

Mental Training for Leaders: Exercises

Inside Out

[video 1 @ 13:13]

WHAT'S THE SKILL?

- Notice 3 specific things in 3 different attentional zones
 - Internal: Thoughts, Emotions, Memories, Sensations
 - Personal bubble: Posture, facial expression, clothes, hair, etc.
 - External: Use your 5 senses

BENEFIT

- Trains the brain to notice and have some control over which zone of attention you are in and to move attention from internal (where we often get stuck), back to the external where the performance is happening
-

Mindfulness Meditation

[video 1 @ 27:40]

WHAT'S THE SKILL?

- Set a timer (and any other features like background sounds or guided scripts) for 3-5 minutes.
- Focus on breath (or another element in the present moment, which could be the external environment). Notice when attention wanders away from target. Note what distracted you and gently (in a non-judgmental way) bring your attention back to the target. Do that as many times as it happens.
- Remember: The point is not to be distraction-free, it's to limit the duration of the distracted time and bring attention back to target.

BENEFIT

- Extending periods of Sustained Attention (focus on what you want to be focused on) AND shortening the periods of Mind Wandering (distraction from the task/performance)
 - Improves your "during performance" ability to recognize when your mind has wandered
-

Defusion Sentences

[video 2 @ 13:00]

WHAT'S THE SKILL?

- Observe thoughts with curiosity. Identify thoughts that are unhelpful/unworkable (likely to lead to a behavior that moves you away from your values/goals).
- Form the thought into a short sentence, i.e. "I am a loser." Write it down.
- Now replay the thought (out loud) with this in front of it: "I'm having a thought that...I am a loser." Write that version down below the original.
- Replay the thought once more (out loud) with this in front of it: "I notice I'm having the thought that...I am a loser." Write that version down below the other two.

BENEFIT

- Takes some of the sting out of the thought. Remember, it doesn't make the thought go away.
- Unhooks you from the thought. Creates distance from the thought. Makes the thought less believable, which makes us less likely to act on it and able to act in a different way.