

Take a moment to REST - a toolkit to manage perspective

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We cannot control our environment. We tend to allow our external circumstances to dictate our internal well-being and behaviour, which can be disempowering and unproductive. Since we can only control our perspective of our environment, the responsibility and opportunity lies in learning how to manage our perspective so that we see our environment from a place of health, mindfulness, optimism and resilience, rather than from a place of fear, anxiety and overwhelm.



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We cannot predict or shift all the factors that cause stress in our lives, nor can we change or control other people, or our environments. We can learn to strengthen our resilience and inner resolve so that the way in which we perceive and engage with our reality, how we handle our stressors and environment, is more mindful and less reactive.

Let me introduce you to 'REST' - a practical framework developed by Lumminos Coaching & Associates that is an interactive toolkit for people to manage the vulnerability of uncertainty, fatigue and overwhelm. Considering the current context of the world and the impact that Covid-19 is having on employees, the premise of this framework invites people to develop the skillset required to lean in and to learn how to better manage their perspective and energy in the face of stress, for the sake of their own well-being and those around them (both personally and professionally). In this Covid context, stress is not only 'job-related', but also related to the blurred boundaries between work and home life, as well as other difficult circumstances that have played out during this time.

This REST framework is aimed at supporting people to feel energised and calm - better equipped with practical tools to handle the uncertainty of stressful situations more skilfully and mindfully, so that they can maintain levels of productivity, increase trust, calm and psychological safety in the virtual and physical workplace – which is necessary for focused delivery, collaboration and innovation.

R – Right-size. Be clear on what you are focusing on and is true and proportionate to the reality of situation. Is this situation bigger or more threatening in my perception than it actually is or needs to be? Am I possibly ramping this up and overreacting or overthinking this? Is it possible you are underreacting and not facing the gritty facts and details? Consider what or who could help you to right-size.

E – Energy. Our ability to right-size challenges is directly related to our energy levels. How do we become more intentional about replenishing our energy – physically, emotionally, mentally, relationally and spiritually? Scheduling regular activities that address each of these areas can be simple and impactful and needn't take up a lot of time. For example, a 'brain break' at set times during the day where you get up, move away from your desk and spend a few minutes in nature just tapping into your senses, can help reduce stress.

S – Story. According to researcher and author, Brené Brown, one of the key practices of people who display the highest levels of personal resilience, is the ability to check and reframe the stories we tell ourselves. What is the story you are telling yourself about your life right now? How can you shift this to more accurately align with your values?

T – Triggers. Part of the skill of managing our perspective, is to proactively become aware of the situations and people that 'hook' an emotional reaction in us (very often this is linked to a story we have in our minds about that person and situation). Rather than reacting in the moment and potentially causing damage, focus on naming and calming your emotions, so that you can think more clearly, and then respond in a considered and balanced way.

We are living in a fast paced, ever-changing world, where we are conditioned to always be working, moving forward, achieving and getting things done. Rest is often associated with being weak, unambitious and lazy, but buying into this myth can lead to burnout and breakdown. Taking time to include rest as part of a personal strategy for success, along with learning to ask for what you need, setting boundaries and saying no to the things that don't align with your values, can pave the way for sustainable success.

Benefits of putting REST into practice

- Exploring individual and team strategies to apply the principles of REST
- Supporting people to feel resourced, energised and calm
- Normalising the effects of pressure and change and naming challenges, struggle and fatigue with the goal of learning new ways and de-escalating stress
- Equipping people with shared language, models and practical tools to handle the uncertainty of stressful situations more skilfully and mindfully
- Offering ways to maintain levels of focus, motivation and productivity
- Providing interactive platform/s to increase trust, calm and psychological safety in the virtual and physical workplace - necessary for focused delivery, collaboration and innovation

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julia Kerr Henkel is an Executive Coach and MD of Lurminos. Julia runs Lurminos, a full-service coaching and culture change consultancy which dares its clients to lead, learn, live, love and parent with awareness, skills, compassion and humour. She is an ICF PCC-level coach, seasoned change and organisational development consultant and speaker. In March 2019, Julia Kerr Henkel studied with Brené Brown in Texas and is now one of a handful Certified Dare to Lead? facilitators in Africa, commissioned to deliver work on her

behalf. In January 2020, she also launched Dare to Lead #daringclassrooms - an extension of this work tailored for educators - our most important leaders. She runs a program at GIBS aimed at supporting newly certified coaches called Kickstart your Coaching Business. Prior to starting Luminos, Julia spent 4 years at Goldman Sachs London and was a director for 8 years at College Hill Investor Relations and Magna Carta, comms and reputation management agencies For more information, visit [www.luminos.co.za]

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