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Set Your Psychological Default Mode on Success

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Life has a way of challenging us with the unexpected. A deal falls through at the last minute. An employee quits when we need him most. We lose our most important account without warning. No matter how hard we try to control life's circumstances, these unforeseen difficulties sneak up on us just when everything seems to be going smoothly.

Your psychological default mode--that is, your typical reaction or response to life's unpleasant complications--can either contribute to or detract from your level of success. It can also directly affect your mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

Often our psychological default mode is such a habit that we aren't even consciously aware of it. When we take a good look at how we typically respond to life's unexpected troubles, we discover a lot about ourselves, and open the door to the possibility of change. Just like the default mode on your computer, you can reset your own default mode if it isn't getting you the results you desire.

What follows are descriptions of five common default mode patterns. Keep in mind that we may demonstrate these patterns to a greater or lesser degree. Also, one person may exhibit any combination of these tendencies. Later in this article, we will look at how you can reset your personal default mode.

Five Common Default Mode Patterns

1. ***The Blamer Mode.*** Here we look to assign blame for whatever has gone wrong. Instead of seeking positive ways to resolve an unpleasant situation, we waste a lot of time and energy trying to determine who is at fault. This default mode tends to provoke defensiveness in others.

2. ***The Victim Mode.*** Here we react to our misfortune by concluding that we have been unfairly targeted by others or life itself. We may engage in self pity (Why me?) and lament about how badly we are being treated. Due to our feelings of powerlessness, we may fail to take effective action.

3. ***The Fighter Mode.*** Here we become angered by life's setbacks, and vow to do battle with whomever or whatever has caused the problem. We need to win, and see life's

unexpected difficulties as a temporary loss that must be avenged in the game of life. This default mode tends to blind us to alternative perspectives which can be helpful in resolving a problem.

4. ***The Perfectionist Mode.*** Here we turn inward and attack the self. We use life's inevitable upsets as an excuse to criticize ourselves beyond measure. We view every disappointing situation as a personal failure and focus exclusively on our own mistakes or shortcomings. We may become paralyzed by our negative self-analysis.

5. ***The Responder Mode.*** Here we assess our current challenge and calmly devise a plan of action. We remain focused on finding and implementing the best solution for the situation we face. We avoid the traps of attaching blame, feeling victimized, becoming enraged, or attacking the self. Instead, we consider what went wrong, make adjustments to reduce the likelihood that the same problem will reoccur, and take responsible action to minimize losses and maximize gains. This default mode tends to engender respect and cooperation among coworkers.

RESETTING YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFAULT MODE

So, how do you reset your psychological default mode, if your current way of reacting or responding to life's challenges isn't working for you? Here are seven steps you can take to change your response patterns.

1. ***Establish your intention to change.*** Write down a description of the new behavior you wish to demonstrate, and tell yourself this is your intended goal. Post your written intentions somewhere so you can read it everyday.

2. ***Activate your imagination.*** Take a few minutes every day to visualize yourself responding in the new way. Your imagination is a powerful tool for activating the changes you desire.

3. ***Find a role model.*** Is there a person who demonstrates the default mode you would most like to emulate? When faced with a difficult situation, ask yourself, "How would _____ handle this challenge?"

4. ***Monitor yourself.*** Notice your reaction patterns. Watch, but don't judge what you see in yourself. Be a neutral observer of your own behavior.

5. ***Heal old wounds.*** Sometimes our emotional reactivity is due to unresolved situations from our past. By healing and releasing the past, we can deactivate emotional triggers and free ourselves to respond differently in the present.

6. ***Celebrate your successes.*** Every time you consciously choose to behave differently, give yourself a big pat on the back. Focus on the positive changes you are making, however small, and watch them multiply.

7. *Be patient.* It takes a little time to change an old habit. Just know if you keep at it, you will succeed. Maintain your focus on how you want to behave, and you will eventually find it quite natural to respond in the new way when life's unexpected challenges present themselves.

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