

Welcome to Week 6

23 September, 2019

Welcome to week 6!

Woo-Hoo and here we are! This week, we are focusing on cognitive flexibility/regulation. I have to admit that in reviewing this week's video, I had a couple of thoughts. 1) I am not explaining cognitive flexibility well at all, and 2) I totally got the 2% quote wrong. (I think I experienced what I call a "brain fart" in that moment.) I apologize for my inconvenience to you and it's all fixable (unless you don't read this email). So, this email serves as offering some correction to the week 6 online video, as well as offering some invitations. Ready?

Clarifying Cognitive Flexibility: In the context of this course, cognitive flexibility is about cultivating the ability to entertain various and sometimes competing thoughts in one's mind. In the practice of noticing what you are noticing, what we are inviting in here is a noticing of how one can change the thought that is taking center stage in the mind or focus on one thought at a time. That is a little harder to do when thoughts are being fueled by emotions or being fed by the negative bias of the brain.

So, combining various researcher's research, we can practice the SBNRR practice (from Meng's *Search Insider Yourself* book) and engage in inquiry from Byron Katie's work to invite in other perspectives of the present moment experience, rather than have our brain stay in the mind-wandering default mode. This practice is all to inform awareness of next moment choice that is compassionate (more on what we mean by compassion later). Sometimes what is most compassionate is gathering more information or staying in inquiry longer before rendering a judgment or actionable decision.

Clarifying the 2% Quote: The 2% quote is intended to illustrate that while the brain appears to wander 47% of the time and that 70% of the time leaders report they are not attentive in meetings, only 2% are not investing in finding ways to increase their personal productivity... wouldn't it be useful then if we walked our talk by focusing on ways that we can train our attention on demand as well as cultivate many other beneficial leadership skills? That includes, perhaps, finding other ways to leverage meeting time so that we're not inviting people to not pay attention 70% of the time because our meeting agendas are not focused, meeting expectations are not clearly co-created, or fill in the blank with your experience of why your mind has wandered during meetings _____.

Having said all that, please let me know if you have any questions from this week.

As we move into this week's practice, the reminder is to avoid trying to "control your thoughts or emotions." Rather, see if you can practice a gentle noticing of what is arising as you move through all the steps invited in the video.

Our online in-class practice this week can be accessed here - [zoom webinar\(https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/187491131\)](https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/187491131) and will be held on September 26th from 12-1 pacific time. Please join in if you can or you can always review the recorded video when you have a moment.

Also, as some of you consider how these practices can be utilized in your organizational behaviour and organizational change work, consider this:

1. The importance of defining your initiatives. Remind yourself to ask people what they FIRST think about when they read this "orange." Do they think orange the color or orange the fruit? And then do they notice an almost immediate yum or yuck following that? This is the human brain just doing its thing...
2. If we are going to co-create something different then we have right now, we need to make the implicit explicit and do so with a lot of kindness or else, people will shut down. Have you ever noticed what happens when you think something is a good thing and then someone requires you to do it or tells you it needs to be done in a certain way (even if that is the way you have been doing it)? Do you notice resistance creeping in?
3. We are cultivating kind inquiry into what is and an honoring of what is being noticed without accepting that it won't change. Change is inevitable; notice nature... nothing is ever the same in nature, unless a human being thinks it hasn't changed. Nature's changes are subtle and leveraging them will be missed if the mind is thinking it knows already what is being seen. Ah... stopping, breathing, noticing, reflecting, looking again with kind inquiry, and then choosing.

Enjoy the practice. I am here to support you in your experience.

In joy,

Marilee and Carol