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Context to the conversation

Bill Burnett speaks about the distinction between energy and engagement and how journaling about these two can be illuminative for us.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And you use two words, energy and engagement in the journal. Can you talk a little bit about the distinction between the two? Because very often I notice people sometimes can end up confusing the two.

Bill Burnett (BB): Yeah, so energy would be, when we do a thing where you do an energy map of your week, when you're doing activities, some activities you do, when you're done, you actually feel more energetic. Like, this is a cool conversation when we're done. I'm gonna be full of ideas, and you're gonna be full of ideas. We'll be more energetic. Other times I have conversations maybe with toxic people in my organization about budgets and things, and it's a zero-sum game, and they're always fighting, and that just drains me of my energy. So energy is something you can notice in yourself and the metric we use is when you're done with a task, are you more or less energetic than you were when you started? Engagement, mean, know, turns out the human brain can only do one thing at a time. It can do lots and lots of things in parallel, but you're only aware of one thing at a time. So what you put your attention to, what you engage in is where you're putting all your cycles. Are you engaging in lots of negative behaviors, negative self-talk, negative interactions with people or are you engaged in positive self-talk, positive interactions, positive activities. Engagement is about what you spend your time on and energy is really, what's the energetic profile of those things? they giving or draining energy? So they are different and you know, I did this one because I can't, I've tried doing journaling, you know, I'm supposed to journal, it's supposed to be good for you and all the positive psychologists say journaling is great. I just never could get into it, so I figured, all right, what could I, I could write one line a day, one line, one observation about my day, and I could put it on, we got two little dials on our good time journal, give me one thing that happened today that was positive, rate positive, negative energy, positive, negative engagement, and if it was flow, put a big red star. And that, can, you can persist in that, because it's just one observation of a day, positive or negative, one observation a day. Rate it on the chart, move to the next day. Do that for the positive side guys will say, if you want to start a new habit or eliminate an old bad habit, it takes about eight weeks. So journal for six to eight weeks and see how your mood is, see how your feeling is. The more you spend time paying attention to positive things, guess what? More positive things show up. Huh, isn't that funny?

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: One thing I would say is that when we journal, it is often useful to journal the “what” rather than the “why”. It is often hard to make meaning of what is going on in the short run but if we collect adequate data and then sit back and look at it after a few weeks, patterns often begin to emerge.

End of transcription

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock the human potential of senior executive’s / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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