME?



- No, feeling all the feelings is an important part of being human
- Pessimism has its place
- Not about mood, it's about overall well-being (which gratitude and optimism promote)
- More important than happiness...



## MEANING & PURPOSE

- Feel contentment in doing what's right or what's meaningful, even when rewards are scarce
- Having a deeper WHY beyond yourself that guides your choices and behavior
- Changes your focus from “why me?” to “what is this teaching me?”



KNOW WHAT  
RECHARGES YOU &  
MAKE IT A HABIT



# WHAT RECHARGES YOU?

1. Time with family/friends
2. Exercise
3. Sleep
4. Reading
5. Cooking
6. Gardening
7. Cleaning
8. Relaxing
9. Writing/journaling
10. Eating out
11. Movies/Entertainment
12. Work
13. Spiritual/Worship
14. Playing games
15. Music/Instruments
16. Service
17. Artistic hobby

## BUILD UP YOUR EMOTIONAL RESERVES

1. **Gratitude journal**, jar, dinner table, bedtime ritual, circle (3 unique things from last 24 hrs)
2. **Positivity Journal** – Write about 1 positive thing from the past 24 hours
3. **Good Will Email** – 2-minute email/text thanking or praising someone different each day
4. **Meditate/prayer** – time to ponder and be present
5. **Exercise** – especially with reflection
6. **Mental Moat** – reserve first and last few minutes of each day for something that fuels or calms you (hint: not news, emails, meetings, social media)
7. **Limit news cycle/ Take a digital sabbatical** – replace with something uplifting
8. **Schedule time** with things that make you happy; Take time to **savor**
9. **Spiritual fuel** – reflecting on deeper meaning, service, big-picture perspective

# SEE STRESS AS A CHALLENGE INSTEAD OF A THREAT

- View stress as enhancing
  - 23% drop in symptoms, happier, more engaged at work
- See your body as preparing you to handle this
- Remember hard things you've done before
- Be kind to yourself and don't expect perfection
- Lean on your support system



# GROWTH MINDSET

Fixed Mindset



Growth Mindset





## Fixed Mindset

Challenges reveal my weaknesses

Struggle means I'm not good at this

Failure is proof of my incompetence

I'm either good at it or not



## Growth Mindset

**Challenges help me grow**

**Struggle means I'm not done**

**Failure is part of learning**

**Effort determines ability**

## REFRAME STRESS OR NERVES AS EXCITEMENT FOR THE CHALLENGE

- Threat Mindset
  - “I can’t do this”
  - “I’m going to blow it”
  - “They’re going to laugh”
- Outcome
  - Lower self-confidence
  - More risk-averse
  - Impaired cognition before and during



# OPPORTUNITY MINDSET

- "I can't wait to share this"
- "I'm going to do well"
- "My speech is important and interesting"
- "I'm actually excited. This is going to be fun!"

■ Outcome...



# “I’m excited...”



**17%**



**17%**



**22%**



# SOCIAL SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS



- The people who survive stress the best are the ones who actually increase their social investments in the middle of stress, which is the opposite of what most of us do.

- Shawn Achor

## **With good relationships...**

- Less depression, less pain, better immunity, better memory
- Relationships are a better predictor of health than cholesterol levels

## **Without good relationships...**

- “Loneliness kills. It’s as powerful as smoking or alcoholism.” (Robert Waldinger, Harvard)
- Contempt predicted infection illness in marriage (Gottman)
- Relationship satisfaction at 50 predicts health at 80



# THE HIGH COST OF DISENGAGEMENT AT WORK

- Feeling isolated or social rejection at work activates the same region of the brain as physical pain
  - (Dunbar and Dunbar, 1998)
- Isolation and lack of social interaction at work is associated with higher risk of cardiovascular disease, compromised immunity, increased risk of depression, and shortened lifespan
  - (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, & Stephenson, 2015; Cacioppo, Hawkley, Norman, & Berntson, 2011; Mushtaq, Shoib, Shah, & Mushtaq, 2014).



# BENEFITS OF POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTION AT WORK

- #1 contributor to employee engagement: relationships with colleagues (Society for HR Management, 2016)
- Lower business costs, improved performance outcomes, lower staff turnover and absenteeism, and fewer safety incidents (Gallup, 2015)
- More positive feelings at end of workday (Nolan & Küpers, 2009)
- More motivated when coworker relationships are good (Basford and Offermann, 2012) – we work harder for people we like
- More trust and cooperation (Oh, Chung, & Labianca, 2004)
- Long-term retention when feel supported (Hodson, 2004; Moynihan & Pandey, 2008) – we quit bosses
- More role clarity and job satisfaction (Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008)
- Google team members: “Feels good to be part of this team”

## PEOPLE WHO HAVE A "BEST FRIEND AT WORK"...



About 1 in 5 reported having a significant relationship with a workmate (Pew and the American Life Project)

- are happier, healthier, and seven times as likely to be engaged in their job.
- have higher levels of productivity, retention, and job satisfaction than those who don't

# START WITH YOU

- No excuses
- (I'm an introvert; I'm too busy; I'm too tired; I don't like small talk)
- Ask “how are you?” and mean it
- Schedule it in – lunch, walk, phone call
- Talk before and after the meeting
- Meet someone new
- Give sincere compliments
- Be helpful (10x more engaged)
- Share something personal



## BE A POSITIVE INFLUENCER

5 : 1

- Highest-performing teams 5.6:1
- Medium-performing teams 1.9:1
- Low-performing teams 0.36:1
  
- Zenger & Folkman

# LEVERAGE THE POWER OF PRAISE

How do we get praise wrong?

- Stingy with praise
- Motivate by criticism instead of praise
- Only praise top performers; overlook team players

1. Stop comparison praise
2. Spotlight the right
3. Praise team players, not just superstars
4. Encourage peer praise
5. Be specific!
6. 21-day good will email

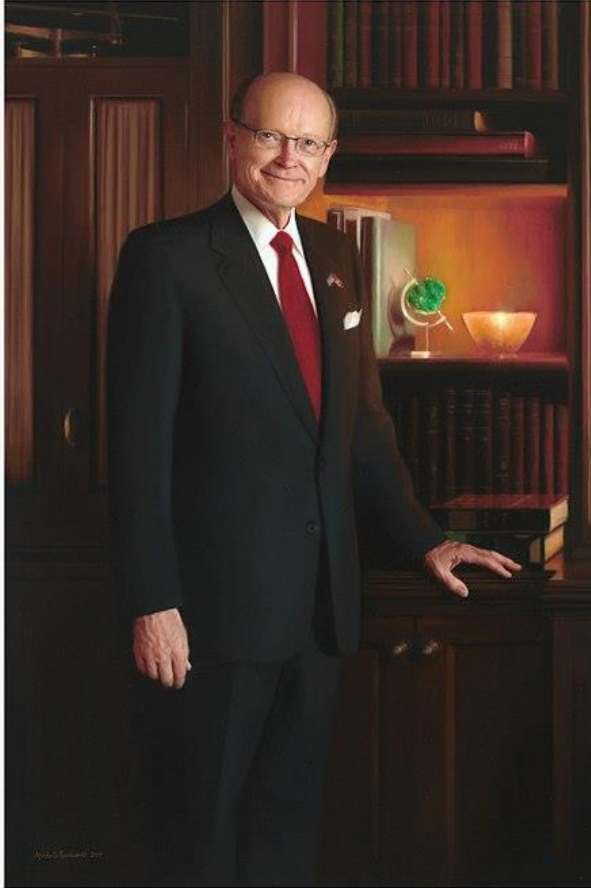




## GIVE THANKS & PRAISE FREELY



- 50% more fund-raising calls after praise and appreciation pep talk



## Donald Petersen Former Chairman of Ford

- Handwrote short, sincere, positive messages every day to people he worked with

*“The most important ten minutes of your day are those you spend doing something to boost the people you work with.”*



## **Indra Noori**

### **CEO, PepsiCo**

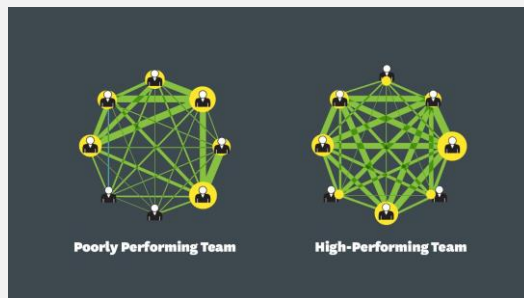
- Sings in the hallways
- Walks barefoot in the office
- Wrote the parents of 29 senior Pepsi execs to tell them what great kids they'd raised

# BREAK DOWN SILOS

- Walk around
- Cross-functional shadowing or lunch
- Combined team lunches
- Personal introductions
- Talk to people outside your circle
- Invite others to the table



# Gerard Arpey, American Airlines



- No one knows more than the people doing the task
- Invited mechanics to monthly meetings with management
  - Redesigned engine repair: Saved 140 man-hours per engine = tens of millions per year
- Dispatcher, also a drag racer, figured center of gravity aerodynamics better if passengers sat in rear
- Pilot suggested refueling in Dallas instead of LA, saved \$50,000/day on fuel

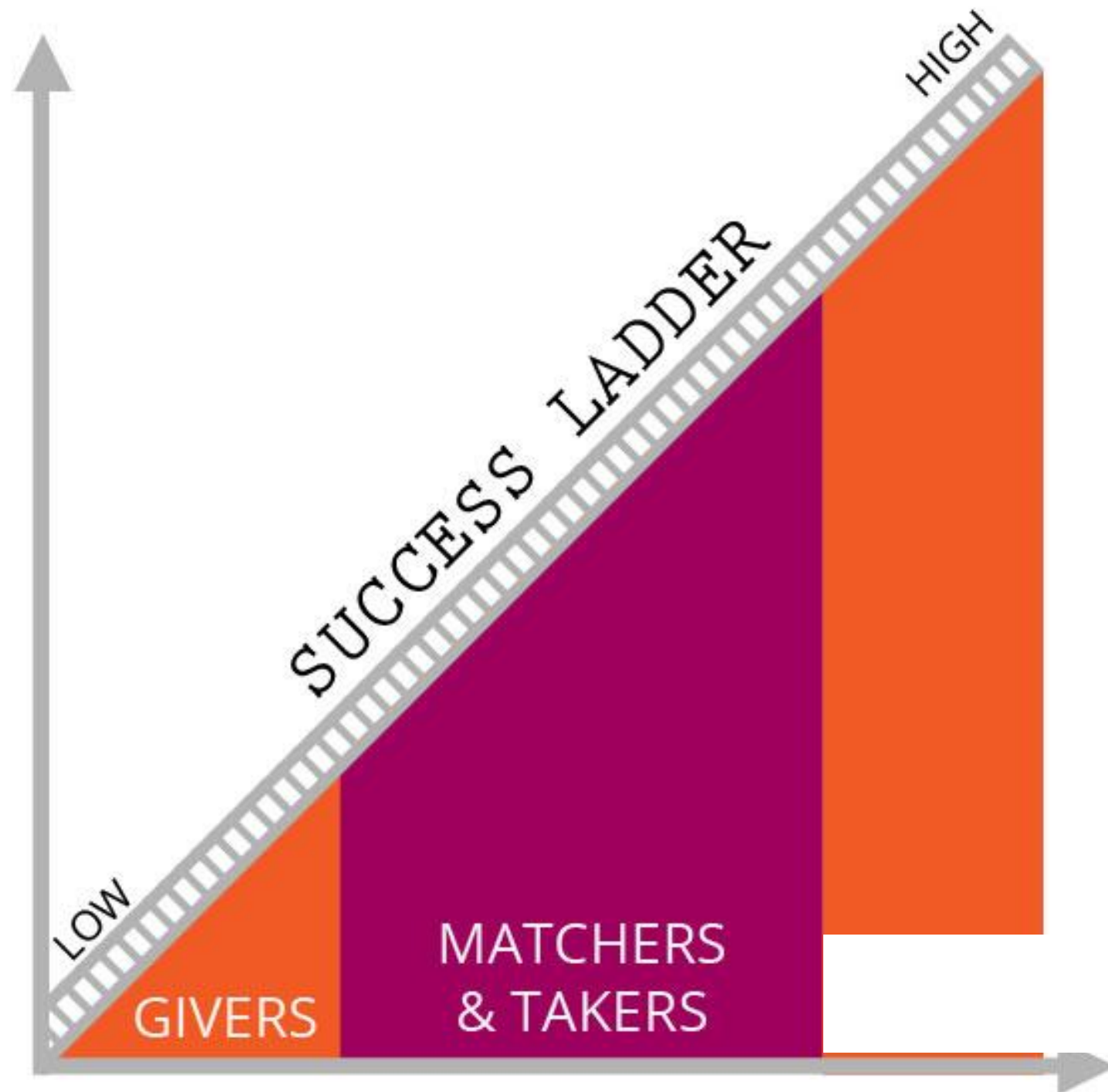
## BE A GIVER

Want to resist stress, increase productivity, and get a promotion?

Don't just seek social support — provide it to others.

### WORK ALTRUISTS...

- 10 times more likely to be engaged
- Significantly happier
- 40% more likely to be promoted over next 2 years (Achor)
- Give more help, guidance, advice, feedback (Hamilton, 2007)



### **TAKER**

- What can you do for me?

### **MATCHER**

- I'll do this if you do that.

### **GIVER**

- What can I do for you?

Adam Grant, *Givers & Takers*



## Successful givers...

- Say no and set boundaries
- Try to help other get what they need another way
- Give in small doses
- Specialize in certain types of giving
- Feel appreciated
  - *“Giver burnout has less to do with the amount of giving and more with the amount of feedback about the impact of that giving.” Adam Grant*



# GATHER

- Create a social spot at work
- Synchronize breaks
  - (\$15 million productivity gains + 10% increase in employee satisfaction)
- Celebrate wins and milestones
- Connect across departments
- Do team-building activities
- Food helps!



# IMPLEMENT TEAM RITUALS

- Gratitude Circle or Positivity Round Robin
- Team member shout out
- High and Low of the week
- What's your favorite...
- Share a song, TED Talk, TV or book recommendation
- Random question
- Team member spotlight (in person, video, before meetings, newsletter)
- Treat & greet
- Share a passion
- Teach us something



# CONNECT REMOTELY

- Call for “Cameras on”
- Greet each person by name and wait for response
- Use “Chat” feature
- Watch facial expressions
- Pause longer for comments and questions
- Meet in person occasionally
- Call people to check in
- Remote happy hour, team lunch
- Arrive early; stay on after





“SELF-CARE IS NEVER A  
SELFISH ACT - IT IS  
SIMPLY GOOD  
STEWARDSHIP OF THE  
ONLY GIFT I HAVE, THE  
GIFT I WAS PUT ON  
EARTH TO OFFER  
OTHERS.”

- PARKER PALMER



**David Eccles  
School of Business**

---

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH