

Taking Full Control of Your PassionFlow in 2012!

Why Others' Emotions Impact Us

Our research tells us that others (i.e., your boss, your co-workers) can impact your PassionFlow. "Passion begets passion!" However, it is also true that others' behavior can also act as a blocker to another's PassionFlow. Therefore, your circumstances can have an impact: sometimes it's insignificant; but, sometimes, it's enough to "throw your game".

Recent research around our brain clearly outlines that we are impacted by others:

"The brain is an open loop. We rely on connections with other people for our emotional stability. Scientists describe the open-loop system as 'interpersonal limbic regulation,' whereby one person transmits signals that can alter hormone levels, cardiovascular function, sleep rhythms and even immune function inside the body of another. Other people can change our very physiology and our emotions. The continual interplay of limbic open loops among members of a group creates a kind of emotional soup, with everyone adding his or her flavor to the mix. Negative emotions — especially chronic anger, anxiety or a sense of futility — powerfully disrupt work, hijacking attentions from the tasks at hand." (Daniel Goleman, *Primal Leadership*)

How We Protect Ourselves from Negative Emotions

However, we don't have to become a victim of our circumstances. Our awareness of how others' can affect us empowers us. We can consciously choose to either invite others' emotional energy to mix with our own; or, we can choose to minimize the impact of others' emotions. It's not always easy to prevent others from significantly impacting our emotional health; sometimes it takes sheer determination. The level of challenge will depend on the extent to which we perceive others as obstacles to our meaning or progress.

Tips for taking full control of your PassionFlow in 2012:

1. **Block the negative stuff!** For example: We may sit next to someone who complains incessantly. We can choose to listen to these complaints, to participate in the discussion, which then invites this negative energy. Or, we can tune this person out and stay focused on our own goals and action plans that will lead us to experiencing a true sense of progress. Also, if your office policy allows, listen to classical music with head phones! It's been proven to improve individual performance and de-stress us. And, most importantly, don't hang out in lunch rooms or at the water cooler with people who are negative. Find the positive people in your workplace and find reasons to interact with them. It will uplift you guaranteed.
2. **Be persistent and tenacious.** We often lose our enthusiasm when surrounded by naysayers. We become disheartened when we don't acquire support we feel we need, sometimes even to the point of giving up. When you have a good idea or a solution, be persistent. Persistence is a behavior passionate people rely on to sustain their PassionFlow. It can take time to build support. You may need to educate people, you may need to create a business case, you may need to find out who influences the decision-maker and work through them, or you might simply need to wait for the right time to propose your idea or solution again. Be tenacious. Hold fast to your ideas and explore alternative ways forward.

3. **Offer appreciation when faced with criticism.** Sounds crazy? Maybe, but it can be a powerful way to protect your PassionFlow. Meet negative energy with positive energy! Rather than adopting the stance of defending yourself (which is energy draining); think about how you might learn something from the criticism (learning fuels a sense of progress).

If your boss is silent when it comes to praising you but vocal when it comes to finding fault, always thank your boss for noticing the “error” or “improvement area.” Don’t take it personally. It’s about the work, not about you. Even if you disagree with the comment, think about a way of using the criticism to your own benefit. Show that you can work with criticism and use it to stimulate further engagement or address issues. Take the higher road. You’ll never regret it.

- a. Made an inputting error? Maybe this is an opportunity to learn more about your system.
- b. Got upset with a customer? Maybe this is a sign that there is an underlying issue which needs addressing.
- c. Cut corners on a proposal? Maybe this is the time to discuss lead time on submission.

Use the criticism to empower yourself. One of my mentors once told me **“Never justify, explain or defend.** It just makes you look weak. Instead, accept the feedback and use it to further empower yourself.”

Quotes of the Month!

“If you have a positive attitude and constantly strive to give your best effort, eventually you will overcome your immediate problems and find you are ready for greater challenges.” **Pat Riley, American professional basketball executive**

“Resentment, anger, frustration, worry, disappointment—negative emotional states, justified or not, take a toll on your heart, brain and body. Don't let justified emotions rob your health and well-being.” **Doc Childre and Howard Martin, HeartMath Solution**

“The one important thing I have learned over the years is the difference between taking one's work seriously and taking one's self seriously. The first is imperative and the second disastrous.” **Margot Fonteyn, British prima ballerina**

“Encourage others to be their best selves. Encourage others to take actions that will generate positive outcomes, rather than further negative responses.” **Jacqueline Throop-Robinson, PassionWorks! Inc.**

“One of the fundamental differences between the Victim Orientation and this one [Creator] is where you put your focus of attention...For Victims, the focus is always on what they don’t want: the problems that seem constantly to multiply in their lives. They don’t want the person, condition, or circumstance they consider their Persecutor Creators, on the other hand, place their focus on what they do want. Doing this, Creators still face and solve problems in the course of creating outcomes they want, but their focus remains fixed on their ultimate vision.” **David Emerald Quotes, from The Power of TED***