

Are You Aware of Your “Negativity Thermostat”?

By Dania Dbaibo Darwish

Perhaps it's common knowledge by now that negative emotions pull you down and certainly don't feel good in the moment. Positive emotions not only feel great, they have more appreciable effects on your multiple life areas. While both kinds of emotions are necessary and integral to life in general, during stressful times, excessive negativity seems to come in bundles. It's like negative situations, people, conversations, emotions, and even bad news hit you from different directions. Then you wonder why you're not feeling well at all?

It's advisable to keep an eye on your “negativity thermostat”! There's a baseline that is optimal for you to keep functioning just right; and then, there are rising levels that can indicate you're reaching an alarming threshold. In the latter state, you may feel hyper-aroused in an anxious like state, or hypo-aroused in a depressive like state. When either state stretches too long, it can hamper your day-to-day functioning and certainly leaves you unbalanced. The ensuing results would be totally unrewarding, right?

So to start with, you need to be more observant of your inner world. How well do you notice the negativity affecting your wellbeing? Do you observe signs of tension in your body? Perhaps lowered mood affecting your outlook on life? Do you notice your frustration compounding and leaking out into unpleasant reactions? These are but few signs that your “negativity thermostat” is becoming “hot”. The more you experience negativity, the “hotter” it becomes; and the worse your functioning will be.

When you have high fever, you normally take medications to cool the fever down. You may put cold patches to return to baseline. Psychologically, when the negativity thermostat peaks, we need to intervene just the same with attempts to lower the negativity marker and cool it down. Decide to be proactive and engage in activities that bring you more positive emotions. This is referred to as “emotional regulation” which is one of the components of “emotional intelligence”. It is your true power when you're able to observe and direct your inner world because much of what stresses you out, is beyond your immediate control.

What you can do to lower the negativity thermostat is varied and depends on your preferences really. Some people feel great if they connect with loving people, go out for a jog, watch funny movies, and the list goes on. Careful, though, about indulging in pleasurable activities that are dysfunctional like emotional eating, or substance abuse. The temporary positive boost isn't worth the guilt and self-loathing that kicks in afterwards. These shoot back into the negativity loop and mess up with that thermostat.

When the times are tough, like the ones we've been going through recently, we do need to strike a balance with self-made good times to offset the negativity impact. We already jump in and take action when we're physically unwell. We'd go to a medical doctor and follow their recommendations to recover. Our psychological health is as important. Don't you think it deserves the same care you'd give your physical health? So let's keep an eye on that negativity thermostat. Self-care in seeking more positive nourishment isn't selfish when you notice the “heat” within. Every time you notice that

negativity thermostat rising, ask yourself: “what can I do NOW to lower it?” Go ahead unleash your creativity....

Your Personal Coach

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