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Janet Paleo—Editor

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Bother Me By Janet Paleo

Recently I was in a meeting where the discussion was about measuring “outcomes” of services for people accessing the public mental health system. It occurred to me that the measures were really about people not being bothered. You could say a good outcome for someone accessing services is if they didn't bother anyone. This means they didn't wind up in a hospital, a jail, in crisis services and they would show up for appointments and, of course, take the meds. A person could do all those things and society would be happy that this is a good outcome from treatment. However, for the person, this does not mean the person has a full life, is happy and feeling fulfilled.

As I examined this further, I wondered how many people prefer the clients who don't bother them. I would like to imagine people start off wanting to help people, but especially in a public system which is underfunded and exhausts their staff with unreasonable case loads, I can understand how people can get to this. Even though I understand it, doesn't make it right.

As I looked further, I realized this was not only the public mental health system, often people get the same treatment in a general hospital. While in a hospital you can hear staff complaining about people who are always pushing the button or calling staff. Then I realized this happens in homes. The phone rings, we don't want to be bothered. The child who wants attention is often told to sit down, be quiet and stop bothering me. This is not just the mental health system, it is pervasive in our society. It is almost as if in a world which is over simulated, which demands our attention to millions of messages, we find ourselves wanting only to be left alone or not be bothered. To not be bothered by others, family, even animals at times.

Consider this scenario. A mother comes home from a taxing day at work. She walks in to having to fix dinner, do household chores and the little ones want her to play. Being tired and overwhelmed, one would not be surprised to hear mom say, “Go play. Leave me alone.”

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Sole Survivor: The Flood by Samantha Thornton

“To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in suffering”-

Friedrich Nietzsche

“I survived because the fire inside me burned brighter than the fire around me”-Joshua Graham

The icky sensation made me feel ironically alone. Little did I know how common it was this time. Maybe common in general, though rarely spoken until now.

The storm brought me this ugly feeling. After the fact, the horrible aloneness of that feeling proved phantom, as people whispered about it in hallways. Internet click bait articles began to surface just hours after the rain stopped; survivors guilt. I was brave enough to blurt it out in a miserable text to my boss. How are you?! He asked. Um, well...I am sort of peachy, aside from spending 24 hours watching my friends on Facebook Live shivering on rooftops and watching boats leave them behind. Videos of flooded first floors with family heirloom Christmas ornaments, photo albums and children's toys floating in the bilge below. Ya, that pretty much sucked. And me? ME??? I never took on water, nor roof damage. I never lost power. I never even lost cable, or internet for heaven sakes. I was fully stocked. I even posted on social media that my worst concern was epic binge eating (It was a REAL concern, by the way).

From there, I was second guessing myself badly. My boss even called me out about it, later (he's a great guy). Why was I sorry I was ok, for a change? Why on earth was I sorry nothing bad happened to me? I put in the “for a change” part, because I am going somewhere with this. I have survived a lot; and always feel crappy about it. What does that say about the cumulative damage to my self-worth? And the “for a change” part; have I come to expect doom and disaster based on old unaddressed wounds? I came to believe that answering these questions might be vital in my on-going healing process.

Like I said earlier, I am used to feeling this way. I feel that way all the time. As someone with lived experience with a mental health condition, maybe I have become ashamed, or afraid of

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So where does this leave us? We have become a society of "leave me alone, don't bother me". Consider how many times you don't do something or interact with someone because you don't want to be bothered. I believe we have lost a bit of our humanity in the process. When we practice "not being bothered", we miss the opportunity to connect, to hear another person's joy, pain, grief or thoughts. We miss the opportunity to celebrate the wonder of our children, our friends and strangers.

In a mental health system, staff miss the opportunity to validate people, encourage positive risk taking behavior like making a friend or getting a job. Often times, many of us need someone to listen to our fears about pursuing a full life.

In a world of "don't bother me", shouldn't the place where we seek help for our mental health concerns be the exception to "don't bother me"? Should we expect the system we turn to for help have higher expectations for us other than us not bothering people? Shouldn't the state who pays for the services set higher standards like involvement in the community, positive risk taking behavior, living a full life and maybe even being happy? Wouldn't these goals achieve similar results of not bothering hospitals, law enforcement and other staff? And perhaps even start changing society to being more human?

When you think about it, when we stop being bothered, our life has been reduced to our not being a valued part of life. We should be grateful in the very act of being bothered, because someone, something believes we are of value to them. Next time when you are being bothered, maybe you should say thank you for believing in my value to you. Be good to yourself and others.

getting better. Maybe, I am ashamed of surviving, when others did not. I know I am not alone in this, particularly in my age group. Many of us were told we wouldn't get better. Then many of us watched our brothers and sisters believe that...and not even try. I guess we don't really talk about it. The veteran that got to come home. The only one from your last hospital stay that made it. Or, the one in 10 out of your rehab that stayed clean.

I think it was important for me to recognize this old wound in myself. It reinforced what I do as a peer supporter. If you are feeling this way, there are many things you can do without holding my job; but one is to honor that you feel that way in the first place. It is a common grief that exists in more people than you can know. And, it came from somewhere. For whatever reason we lost our own value in our own eyes. Some common false beliefs we hold to ourselves could be (again feel free to add your own!):

Believing you were not supposed to be ok.

Thinking another should have been safe, or survived instead of you.

Believing you do not deserve to be ok.

Believing we are greedy, or selfish for being ok

Feeling we are totally alone...sole survivor

You are not

I came away thinking, I was never closer to other humans, then when I cried for my brothers and sisters who were not so lucky. On the surface and fighting my old demons, it seemed the opposite. I was not alone at all. I was connected more than ever. I felt compassion and was given the blessing of action. As for my condition, I fight this sole survivor thing by reminding others they are not alone; and that it is ok to get better. It is ok to believe you can get better, regardless of what other say. It is ok to take your time getting better; your timing...not someone else's (we go forward at our own pace).

I think it is important for me to share getting better with others. It may be their beacon in the darkness of an adversity. I believe sharing about survivor's guilt may help us share ourselves and our experiences. In this way we can heal our past and become beacons. All of our roles and journeys are sacred.

And as for the storm? I got out and helped, sure. But, some of the biggest things I did looked rotten from the outside. No glory. I bought low price retail. I ate out and tipped big. Those guys had not worked in weeks; and they needed us to get better. I helped other people restore joy and recreation. I brought them to dinner and we did usual things in unusual times. I did not need them to lie, or be anywhere they were not. I just brought them along in my endeavors if they needed a break from rebuilding. I was able to do that because I didn't get hurt.

Anyway guys...It is ok to be ok.

You are not alone on that island.

Until next time peeps...Breath peace!

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Learning To Manage Your Stress

By [Susan Ruttr](#)

Stress may not be a laughing matter to you. But maybe it should be. Humor is one of the most powerful stress-reducing tools there is. "Just as studies have shown the negative effects of stress on the body, we're now finding that humor has positive effects," says Karyn Buxman, R.N., editor of "Therapeutic Humor, the journal of the National Association for Therapeutic Humor. When you laugh, your heart rate and blood pressure rise -- giving your cardiovascular system a mini-aerobic workout -- then temporarily dip lower than they were before. Your immune system makes more immune cells.

Learning to manage stress isn't just good for your body. It keeps your mind and spirit more youthful, too. With fewer worries to tax your brain, don't be surprised if your noggin becomes more nimble. Under highly stressful conditions, it's simply harder to remember things and to concentrate. When stress hits high gear, you may be unable to retain a sentence that you have just read or remember someone you met minutes before.

Some evidence even shows that high levels of stress may shrink the part of the brain that governs learning and memory. Scientists who studied the brains of people with severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder found that one part of the brain, called the "hippocampus", actually became smaller when high-level stress kicked in. Some researchers speculate that the shrinkage could result from raised levels of stress hormones called "glucocorticoids".

When stress declines, you are more likely to stretch your physical and mental boundaries, suggests Phil Nuernberger, Ph.D., president of Mind Resources Technologies in Honesdale , Pennsylvania.

Ways To Increase Motivation

By [Peter James Field](#)

What pulls you, drives you, pushes you?

It might seem like the people around us are very polarized -- some people want to make a difference to the environment, while others want to retire at 50 -- but research shows that humans are actually much more complex and multifaceted than this.

It isn't just one thing that motivates and allows us to make that motivation breakthrough, but many things all at once. Researchers have narrowed down the many motivators to a few distinct categories. If you want to get to that motivation place within, then here are a few pointers that will aid in your self help motivation.

Goal Setting

Setting goals can improve motivation and get you moving. But when setting goals make sure they feel achievable, realistic, and that they really do motivate you. Improving your average sale at work may not push your buttons, though it looks good on a resume -- so what does push your buttons? Saving up for a holiday to Fiji? Taking art classes at night?

These sorts of goals might inspire you to push your average sale up, for example, more than just focusing on improving your work performance.

Goals should feel exciting. They are tied in with your dreams you have for your future. If, however, you find that your goal setting is too daunting or feels too difficult, you may have overreached what you feel is achievable. Instead of writing a novel, maybe just start with a short story.

Then work your way up to 5 stories. Once you have completed 10 stories, even if it takes a whole year, writing a novel may not freak you out. It will probably feel more achievable by then.

Understanding Your Drives

According to a study published by the Incentive Research Foundation in 2011, there are four basic drives that determine human motivation: acquiring, comprehending, bonding and defending.

Acquiring is about the tangible benefits we can gain e.g. money, skills, training, promotions, respect, etc. Comprehending has to do with doing something we feel is meaningful, such as working with complex ideas, creativity, or participating in a job that makes a difference to the world. Bonding all about friendship, camaraderie, and social connection.

Defending takes into account issues around fairness and justice -- we are more motivated to work with and for people who treat us (and others) well, than those who treat us (and others) unfairly.

While some people may feel they lean more towards one drive than another, the studies show humans actually need a

balance of all four areas. Failing in one area can negatively impact how we feel about all other areas. When you achieve a holistic balance of all four drives, you naturally access that motivation place within, make that motivation breakthrough, and become highly motivated.

Teaming Up

Setting goals, chanting affirmations, working on projects -- it all helps, but sometimes you just need a bit more external support.

Some of us thrive from working alone, the triumph is all the more great once you reach the finish line all by yourself. But some of us are team players. Support, camaraderie, creative collaboration -- working with others brings a lot to our lives and the things we are trying so desperately to achieve.

If you are not sure what you prefer, just try it. Invite someone to collaborate on a project, partner up with some like-minded colleagues, or join a group. Not only does this sort of networking provide you with fresh perspectives and ideas, it also provides accountability. Tell people about your goals and projects.

It can really motivate you to know that someone supports your dreams, and is cheering you on.

Conserving Energy

Increasing motivation is hard when you are tired. Often people are hard-working and dedicated to their goals. But dedication can lead to fatigue, if you don't pace yourself and self-manage your energy output. Even when you love what you do, even when you feel happy and excited, the mind and body need to rest.

Being "on" all the time, or worse, experiencing chronic stress, can lead to fatigue and exhaustion that feels as if it leeches into every part of life. At this point, you need to be realistic. It is hard to be motivated if you have pushed your system too hard.

To increase your motivation, the best thing you can do is take time out and re-fuel. Take a break from your goals, take a break even from your career or job, just for a little while, if it is possible.

People who care about you always want to help out. Ask those around you to share the load, so you can get away for a while. Ask yourself how long -- you know the answer. One weekend? A week? A month?

Soon as you get the rest you need, being motivated and enthusiastic about your goals becomes a whole lot easier.

Discovering True Happiness

By [RVM](#)

Some people are just enamored by the glamour of life. They think money and fame are everything. In reality, money, fame, and power are not truly everything. Could it be that happiness is everything? We all seek happiness. We act as if the goal of life is to be happy. Every human being in this world seeks happiness at some point. We want money because money will give us happiness. We want glory because the glory gives us happiness. We want name, fame, sex, and power because we think all these give us happiness.

But unfortunately, we do not know what is true happiness, beyond all, it is bliss, fulfillment and unbound joy. Unfortunately, because we are entangled with pleasures, we cannot see beyond pleasure. There is nothing wrong with pleasure, it just is not happiness. Happiness is a frame of mind. It is closely tied to the sense that we make a difference for others and it can be experienced even when we are in the middle of grief and pain. Dare to choose happiness where you are.



Top 5 Theoretical Principles of Success

By [Mohammad Shafie](#)

You've probably heard of Stephen Covey and his bestseller, "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People". While his 7+1 habits (the 8th released later) are good on their own, I have taken the liberty to take 5 principles from another time tested system, tested their validity on other existing success stories and evolved them to universally apply to this day and age.

These are universal and timeless principles, and brutal truths that do justice to those of us who crave to go beyond knowledge to wisdom and finally find and ultimately fulfill a grand self-defined purpose in life.

Without further ado, here are the top 5 theoretical principles of success:

1) Truth

Live, breathe, speak and act by the truth. Instead of living your life by the standards of something you had never understood, be true to yourself (a common phrase usually meant to tell people to follow their whimsical desires) and only think, say or do those things that you truly, deeply mean.

"This above all – To thine own self be true"

At the same time, always seek the Truth behind any and every matter, situation or circumstance. Do not be swayed by appearances or facades. Do not allow your most important decisions in life to be influenced by conclusions that you had come to without rigorous investigation and validation.

What is the reality behind this situation? What is the truth of the circumstance? What is realistically my place in this scheme of things? What can I really influence? What is outside my control? What had truly caused me to be in this place and time?

2) Justice

Justice means a certain sense of harmony or fairness. Fairness does not necessarily equate with absolute equality. Justice means placing the right things at the right places. Just as you should be fair to others, you must be fair to yourself. Why should you deprive yourself of the right to fairness? Why should you be a martyr for others who may not want to appreciate you?

More importantly, just because someone or a number of people had treated you unfairly or short-changed you before, you should not do the same to others, not even to those who had offended you. Justice also comes about as a natural extension of awareness of the truth.

3) Knowledge

Gain whatever knowledge is relevant and required of you at any moment. The first step to realizing the truth is to first gain knowledge

about matters you are currently dealing with.

Get the right knowledge from the right sources in whatever it is you are pursuing. Usually the best sources of specific knowledge are those who have successfully done before what you are seeking to now do.

4) Wisdom

You need to translate what knowledge you have into wisdom and the only way to do that is to practically apply the knowledge you have and gauge for yourself the details, nuances, personal evolutions and permutations that best suit you.

You can also gain wisdom from those who have successfully applied the knowledge you are exploring, and getting them to guide you, lead you or mentor you. Here, the wisdom of humility is apparent in becoming a student to these wise teachers – and they can be anybody or come in the guise of any vocation.

5) Purpose

Ultimately, all the values and principles up to this point have existed to serve the purpose of having a purpose. The 5 principles are listed not in any order of ascending or descending importance, but the principle of purpose can be said to be the overall overarching principle that encompasses the rest, made up of the rest of the parts, existent in all the other parts, at the same time. Purpose here apparently means having a purpose for your life, however you choose to define it.

You should take as much time as possible to define your purpose, constantly evolving it to suit current situations. The ultimate, universal end purpose of all humanity is to live a life good enough to warrant a sense of satisfaction and peace with oneself before death.

Think of death, not as something that haunts or looms over your life, but as an excuse to have a grand unifying purpose that satisfies you philosophically, emotionally and psychologically, as an excuse to make the best use of the time you have to live.

There you go. The 5 theoretical principles of success that are universal and timeless. The above pointers cannot do enough justice to the depth and scope of the principles, even extensive essays or books cannot achieve that. But only when you truly understand these principles will you be able to take full control of your life and ultimately your success.

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