

Your Mindset Matters

When I first heard the word 'mindset' I cringed slightly. I tend to like 'proper' use of English words and grammar. I'm uncomfortable with the practice of adapting nouns into verbs – such as 'gifting' instead of 'giving a gift' – and I think it's a bit sad that with the wealth of vocabulary available to us we're constantly inventing new words to sum up the meaning of several. I suppose it speeds up communication and makes it easier to send texts! 'Mindset' is a good example of this. To me it's shorthand for 'values, beliefs, thought processes, attitude and emotional state' so I have eventually accepted it as a useful addition to my repertoire.

Why does mindset matter? I think the case for monitoring your mindset is perfectly summed up in the well-known quote from Henry Ford:

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're probably right"

When you know that you can do something, when you know you can succeed, the motivation to do it is so much greater than when you're faced with a task you know you can't do, or can't deliver results with. That's one reason why mindset is important.

There are others:

If your mindset is one of anticipating problems and difficulties, then you can waste a lot of time worrying about things that will probably never happen. (I realise that some people get paid to do that, but if risk management isn't your job then I recommend you leave it to the professionals!)

If your mindset is one of blind optimism you may be in danger of inadequate planning or ignoring vital feedback.

If your mindset includes lack of confidence in the value of what you're doing, you'll probably do it less well than if you believe you're contributing something worthwhile.

If you don't believe it's possible to achieve your goal, you might never make any progress towards it.

Need I go on? Every aspect of your thought process will affect your motivation, your ability and your focus on the task in hand. If you don't manage your mindset, it's almost impossible to manage anything else.

What do I mean by 'managing your mindset'? It's basically the same as managing time, budget, people or projects.

- Set goals and make plans – about your attitudes or focus
- Monitor progress – how well do you maintain your focus, concentration or optimism?
- Take action if you stray from the plan – shift your attention, change your emotional state or remove limiting beliefs
- Minimise the effect of outside influences – make sure you have a recovery strategy for when someone disparages your idea or doubts your ability
- Reward successes

This is a relatively minor task. It won't take much time to check your mindset before you tackle a piece of work, but it could significantly enhance your experience of doing it, the quality of your results or the time it takes.

So here's your challenge:

For one day only, check your mindset every time you pause during the day. Check your mindset before you start a task, begin a meeting, make a phone call or write an email. Ask yourself if it's a good mindset for the activity and if not, change it by whatever means you have.

Monitor your results for the same day.

Let me know what happens...

...I think you'll be delighted.

Dianne Lowther
Master Trainer of NLP

Dianne Lowther is a Master Trainer of NLP and Principal of Brilliant Minds. She specialises in applications of NLP for leadership and business results.

Brilliant Minds
Suite 440, 99 Warwick Street
Leamington Spa, CV32 4RB
01926 435609
www.brilliantminds.co.uk