KAREN SAYS

HEALTH AND WEALTH (NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE)

MANY moons ago I was studying in a university whose student body was mostly international. One Lunar New Year, I invited my entire building for Eve dinner. Fuelled by my desire to share Malaysian cooking and make my family away from home happy, I set out to cook for three days straight.

Today, I am considerably better at setting my goals and having a balance between what I achieve at work and, if not anything else, the number of hours I sleep (mostly!).

Last week, several of our contributors underlined the fact that with the demands we face today, we really need to choose work we are passionate about because there may not be enough hours left in the day to recharge. Always the ambidextrous economist, and a health economist at that, I chose to focus on health and wealth this week. For as much as we love what we do, we need to still make the right choices with regard work-life balance in order to sustain our performance levels.

Evelyn Teh asserts that health and well-being at the workplace requires integrated efforts of employers, employees and society, and walks us through five key aspects of how we can all contribute to maintaining work-life balance.

What is an unlimited vacation policy? Morag Barrett believes employees can and should be trusted to take the appropriate number of vacation days – and therefore, negates the need to allocate a set number of vacation days.

John Walter Baybay writes about how there is a tendency to work so hard that we start neglecting our health which in turn affects our effectiveness at work. Sharing his own experience, John Walter Baybay writes about how there is a tendency to work so hard that we start neglecting our health which in turn affects our effectiveness at work. Sharing his own experience, John Walter Baybay talks about some serious consequences of sleep deprivation on individuals and the organisations they work for.

In Starting Young, Stephanie Kee enlightens us on what we should pack for a journey of self-discovery – both in a literal and metaphorical sense! And Yasis Osman, in this week’s instalment of Movie Wisdom, helps us draw lessons on work-life balance from the story of how Mary Poppins came to be so much a part of our young lives.

And by no means least, our fearless leader Roshan Thian delves into why some people appear to consistently be luckier than others, and how we might be able to reframe luck as something we can influence rather than just wait for fate to run its course.

Last but not least, we’ve wished everyone safe travels and joyous celebration of their Chinese New Year.

KAREN NEOH
Editor
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STRESS LESS, FLEX!

By TARA THIAGARAJAN
Tara.thiagarajan@leaderonomics.com

MENTAL health has oft been overlooked when it comes to considering one’s overall health, especially in relation to work. Aside from the physical aspects, it is important we maintain our sanity especially when work is in the picture.

Something that can help us do this is to strike a good work-life balance. One way we can achieve this is by incorporating a more flexible schedule at work, which allows us to come into work early and leave early or come in late and leave late.

THIS IS KNOWN AS FLEXTIME

Flextime arrangements may vary but generally allow employees to come in and leave work at a time that is more conducive for them, while still fulfilling the required hours. These arrangements let them use their time more efficiently and fulfill their personal obligations outside work.

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

Although some employers may see this as a step back in terms of productivity, research has shown that workplace places that are more flexible with their working hours have employees who produce better quality work.

Apart from that, flextime also proves to decrease turnover as well as absenteeism rates. Organisations that accommodate their employees’ busy and unpredictable lives are what many people look for in a job nowadays.

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES

Employees undoubtedly benefit from flextime since they are able to come and go from work at a time that is convenient for them, allowing them to avoid stressors like rush hour.

Flextime also lets employees work at a time they can be most efficient and fulfilling for their personal obligations outside work, which may not be the case when they work in rigid schedules.

Employees will be able to give their complete focus to work without worrying about their personal responsibilities outside of work and whether or not they will reach work “on time”.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the day, flextime appears to introduce a more relaxed atmosphere at work, which can help employees focus better. Although some employers may not see the appeal of implementing this in their workplace, the long-term benefits of flextime are evident since successful powerhouses such as Google and Accenture are proponents of flextime for their employees.
LUCK IS NOT LUCK
YOU CAN INFLUENCE YOUR RETURN ON LUCK

By ROSHAN THIRAN
roshan.thiran@leaderonomics.com

These past few weeks, with the Chinese New Year celebrations coming in full swing, many friends wished me “luck” many times. Everyone was hoping for a great year with lots of “luck”. Most believe that luck happens by chance. We believe luck is something that we cannot plan for or obtain by design. Luck is fated, written in the stars. Or is it?

I remember a conversation I had with Datuk Seri Idris Jala (currently Minister in The Prime Minister’s Department) many years ago, and he explained the secret to his success as a leader. He had six key points to success in leadership, and his final point was “Be a leader.” Surely, if you can’t be a leader, you will get lucky. When I explained this to my interviewer’s excitement for his newly adopted passion.

I then told him about how I had spent part of the summer going to the United States (US) that year, and he shared his experiences watching football games too. An hour went by so quickly, and I walked out smiling after a pleasant conversation on the state of football in the US. I was one of only three interns who got the offer. I always thought that I was extremely lucky to have caught my interviewer’s excitement for his newly adopted passion.

On the contrary, in recent conversations with a number of “luck” experts, they claimed that I might not have been merely lucky. Was it luck?

TYPES OF LUCK
As a young boy, I frequently read biographies of famous people. I became a great fan of Benjamin Franklin and US President Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson once declared, “I’m a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it.” Franklin similarly shared Jefferson’s belief in luck – that it had everything to do with effort. Yet, many people work hard and still remain unlucky all their lives. Surely, there has to be more than mere effort that determines luck? Researchers Anthony K. Tjan, Richard Harrington and Tsun-yan Hsieh postulate that there are two types of luck – luck that you cannot affect (like who your parents are and your blood type, etc) and luck that you can influence (like your business success or your career progress).

In fact, they believe that a majority of “business luck” can be influenced and it is really about understanding how. Their conclusion: “luck is about attitude as much as it is about probability.”

They found that people who describe themselves as lucky tend to be luckier because of their right attitude. They concluded that the right attitude comprised three traits – humility, intellectual curiosity, and constant optimism.

Dale Carnegie said, “Happiness doesn’t depend on any external conditions – it is governed by your mental attitude.” Carnegie is right. As Idris accurately pointed out, if we learn to control the things that we can, including our reaction to the world around us, we may swing the luck pendulum. Our response to a disastrous occurrence is often more important than the incidence itself.

Authors John D. Krumholz and Al S. Levin claim that there’s no such thing as luck. They describe luck as “happenstance.”

They believe that “happenstance” isn’t something that randomly affects us but rather something we create out of the chance circumstances and encounters that run through our lives. A changed occurrence, an unplanned meeting, or missed appointments may sometimes lead our lives into unexpected directions that might alter it and our careers. These “happenstances” may happen frequently to everyone. The key difference between lucky people and the “unlucky” ones is the ability to recognise these opportunities and leverage them.

> TURN TO PAGE 4
The probability of our success.

breaks and taking action can increase

but like Graham, leveraging our lucky
to create a solution to their nightmare.

yet no one viewed it as an opportunity

erangle just like Graham did,

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investigated the role of “luck” in these

ness successes of modern times. They

completed a nine-year research study

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poor woman in Dallas, sup-

So, she decided to put some

secretary and learnt shorthand

to be a hostage

powerful way to move

from being a hostage

to being a leader.

> FROM PAGE 3

Bette Nesmith Graham was a poor woman in Dallas, supporting her small child as a single mom. She got a job as a secretary and learnt shorthand and typing to ensure she kept her job. Yet, she constantly made typing errors. She was an artist and she recalled how artists would paint over their mistakes on canvas. So, she decided to put some tempera water-based paint in a bottle and took her watercolour brush to the office, using it to correct her typing mistakes.

Before long, her invention, which she named “liquid paper”, became a worldwide hit and she built it into a multimillion dollar corporation.

Was she lucky? Or was this the ability to recognise opportunities even in mistakes?

There were thousands of secretaries who probably went through typing error anguishes just like Graham did, yet no one viewed it as an opportunity to create a solution to their nightmare. No one can control every outcome even in mistakes?

There is a popular saying “you make your own luck”. When we see luck as something that is beyond our reach or something that we can’t create, we become victims and complain about others and the world. Reframing luck as something we may influence (regardless how limited our influence may be) is a powerful way to move from being a hostage to being a leader.

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Keeping cool at work

Managing work-related stress and subsequently, your mental health

By TARA THIAGARAJAN

E LRIER this morning, I was told that I had about a day to write an article about work-related stress. Oh, irony! Meeting deadlines is commonplace where I work and yet my reaction is always the same – STRESS. 

My mind races, my heart pumps hard, and my breathing is shallow as I sense the deadline drawing nearer and nearer with each passing second. Stress, like work, is an inevitable part of our lives. We experience it from the moment we wake up every morning till we go back to sleep at night. 

From a biological perspective, stress is our body’s natural response to potentially dangerous things in our environment. Hormones such as adrenaline are released throughout our body to increase our heart and breathing rates along with other symptoms such as sweating. This is known as the fight or flight response—our body’s way of responding to stressors in the environment. Obviously, humans have evolved from being fearful of life-threatening dangers such as facing saber-toothed tigers, to being fearful of life-threatening dangers that we encounter in our daily lives. 

Stress, like work, is an inevitable part of our lives. We experience it from the moment we wake up every morning till we go back to sleep at night. From a biological perspective, stress is our body’s natural response to potentially dangerous things in our environment. Hormones such as adrenaline are released throughout our body to increase our heart and breathing rates along with other symptoms such as sweating. This is known as the fight or flight response—our body’s way of responding to stressors in the environment. Obviously, humans have evolved from being fearful of life-threatening dangers such as facing saber-toothed tigers, to being fearful of life-threatening dangers that we encounter in our daily lives.

According to the National Health Service in the United Kingdom, identifying the factors that trigger your stress is the first step in stress management. A great way to do this is to keep a journal and jot down brief descriptions of your stressful episodes for two to four weeks. As we look back on what we have written over the past few weeks, we may be able to notice a pattern, perhaps a commontheme that ties each stressful episode to one another, which can be incredibly useful in identifying what exactly triggers our stress response.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), below are the common triggers of work stress:

- Conflicting demands or unclear performance expectations.
- Not having enough control over job-related decisions.
- Work that isn’t engaging or challenging.
- Low salaries.
- Excessive workloads.
- Few opportunities for growth or achievement.
- Work that isn’t engaging or challenging.
- Lack of social support.
- Not having enough control over job-related decisions.
- Conflicting demands or unclear performance expectations.

WHERE’S THE TRIGGER?

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- Conflicting demands or unclear performance expectations.

STRESS IS WITH US

Stress is something we are faced with everyday. It is up to us to develop the appropriate reactions to help us cope with it in efforts to preserve our mental and physical health. Experts from the APA suggest any form of exercise that can be done after work is the best way to buffer against the mentally exhausting effects of stress. Allotting time for your hobbies or even time with family or friends can do wonders against stress as well.

These experts also highlight the importance of developing healthy sleeping patterns in combating the negative effects of stress. Cutting down on coffee and perhaps switching to soothing herbal teas could make a world of a difference to your energy levels during the day.

It would do us good to apply these strategies to our everyday lives in an effort to manage the way we counter life’s daily stressors. I know I certainly will!

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is an essential skill we need room to breathe to avoid burning out from being overloaded with work.

RETURNING TO THE RESPECTABLE MINDSET

Effectively communicating not only to our bosses, but also to our coworkers, that we can only handle so much work at one time, does not mean that we are telling them not to give us work or ask us for help in the future. Instead, it sends the message that we need room to breathe to avoid burning out from being overloaded with work.

RESPOND HEALTHILY

Stress is something we are faced with everyday. It is up to us to develop the appropriate reactions to help us cope with it in efforts to preserve our mental and physical health. Experts from the APA suggest any form of exercise that can be done after work is the best way to buffer against the mentally exhausting effects of stress. Allotting time for your hobbies or even time with family or friends can do wonders against stress as well.

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- Tara is an intern who is trying her best to soak up all the information she can, which is why she refers to herself as a sponge. Spongebob Squarepants is also her favourite TV show of all time. Coincidence? She thinks not. To connect with her, email editor@leaderonomics.com
BEYOND THE SALAD BAR

A PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKFORCE

By EVELYN TEH
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INFORMATION

As children, dreaming comes naturally Having a higher purpose is one life that has been shown to motivate people which in turn has a possible positive impact on well-being Stakes on inspiration have shown that people who have a higher purpose, or a more meaningful, purposeful lives tend to have more desire to work, be more productive and even be more likely to achieve a higher level of success.

SUPPORT

On top of communicating with clarity, another tangible way of enabling better well-being is in an organization is to provide support. There are various ways an organization can provide this, even basic needs. Some of these are improving the value of your employee's equipment, managing the work environment, organizational change management, and the type of leadership where support is in opposition with challenge, productivity will often lead to lower psychological well-being

CLARITY

I seem to be the question that many need to have an organization in its willingness to proceed with a clear direction. There are a few factors that need to be addressed such as what is my purpose, what is my mission, and who is the organization's story. It is important to clarify this in our minds, as it is the key to our success.

Tip No 1: What support systems relevant to the organisation's story. If envisioning what is being said to be a form of a healthy environment. Organisations and what this simply means is often leads to lower psychological well-being.

Tip No 2: What support systems relevant to the organisation's story. If envisioning what is being said to be a form of a healthy environment. Organisations and what this simply means is often leads to lower psychological well-being.

SHIELD

Of course, one has to challenge the common notion that support is in opposition with challenge, productivity will often lead to lower psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

No, we are not referring to referring to the official work contract - which may contribute to the psychological contract between organisation and employee.

Evelyn is part of the Learning & Acceleration team at Leaderonomics. Connect with her at editor@leaderonomics.com

WHAT ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE?

For all its worth, psychological well-being in an organisation cannot be the sole responsibility of the employer in creating the right ecosystem. Employees often benefit from taking proactive steps not only in responding to employer’s efforts but also in preceding these efforts.

A CASE STUDY

However in one organization where we assisted talent development solutions, the talent who responded to the call to make a change found himself with standard operating procedures and rigid political models.

AGILITY AND INNOVATION

Still, she shared her story with us, it was obvious that she had a new sense of confidence and self-esteem, having previously created a pathway that aligned with organizational goals.

START GROWING

Thus, for employees, it is worth whilst to remember that giving starts with ourselves and it is seen as an integral part of the workplace. As such, it is important to take the active step of making changes.

Interestingly, this often leads to lower psychological well-being. Psychological contract has been shown to be a form of a healthy environment. Organisations and what this simply means is often leads to lower psychological well-being.

What this points to, in our effort to build a healthy workforce, is to honour the psychological contract with authenticity and intention.

This may mean that promises are not made in all, preventing situations as realistically as possible with without compromising performance.

Which is easier to frame situations in ways that benefit the organization, in an area where is understood easily, this often moves.

Moreover there is always the age-old question: In any organisation.

Confidentiality information breach restricts and privacy which reduces the psychological contract in organizations that is the key for anyone to learn and grow to be in that spot instead of being challenged by someone else.

Being given chances is often key in building autonomy and one’s own notice of worth.
V-A-C-A-T-I-O-N
USE IT. DON'T LOSE IT.

AS ADULTS, WE CAN AND SHOULD BE TRUSTED TO TAKE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF VACATION DAYS TO RECHARGE OUR BATTERIES

By MORAG BARRETT
editor@leaderonomics.com

THE holiday season is upon us, and yet there are still plenty of people who will not be taking a holiday in the next few weeks.

You know who I mean, the colleague who prides themselves in “not having taken a vacation for years”, those who forgo their PTO (paid time off) to spend even longer hours in the office.

I have never understood this. While I love my job, I also love some time with the family, time to kick back, hang out with friends, and time spent to explore new destinations.

Earlier last year the newsstands and Twitter feeds were abuzz with the announcement from Sir Richard Branson and the Virgin Group of “unlimited vacation time for all”.

It made me smile as we have been leading this charge for a number of years. We have had an unlimited vacation policy since I started the company in 2007.

HAVING A BREAK, HAVE A VACATION

Last year I spent time with the family sailing in Cape Cod and have plans for Thanksgiving and Christmas “stay-cations” too. I’ve always believed that, as adults, we can and should be trusted to take the appropriate number of vacation days to recharge our batteries.

Plus, I really don’t want to have to track hours or time off; we all have better things and more fun things to do! I decided to go for a hunt to find out where the most and least vacation days were offered and stumbled on a newspaper article that summarised the global picture as above.

The number of days on offer vary considerably! At the lower end is zero (you can’t get lower than that) to less than 10 days. I have never quite understood the approach in American companies of two weeks’ vacation.

I have also experienced the other end of the scale. At the end of my banking career in the UK (United Kingdom), I had 30 paid days of vacation plus nine national holidays.

Essentially I was able to take a week off work every six weeks or so. It was challenging to fit them in, but I managed it, as did my team, and my branch and business thrived.

However, this leads to the next challenge. Whether you get 10, 28 or unlimited vacation I regularly hear from friends and clients who proudly share that they never take their vacation time. These are paid days off. Why wouldn’t you take them?

The reasons cited for not taking vacation varies:

- “I’m just too busy”
- “The company/project is going through a critical time, I can’t afford to be away”
- “It will be seen as a black mark on my reputation.”
- “No one else takes vacation.”
- “My inbox will be so full that I will never catch up when I get back. Better to stay!”

Some of the fears are real. A recent study reported that 13% of managers are less likely to promote employees who take all of their vacation days.

In another 2012 survey, employees who took less than their full vacation time earned on average 2.8% more in the next year than employees who took all of their vacation days.

However, the reality is, that the world continues when we take a vacation – when we choose to disconnect. Things will still be there, waiting for us when we return.

It’s ironic that while there is so much discussion about the need for work-life balance, people resist this immediate opportunity to effect balance.

Don’t lose it, use it, take your vacation and personal development, visit www.leaderonomics.com. For feedback, email editor@leaderonomics.com

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A vacation provides opportunity to spend time with family and friends, or to get away from it all. Either way most of us return to the office, refreshed, recharged and enriched, with new ideas and a clearer perspective to move forward.

Don’t wait for the company fix. Take the individual approach and own your vacation.

Don’t lose it, use it, take your vacation and send me your holiday snaps so I can see you kicking back and having fun!

Morag Barrett is the best-selling author of Cultivate: The Power of Winning Relationships and CEO of SkyTeam (www.skyeteam.com), an international HR consulting and leadership development company. Morag’s experience ranges from senior executive coaching to developing leaders and teams across Europe, America and Asia. For more articles on leadership and personal development, visit www.leaderonomics.com.
LEADERSHIP
AND DANCING
WITH THE ANGELS

By John Walter Baybay
editor@leaderonomics.com

My father came from the “old school” having witnessed the Second World War, the Japanese occupation, the American liberation, and the rise and fall of my grandfather’s cigarette factory.

I came into his office when I was around nine years old in the early 80s where the place was just buzzing with busy people.

Typewriters and telex machines were tapping away in the background as he opened a listing from a book called The Top 1000 Corporations of the Philippines.

There, his company was listed somewhere in the 700s as he pointed at it with his thick stubby index finger projecting from a cuff perfectly extending from his suit sleeve.

He said: “Blood, sweat and tears! You need to work like a devil to dance like an angel!”

He’s up there right now with the angels looking down with a high-brow probably saying, “Well, my son is still working at it!”

A famous wise saying goes:

“What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his/her soul?”

Indeed these words should ring louder for many executives as one would usually encounter a “Faustian bargain” of sorts especially when they move higher up the corporate ladder.

“Everything has a price,” my father would say. I have witnessed (having been one) many executives who play the risk and bargain of moving up the ladder only to forfeit their health and eventually their quality of life.

The wagers were often high! We tend to overlook the quality of our relationships with our loved ones and friends and in the process, neglect ourselves.

This is not to reprimand anyone; because I know how it is in the C-suite when you’re just about to pack up for work at 6:30pm, your boss pokes his head into the office to say, “We have a dinner meeting at 8pm! I’ll meet you up front at 7:30pm!”

There is a huge gap between doing your job really well and understanding and working the business.

The latter takes a higher level of commitment which sometimes supersedes many other priorities.

Business usually comes first. There is also a career paradox that creeps into a lot of our decisions. Charles Handy in his book The Age of Paradox says that we usually work on our careers so that we earn a better quality of life.

However, what happens is usually the reverse. We work so hard that we start neglecting our health.

And once we do, our effectiveness at work starts to diminish as well.

We work so hard just to appreciate that it takes more resources to guard our health through corrective measures. Sadly the most you get in the end is just a bunch of “stuff.”

In 2012, I had the best year “career-wise” when I often rode a private plane to and from work. I racked up at least 26 billable days per month. We were liquid.

We had a lot of cash in the bank but along with it was my obvious gain in girth.

While I tried to put in the hours as a “weekend warrior” biking my lungs out whenever I had the time, still the executive life caught up with me.

Not to mention the loss of sleep and missing some important dates in my family’s life. Sure, work was good! But when January 2013 came around, I failed the stress-test on my APE (annual physical exam)!

After spending a thousand dollars on bike parts, I found that my body was the one in need of dire repair. I was put on a stricter diet and a regimen of statins and anti-hypertension medication.

CLIMBING HIGH COULD ALSO LEAD TO A CRASH

The paradox of career success and health is inversely structured. In your progression towards the top we slowly tip the work-life balance in favour of advancement.

We focus on building our careers with the justification of seeking a higher quality of life. We do get to a sweet spot that gets stretched at some point, but somehow the allure of success and a skewed sense of purpose slowly tend to reel us into the career track.

Every decision (even the smallest ones) that we make between work and everything else works along a zero-sum sort of balance sheet that crediting hours to work takes away from either yourself, family, society, and fitness.

In the end, some of these accounts cannot afford to give anymore. At this point you need to re-align your priorities!

We have to realise that our bodies can only take so much. And just as you would demand for your mind and body to remain productive, it is subjected to physical principles and limitations.

What I did learn from working with competitive athletes, of which some are successful entrepreneurs, is that we need to adapt to a “physical performance mindset”.

At the end of long days of conflict where you seem to be pulled apart in different directions, you will realise that you only have one body. Take care of it! Upgrade it! Enforce a renewal!

> TURN TO PAGE 10
Sleep deprivation is linked to a variety of serious health problems, including heart attack, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. It stresses you out because your body overproduces the stress hormone cortisol when it’s sleep deprived.

While excess cortisol has a host of negative health effects that come from the havoc it wreaks on your immune system, it also makes you look older, because cortisol breaks down skin collagen, the protein that keeps skin smooth and elastic.

In men specifically, not sleeping enough reduces testosterone levels and lowers sperm count.

Too many studies to list have shown that people who get enough sleep live longer, healthier lives, but I understand that sometimes this isn’t motivation enough.

So consider this — not sleeping enough makes you fat. Sleep deprivation compromises your body’s ability to metabolise carbohydrates and control food intake. When you sleep less you eat more and have more difficulty burning the calories you consume.

Sleep deprivation makes you hungrier by increasing the appetite-stimulating hormone ghrelin and makes it harder for you to get full by reducing levels of the satiety-inducing hormone leptin.

People who sleep less than six hours a night are 30% more likely to become obese than those who sleep seven to nine hours a night.

**How much sleep is enough?**

Most people need seven to nine hours of sleep a night to feel sufficiently rested. Few people are at their best with less than seven hours, and few require more than nine without an underlying health condition.

And that’s a major problem, since more than half of Americans get less than the necessary seven hours of sleep each night, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

**For go-getters, it’s even worse**

A recent survey of Inc. 500 CEOs found that half of them are sleep-deprived more than six hours a night. And the problem doesn’t stop at the top. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a third of US workers get less than six hours of sleep each night, and sleep deprivation costs US businesses more than US$63bil annually in lost productivity.

**Sleep Deprivation Destroying Both You and Your Career (Part 1)**

Sleep is good for your brain, but new research from the University of Rochester provides the first direct evidence for why your brain needs you to sleep (and the right way — more on that later).

The study found that when you sleep, your brain removes toxic proteins from its neurons that are by-products of neural activity when you’re awake. Unfortunately, your brain can remove them adequately only while you are sleeping.

So when you don’t get enough sleep, the toxic proteins remain in your brain cells, wreaking havoc by impairing your ability to think — something no amount of caffeine can fix.

Skipping sleep impairs your brain function across the board. It slows your ability to process information and problem solve, kills your creativity, and catapults your stress levels and emotional reactivity.

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**Brain Bulletin**

**What sleep deprivation does to your health**

Brain cells, wreaking havoc by impairing your ability to think — something no amount of caffeine can fix.

**WHY YOU NEED ADEQUATE SLEEP TO PERFORM**

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**About us**

Dr Travis Bradberry is the award-winning co-author of the No. 1 bestselling book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0, and the cofounder of TalentSmart, the world’s leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training, serving more than 75% of Fortune 1000 companies. His bestselling books have been translated into 25 languages and are available in more than 150 countries. Dr. Bradberry has written for, or been covered by, Newsweek, BusinessWeek, Fortune, Fast Company, Inc., USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and The Harvard Business Review.

**Editor’s Note**

In part 2 of this article, Dr. Bradberry will outline 30 strategies that can help us identify the hidden killers of quality sleep. Stay tuned!
Packing can be a pain. When we prepare for a long journey, we have to select the things from our lives that we can fit into a suitcase. The things we pack determine what we can (or cannot) do and where we can (or cannot) go. The same applies for the journey of life. Packing for the journey of life is a huge experience for people in their 20s, like me, who struggle to find purpose and direction. How do I prepare for the journey ahead? I wrestled with this question when I hit my “quarter life” crisis. Too many people were telling me what I needed to do.

In the spur of the moment, I bought a one-way ticket to Thailand to figure things out for a couple of weeks.

Here are five things I discovered on my solo trip which was worth carrying for the long haul:

1. A JOURNAL
   A journal captures the highlights and insights of a journey. Have you ever had an epiphany while travelling? Were you inspired by an unbidden question? Write it down in your journal. When you return to familiar ground, your journal becomes the novel for you to reflect on all that has happened. Let your starting point for a journey, or a journal entry, be a question.

Here are some questions that I’ve found helpful:

- What energizes me?
- What can I do with the strengths that I have?
- How do I want to spend the next few years in making as much impact as possible?

These are easier questions to tackle than to ask, “Why do I exist?”

When you accept that you are on a journey, then you value the quest and the questions that unfold. We will see that the more questions we ask, the better we understand and accept ourselves. Questions no longer intimidate.

2. A MINI MEDIC KIT
   This is what you need to nurse your adventure wounds. Scrapped yourself while leaping from rock to rock? You’ll need to put on that plaster before you take another leap.

You might fall off a bike as you pedal along bumpy roads or bruise yourself as you surf a big wave in life. Every journey needs a timeout for healing and recovery.

Your metaphorical medic kit, which may prove to be your salvation at these times, holds your sense of good judgment and courage. It prepares you to take risks and helps you with acceptance when mistakes are made. Such a medic kit prepares us to accept the consequences of taking leaps of faith. Sometimes we may regret jumping; people may question our choices; and we may land face-down in mud. Mistakes will be made. But we all know that some leaps are necessary for achieving breakthroughs.

Taking a leap requires assessing the risk, and then making a firm choice to go for it. The medic kit helps us to get over the way things are, especially when they don’t turn out the way we expected.

3. A PHOTOGRAPH
   As you venture into foreign lands, a snapshot of familiar faces can bring a rush of warmth and comfort, making the challenging journey bearable.

It’s really helpful to carry a photo of the people who matter in our lives so that we remember that we’re never truly alone (even when we feel lonely).

We can also collect real-life snapshots by reaching out to people we meet along the way, who may help to guide us to understand ourselves better. Who are the family members, friends, clients or bosses who are helping us grow into who we are becoming?

We can also be thankful for friends and family who become obstacles in our quest to find purpose in life. Their challenges and questions will (usually) make us stronger.

4. A MAP
   Getting lost in the vibrant city of Ho Chi Minh or Jakarta can be an exhilarating experience. But once the sun sets and darkness settles in, we will long for home.

A map is a wonderful tool to help us wander afar; maybe even get lost, and then find our way home again.

One important thing we need to do is to map out our core values. It is important to know who you are and what you stand for.

For example, one of my core values is generosity, or giving back. When I feel lost, I turn to this core value as a marker point on the map.

What is the core value that defines you? Map that down. With at least one core value in mind, you can now start searching for a cause, or a job, or a person, who resonates with your inner being.

To map your way in life, start with your core values.

5. SANDALS
   A journey offers many opportunities for us to take off our shoes and socks, and start wearing sandals. Sandals give wiggle room for our toes.

Let’s praise the humble sandal that helps us face our fears, and lets us wander afar. Maybe even get lost, and then find our way home again.

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Take one step at a time, and savour the present moment.
MARY POPPINS SHOWS US THE WAY TO HAVE A HEALTHY WORK–LIFE BALANCE

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“A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down”

GOOD luck getting that song out of your head! Those simple words in a beloved movie perfectly defines what it means to overcome a daunting task, while still having fun.

In the movie Saving Mr Banks, which explores the arduous 20-year-long effort of Walt Disney to obtain the rights to the Mary Poppins franchise, this song rings true in so many ways.

In particular, the movie focuses on that beautiful, illuminating moment when work and life collide to give the most enjoyment while achieving the most success.

The plot centres loosely on the classic Mary Poppins movie with Julie Andrews as cinema’s most enchanting, lovable, and magical nanny ever put on screen.

For those who do not know the movie Mary Poppins, you really need to watch it! It will change your life as it did mine. For those who have watched it before, here is a virtual high-five coming your way. To the rest, well, spoilers ahead.

SWALLOWING MEDICINE

Combining work and relationships can either go either way, but it does reveal what matters more. In one scene, Banks brings his two children, Jane and Michael, into the bank where he works.

The day goes disastrously wrong when one of the children causes a riot at the father’s workplace. The aftermath is that Banks has to rethink his career and his family relationships. In everyone’s lives, be it their jobs or personal lives, the concept of small but meaningful moments also comes to mind.

MEANINGFUL LIVES

The concept of small but meaningful moments also comes to mind when we want to live purposeful lives. The purpose of Walt Disney, played by Tom Hanks in Saving Mr Banks, is to drive so enthusiastically to make Mary Poppins because of a promise to his children.

In the movie, Saving Mr Banks,导演沃尔特·迪士尼（Walt Disney）是主角，他为了履行对孩子们的承诺，竭尽全力制作《美女与野兽》这部电影。他的孩子甚至希望他能够从工作中抽身出来，陪伴他们。

Mary Poppins, played by Emma Thompson, but also inspires the author, P. L. Travers, played by Emma Thompson, to release the rights of Mary Poppins to him.

Enthusiasm is a powerful force. When you find meaning in your work, you are more inclined to excel. The purpose of Walt Disney, played by Tom Hanks in Saving Mr Banks, is to drive so enthusiastically to make Mary Poppins because of a promise to his children.

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Enthusiasm is a powerful force. When you find meaning in your work, you are more inclined to excel. The drive and passion shown by Disney’s character is one of the biggest reasons this famous classic was ever made.

Excelling in your work gives you that feeling of achievement as well as being spiritually poised. Find that purpose in what you do, and the rewards will be apparent.

Saving Mr Banks shows that work and life should not be taken too seriously. Life is too short to constantly struggle to find time between work and family.

Time with loved ones is non-negotiable. Determine for yourself what is important and what brings you the most happiness.

Remember, just a spoonful of sugar. That is all it takes to make the moments in life the best you can have.

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