

FOCUSING FRUSTRATION FOR BETTER RESULTS



Have you ever found yourself getting frustrated at work? Perhaps with people around you being unhelpful or not doing their job properly, the way your manager deals with a situation or individual at work, someone getting a promotion who you don't think deserves it or perhaps changes taking place that you can't see the relevance of.

There are many situations we can find ourselves in at work that may lead to frustration. In fact, everyone experiences frustration at times and it's not the issue that we get frustrated, but the way we handle that frustration, that defines us.

We can express the emotions of frustration in many different ways, many of them negatively: rolling of the eyes in a meeting, folding our arms and sulking, slamming the phone down in anger, snapping at a colleague and more. But how often does that kind of behaviour help the situation? And how often does it hinder solving the issues at hand and actively damage our reputation?

By learning to channel and manage our emotional response to frustration, we have a far greater chance of solving the problems that created the frustration in the first place, as well as growing a reputation as someone who is proactive and not reactive at work.

This article has been written to help people learn to manage their frustration at work. By proactively managing our emotional responses we can improve our own sense of satisfaction as well as build a reputation as someone who handles frustration in a productive and positive way.

WHAT IS FRUSTRATION?

Frustration is an emotional response to being blocked from achieving something we want.

When handled positively, frustration can lead us to achieve more, overcome barriers and challenges, stretch our creative thinking and engage our mental resources. When handled negatively however, frustration can be toxic to our relationships with others, both personally and professionally.

WHAT CAUSES FRUSTRATION?

Frustration can be caused by many different things, often it's a direct response to stress. Therefore, to manage frustration more effectively, it's worth considering managing our stress levels more productively. See my article on stress coping for help in this area.

Frustration can also be a response to internal triggers such as perceived needs and wants, lack of confidence or even fear. Alternatively, it can be a response to external triggers, such as other people's attitudes and behaviour.

I would encourage you to reflect upon and identify your own personal triggers of frustration, once you have been able to do this, you will find your response to those triggers far easier to control. If you are aware in advance when you are being triggered, you can take steps to control your response to those triggers in a more productive manner by following the six steps below.

SIX STEPS TO FRUSTRATION-RESPONSE CONTROL

1. **Stop (and breathe)** - when our emotions are triggered, our breathing tends to become shallow, we release chemicals into our brain and body that enact the fight or flight response in us. Where stressful situations that involve our safety require these reactions, they are totally necessary, but most work-based frustrations are not life-critical and therefore do not warrant the same response. By consciously stopping your thoughts and focusing on your breathing for a minute or two, you can calm those natural reactions to stress and thus calm your overall reaction to the situation that frustrates you.
2. **Be mindful, not mind-full** – pull yourself out of the moment where your thoughts are getting tangled (when getting frustrated, do you find you experience racing thoughts?) and put yourself somewhere else where you can clear your head and calm your mind. You will find this strengthens your emotional resilience and leads to a more positive outcome. If you are interested in learning more about mindfulness visit our website articles page.
3. **Ask yourself how truly important it is** – how will this situation impact you a week, month or year from now? Will it have life-changing results or will it all be forgotten? If it will be forgotten, the chances are it's now all that important.
4. **Position yourself outside of the situation** – and look at it objectively. The use of a method called perceptual positioning can be useful here. Stand back and look at the situation from the other person's perspective (or perception of the situation). Observe what they think, feel and see. Then review it from an observer's position, what do they think, feel and see in this situation? For more information on Perceptual Positioning, visit our website articles page.
5. **Share your frustrations with someone who can be objective** – avoid feeding your feelings by talking with others who share in your frustration, but try sharing with someone else who is uninvolved. They may help you observe a different perspective on the situation.
6. **Adopt a solutions mindset** – by seeing yourself as 'in control' rather than 'helpless' in the situation you can begin to work on solving the problem at hand, rather than triggering an emotional response. Be proactive and look to solve the problem, rather than reactive and add to the problem. We have an article 'Healthy Mindset' which can help more here.

As always, I hope this article has been useful to you. If you have any learning needs you'd like to share or discuss, please connect with us either on linked in (Thirst4 Learning Ltd) or via hello@thirst4learning.com.

Best wishes to all.