3 Mind-Changing Habits Every Leader Should Follow

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The human mind is incredibly powerful in shaping our feelings and behavior, which is why your mindset can make all the difference in your level of success as well as your daily happiness. In fact, your mindset even affects those around you through your attitudes and actions. Because of this, mindset is especially important for business leaders, whose feelings and decisions affect the people they lead and the outcomes of their businesses. But changing your mindset takes more than just willpower — it requires regular thoughts and actions.

One of the most effective ways to change your mindset is through the power of habit. Habits come in many shapes and sizes, good, bad and neutral. Once a habit is established, it's easy to continue doing it, which is what makes it such a powerful tool to affect your mindset. Here are three habits that I use to help me create a more successful mindset.

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1. Build resiliency through optimism

We've all been told at some point in our lives to adopt a positive mindset — and for good reason. It's incredibly beneficial not only in making you feel happier but also in building resiliency, a skill that every leader needs in order to recover from challenges and setbacks.

While it may seem more practical to take a pessimistic or realistic approach to challenges, an optimistic approach is often most advantageous because it doesn’t allow you to become discouraged from continuing to try to find a solution and push through the difficulty. A positive attitude allows you not to take setbacks personally and to believe in your own abilities even when things aren’t going according to plan. For a leader, positivity during times of challenge or crisis is especially important in order to support team morale and direct the team toward solutions rather than discouragement.

Of course, choosing a positive attitude isn’t as simple as flipping a switch when you wake up in the morning. It takes a significant amount of work, but luckily there are a few practices you can use to help you establish and maintain a positive mindset.

I use the practice of gratitude journaling, which has become popular as a form of reflection and as a mindset tool to foster positivity. Taking time to appreciate positive things in your life will naturally make you feel uplifted and happier, so a practice like this can be worthwhile to establish. Similarly, you can focus on the positive by finding things throughout your day to appreciate. For example, try challenging yourself to pay five compliments every day to five different people. Not only will you make someone else feel positive, but you’ll feel good about it too.

When you do catch yourself thinking negative thoughts, whether that’s about yourself, someone else or a situation you’re in, try to reframe them into something positive or change your focus onto something uplifting. While this isn’t always possible, the more you practice it, the easier it will become to keep your mindset positive as a whole.

2. Practice generosity

Not only is generosity virtuous, but it has a number of positive effects on your mindset. First, and most obviously, it feels good to do something nice for someone else, which can help you maintain a positive attitude. But if you make a point of practicing generosity regularly, it can have even more benefits. It affects the way people see you and the kind of culture you create as a leader. And when you give to others regularly, it helps you develop a mindset of abundance rather than scarcity.

At my company, we have an annual Random Acts of Kindness week, in which all employees participate. We're a remote company, so it might look a bit different if you were to implement it. The week has opportunities for employees to show kindness towards coworkers on Monday, their team on Tuesday, their loved ones on Valentine's Day, local small businesses on Thursday and the community on Friday. We post photos on our Slack channel and donate money towards a charity.

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3. Create a habit of creativity

Creativity is essential for the business leader in growing your business, and it's one of your most important functions — something no one else on your team can do for you. But creativity is like a muscle, and the more you practice it, the easier it becomes. By maintaining a creative mindset, I find I'm better able to respond to problems, and I'm constantly coming up with new ideas. Creativity is never a struggle for me because I make a habit of it by creating space in my regular schedule dedicated to creativity.

Making creativity into a habit starts by simply scheduling time for it regularly, then showing up and staying focused on

your creative tasks without distractions. Your mindset is something you get to choose, but it takes work to get there. By establishing habits that help you craft the mindset you desire and practicing them regularly, you'll be able to more easily maintain a mindset that will help you reach higher levels of success as a leader.

The power to shape our mindset and improve our business lies within our grasp, offering a gateway to enhanced success and daily contentment. As business leaders, recognizing the profound impact our mindset has on those we lead and the outcomes of our endeavors is paramount. Yet, the journey toward a transformative mindset requires more than sheer willpower — it demands the cultivation of habits that nourish positivity, generosity and creativity.

By embracing practices like gratitude journaling, fostering a culture of generosity and carving out dedicated time for creativity, we pave the path toward a mindset primed for triumph. Join me in committing to the regular cultivation of habits that elevate not only our own success but also those around us.

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