



Working From Home - A New Relationship With Work

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Supporting Educators, Transforming Lives

SELF-CARE - The Psychological Contract With Work



- Affects our sense of value and self-worth
- What is my self-worth based on?
- Is my value based on:
 - ❖ How much I give?
 - ❖ How much I earn?
 - ❖ How many hours I spend on work?
 - ❖ What my role “should” allow me to achieve?
- What “stories” do I tell myself about work and my expectations?

Keeping my boundaries clear:

If I was in a relationship/friendship where they did not allow me to:

- exercise,
- eat healthily or
- see my friends and family

What would I do?

What would I say?

But these are exceptional times and our relationship with work has changed dramatically and at great speed! What is our psychological contract now?
Boundaries are blurred!!!

My Relationship With Work – Working From Home



What is staying the same?

- Staying connected to our pupils and to our colleagues
- Preparing and teaching high quality learning experiences
- Having a clear purpose and direction in what we are doing and having a clear sense of making a difference to our children and young people's lives
- Keeping to a routine – but please beware of habits from work: What serves me? What does not?

What has changed?

- We are not physically present to our pupils and colleagues
- We can therefore feel unsure as to whether or not we are making the difference to all our pupils or indeed as to whether or not they are safe and secure.
- Our own motivation levels and attention levels can fluctuate with other demands in our respective homes e.g. looking after our own children and families, distractions,
- Increased anxiety – not knowing the full impact on children and young people and their families as the crisis unfolds; sense of disconnect from their reality.

Some questions
to ask yourself
when setting up
at home for your
work:

What do I need to
continue to do at
home that I would
do at work?

What do I need to do
differently because of
environmental factors
as well as physical,
mental and emotional
wellbeing factors?

Who needs to
know this about
my arrangements
and what do I
need from others?

What will support
me to do this?

Getting Real With Working From Home



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Environmental & Physical – Boundaries and Ideas



- Physical space – Where is it best to work? How is the lighting and the air? Will I be alone or with family? Setting Physical boundaries allows you to have healthier Psychological boundaries at home.
- Keeping it clear and organised – Every day at the designated “closing time”, tidy away what you no longer need and file away all that you need to.
- Timetable and Routine – The timetable needs to support your needs to work, take breaks, eat, rest, connect with others in the house and online, exercise and play! You need “play-time,” too! It may not be socialising as before, but you may decide to learn that instrument or language or paint old furniture!
- IT set-up and being connected – This can take time so be patient with yourself and factor it into the timetable. Making connections with colleagues, not just on the coursework but sharing experiences of what this feels like to be at home are crucial for our wellbeing too. We are all in this together!
- Online boundaries – What will you allow? School is now in your home, so... How often? When? Where?

Mental Wellbeing – Boundaries and Ideas

- Connecting with purpose - Write down somewhere your WHY and make this visible to yourself every morning.
- Preparing a ***reasonable*** amount of high quality learning activities and experiences. Overload for parents and children is very real too.
- Feedback – How are receiving this? You need to know that your work is making a difference, so what have you put in place to support you with this?
- Checking in with yourself several times a day – Stopping and taking breaks and during breaks, checking in with self – How are you? Anxious? Relaxed? Tired? What do you need before resuming work? A walk? Deep breathing exercises?

Mental Wellbeing – Boundaries and Ideas Cont'd



- “Diet of the mind” – Be aware of what you are allowing into your work space and your home space every day. Limit intake of social media and news items. Yes, stay informed; but be aware of the impact of this “stream of consciousness” has on yours!
- Overthinking – If we have habits of worry and anxiety, can we find a way to reframe it? Instead of calling ourselves “anxious” or “worried”, can we say instead, “Worry is visiting again” or “Anxiety is knocking at the door.” It allows us to distance the experience from who we really are and we can identify less with this as a personality trait but as a transient sensation. (More to follow on this area from The Hive and colleagues.)

Emotional Wellbeing Factors

- Digesting change – Take time to reflect on what this crisis means to you. How it is affecting you personally or affecting your thoughts about the world we lived in a month ago and the world we are living in now. We all need coherence, individually and collectively, so what does this mean for you? What narrative supports you at this time?
- Meaningful Connection to Others - Sharing the experiences of working like this and how it feels matter right now, just as much as the coursework. It can help reduce anxiety, worry, doubt about doing enough and meeting needs.
- Guilt – taking more breaks, being distracted, resting more. Fatigue may be experienced quite acutely during the first couple of weeks and even longer – adrenaline, new pace, “coming down.” Please DO NOT feel guilty if you need to rest more at this time. Your body is adjusting. This is why your routine and workload has to be reasonable and sustainable.

Emotional Wellbeing Factors Cont'd



- Online Overload - Feeling overwhelmed by amount of material out there to support you? Reduce number of followers for now (sorry pals!) to support you in coping with the overload.
- Self-Compassion – Be gentle and kind with yourself. This is tough, but you can be gentle.
- Finding the joy – Looking for moments of joy; enjoying moments of laughter, connection, wonder every day.
- Opportunities to volunteer in the community – “Giving” can provide us with a greater sense of wellbeing and doing something constructive in the community at this time can help us feel better.

Use of Time - Prioritising Self-Care Everyday Example



- 8:00am – Email check and responses/ Update learning site.
- 9:00am – Joe Wick's Workout
- 9:45am – Check-in with pupils and online learning progress/support.
- 11:15am Coffee break and stretching
- 11:45am - Setting up more online learning – Assessments
- 1:30pm – 2:15pm Lunch and family time (online or otherwise) or Lunch and power nap!
- 2:15pm – 4:00pm – Online contact with colleagues – update on progress/collegiate working
- 4:00pm – 5:00pm – Daily walk alone or with family member
- 5:00pm – 6:00pm – Last email check of day – FINISH
- 6:00pm – COMPLETE HOMETIME

- What is currently working well with your established routine?
- What needs to change to support your wellbeing?
- Who/What can support you with this?
- What are you enjoying?
What is giving you a sense of accomplishment?
- How can you remain flexible with your own regime?

When do my expectations support me?

Expectation?

A strong belief that something will happen or be the case.



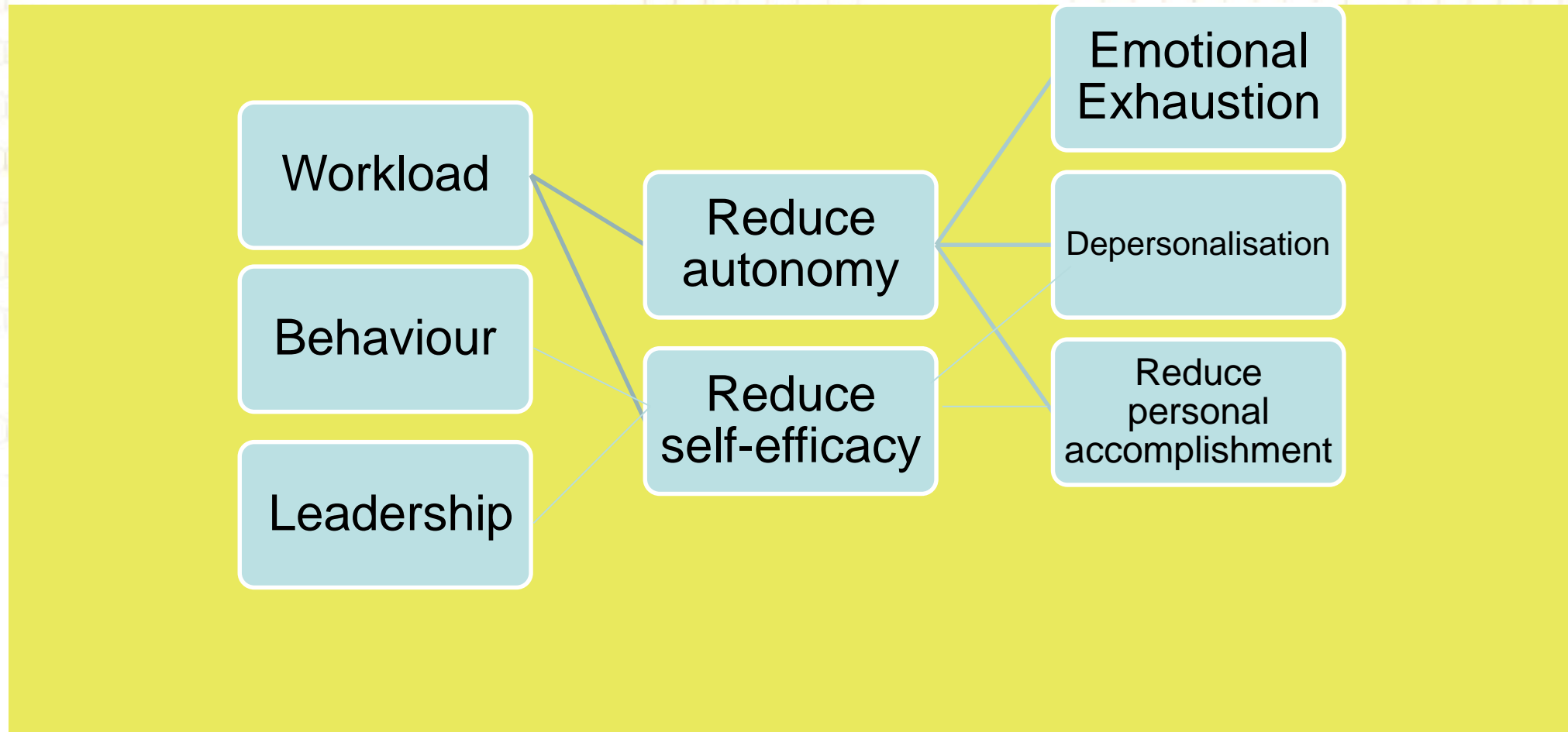
Reality?

The state of things as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them.



Self-Efficacy and Autonomy –

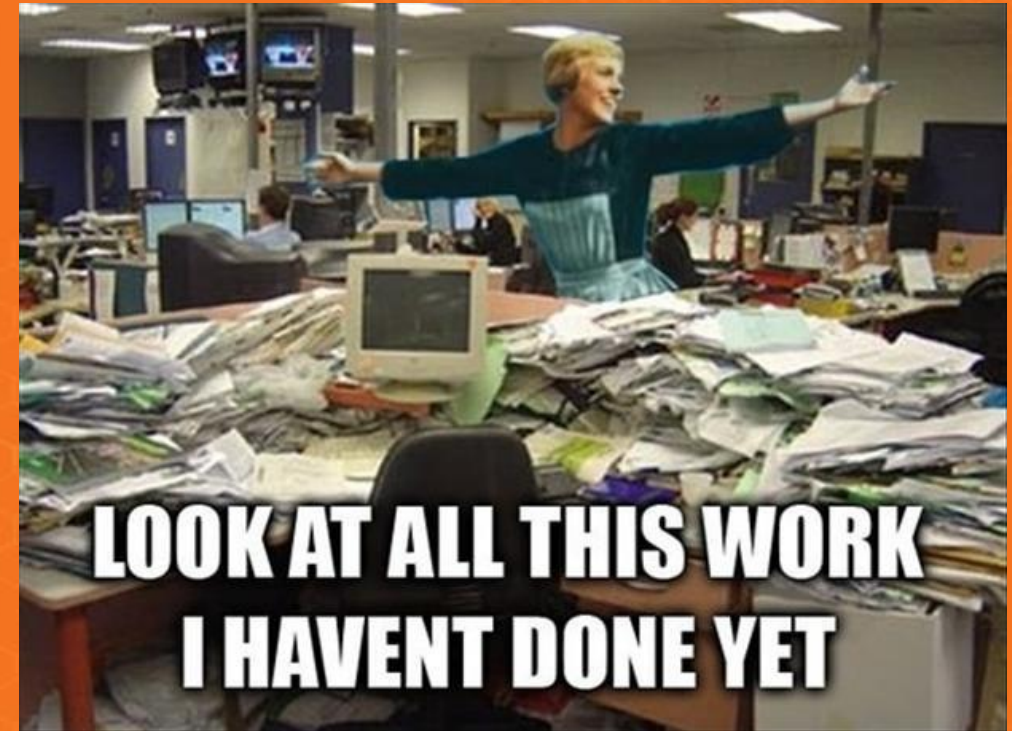
We still need feedback and we still need to feel control



Workload – Making a Difference



- What is realistic to complete over a day? A week? A month?
- What expectations are supporting you at this time? Which expectations are not?
- Who might you need to share your thoughts and feelings with?
- What feedback are you receiving from pupils and colleagues about how the learning is progressing?
- What is giving you a sense of achievement and accomplishment?



Behaviour, Leadership, Teams, Relationships...

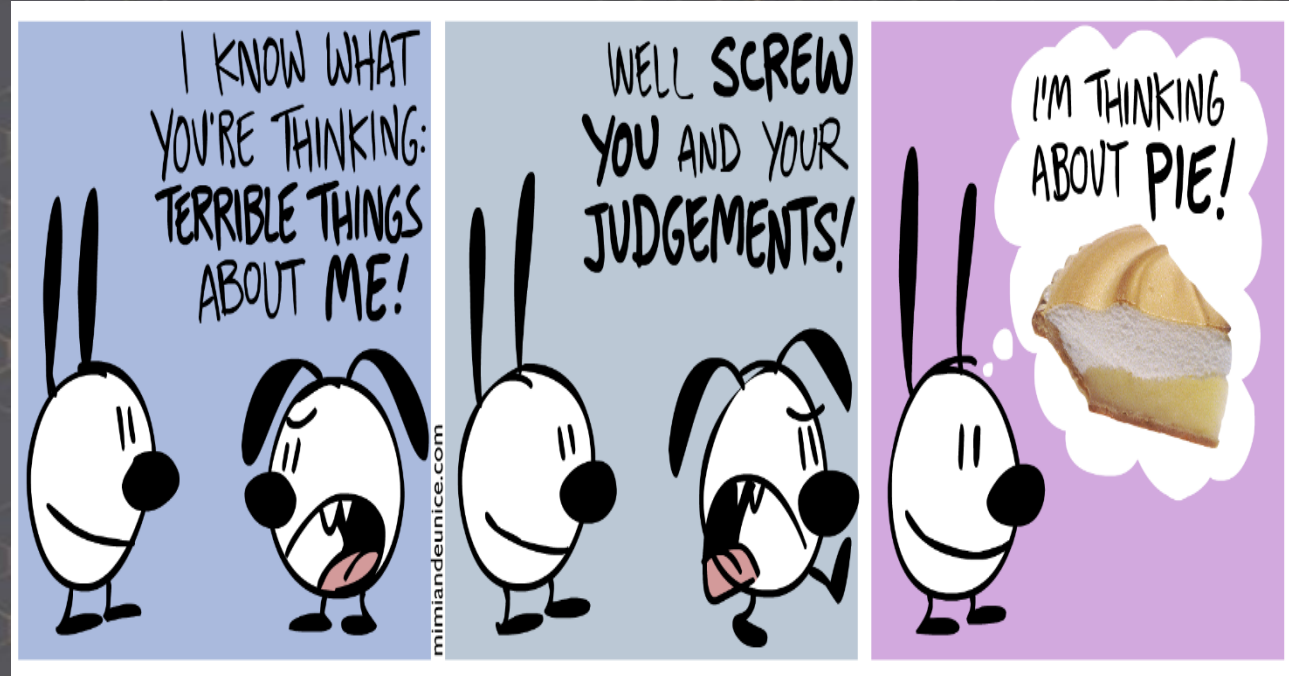


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- What is supporting you as a staff to remain collegiate at this time?
- What has been challenging? How has this been resolved? What matters most now?
- What are the clear values that underpin your working as a team?
- What are the clear agreements that you have made as a team that continue to support your efforts?
- Whose needs are you meeting in the work that you are doing as a team?
- When there is conflict, what is the unmet needs that are being expressed, no matter how poorly?
- How can the practice of compassion support you?

Our Thoughts are Central to Self-Care

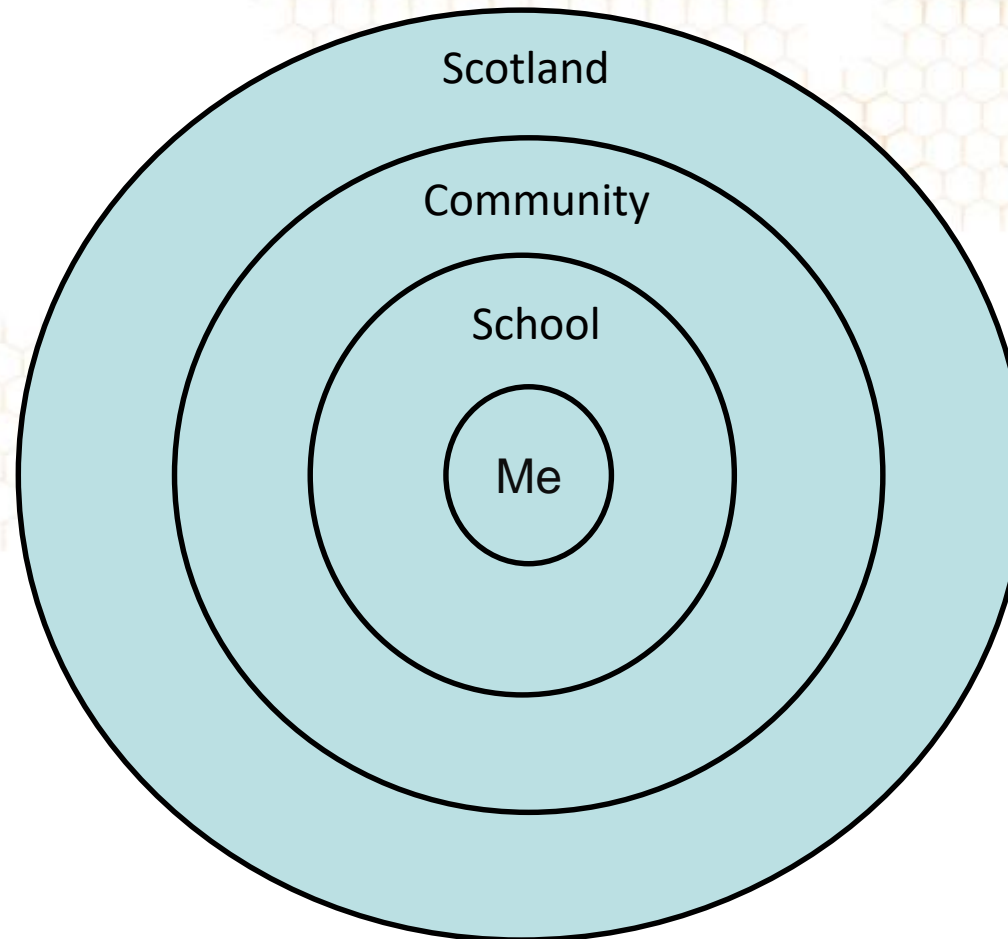
60 000 to
120 000 thoughts
every day!



“Mindful awareness – or mindfulness – spontaneously arises out of this Being mode when we learn to pay attention, on purpose, in the present moment, **without judgment**, to things as they actually are.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Locus of Control – What can I control, influence, let go of?



Not getting it all done...



Attributions –

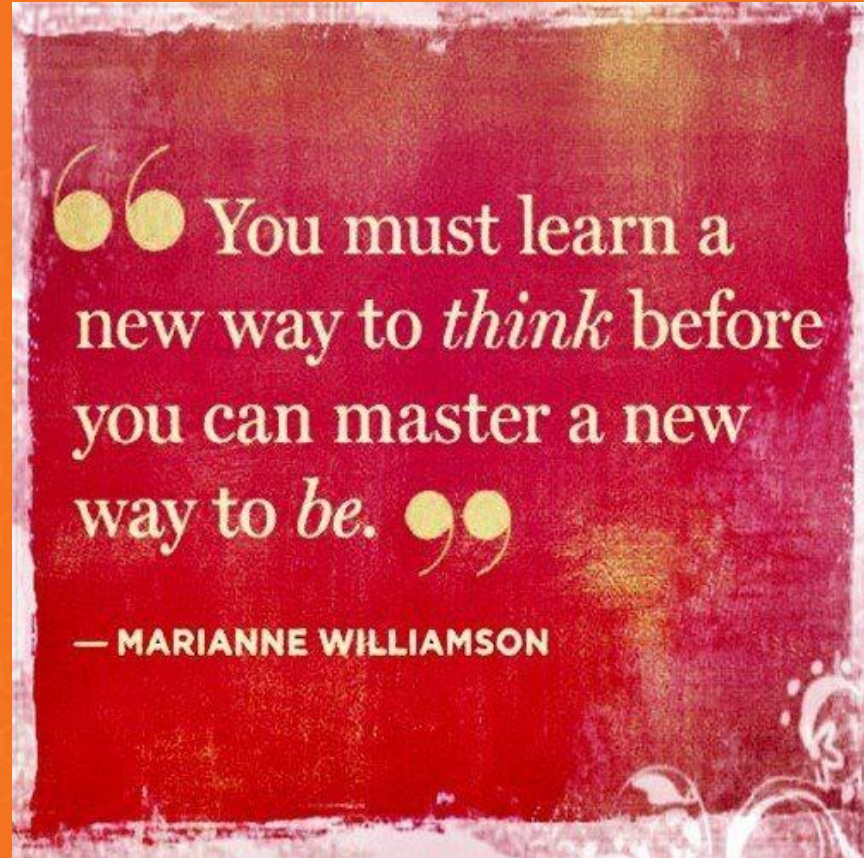
Dispositional or Situational?

- It's impossible!
- No one can do this!
- I am just rubbish at this job!
- Teaching is just not for me!
- I feel I've let all my pupils down!
- I've let my boss down!

Reality Check and Self-Compassion:

- You're not alone. Others are experiencing the same right now.
- Label your feelings – frustrated, helpless, hopeless.
- What would your best friend say?
- How realistic are your expectations and/or others' expectations?
- What have you been successful at that day/week? What have you achieved and achieved really well?
- Did you expect everything you planned this week to go the way you planned it?

Our behaviour is underpinned by habitual thoughts and beliefs,
BUT this is NOT “Business as Usual”, so we need to consider
new thoughts and new behaviours to support our wellbeing.



“Plugged Into The Past” – Dr Joe Dispenza

Old Thoughts, Old Feelings Exist to “Protect” or Limit Us

Examples of areas in our lives that can be habitual:

- Routines
- Patterns of thoughts and behaviours
- Predictable relationships
- Environmental cues
- Assumptions about situations, people, reactions
- Own reactions and triggers
- Learned helplessness – solution is “out there”

The Power of Habit

Possible Supportive examples:

- Eating breakfast; Showering; Locking your house door

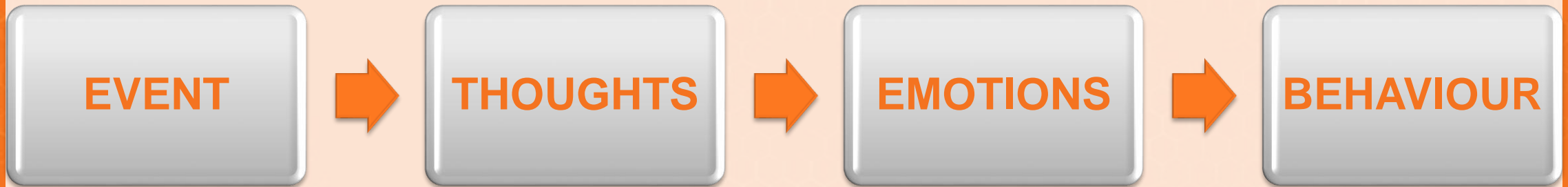
Possible Limiting examples:

- How you travel to and from work
- How you go about your work routine

- Which habits help me feel better?
- Which habits of thought or behaviour do not serve me in this situation?
- What do I need to think about/do differently?

Where do we default to?

“Noticing” as a Wellbeing Strategy



Where do we default to?

Reframing as a Wellbeing Strategy



Reframing as a strategy:

- Doubt – “I’m not sure that I am doing enough to help”
- Questions to ask: How has my routine supported me to help others? What feedback have I received this week that tells me I am making a difference to others? What more is physically possible and realistic for me to do?
- Example of a reframe: “I have given all that is possible this week as I manage change myself. I can plan more support for next week. I need to be realistic in managing my efforts and energy so that this is sustainable in unknown times.”

Where do we default to?

Reframing as a Wellbeing Strategy



Reframing as a strategy:

- Guilt – “I feel like I have abandoned my pupils at a time when they needed me the most. I feel awful.”
 - Questions to ask – What choice did I have in all of this? How can I maintain contact with pupils now? How can I check-in with them? How can I turn this guilt into something resourceful?
- Example of reframe: “We were all in the same situation of having to change quickly. Guilt shows me that I care about my pupils. I can use this energy in a different way to reach out to my pupils online with messages of support.”

Where do we default to?

Reframing as a Wellbeing Strategy



Reframing as a strategy:

- Anxiety – “When will this be over? I cannot cope with uncertainty”
- Questions to ask: When have you experienced this anxiety before? What supported you then to feel better? How can you use this resourcefulness from then in this situation now? What can you control at this time? Do you identify as BEING anxious; or as EXPERIENCING anxiety – there is a difference?
- Example of reframe: “Anxiety is visiting me again. I have experienced this before. I know what I can control and I will focus on this now. I can always control my breathing and this eases anxious feelings that visit me. “

Summing Up and Reflective Questions



- In what ways has my relationship with work changed and in what ways has it stayed the same?
- What boundaries do I need to put in place to support my wellbeing and to clearly delineate working life and home life? What can I control, influence, let go of?
- What are healthy and supportive expectations of myself, my colleagues and my pupils at this time, each day, each week? When will I continue to review these expectations as the weeks go by?
- Which connections with pupils and their families, colleagues, and my own family support my wellbeing at this time?
- What do I notice about the habitual thoughts and feelings that I experience and how can I reframe these for myself?