

Proactive verses Reactive

Our effectiveness in life is strongly influenced by our ability to be proactive. We all face a wide range of challenges and concerns in our lifetime. Change is inevitable and the only thing we do have control of is our reaction to it.

Reframing a helpful tool for effectiveness:

Reframing means to change the meaning or interpretation of an event. It allows you to find opportunities in circumstances that generally might overwhelm you. This skill needs to be practiced to facilitate mastery, but is one of the most helpful stress management skills.

The reframing skill involves:

- The assessment of what has happened to evaluate whether your thinking is stuck in a negative interpretation of what is happening.
- The decision to find a constructive and or positive meaning or interpretation of the event no matter how difficult.
- The construction of a new interpretation –“re-frame”- around the new event.
- Reframing is *not problem solving*.

Reframing allows you to look closely at the negative aspects of the situation, but then to analyze what are the positive aspects. By choosing to focus on the positive aspects you develop a positive attitude towards the situation, one that allows you to be in a state that enables you to think more clearly.

- Reframing is an internal skill that gives you control over how you choose to react to what happens to you.
- Helpful in managing stress because it puts you back in control.

Reframing is a skill that encourages you to ask yourself

- What are the positive meanings in this for me?
- Where are the opportunities in this for me?
- In what way can I use this event to grow as a person?
- How has this event changed my relationships/ has it provided me, my family, or my friends with any new appreciations?

Successful reframing requires that reframed thoughts must result in an interpretation of the same information or situation that is both positive and realistic. You will know if you have successfully reframed a situation when the thoughts and feeling you have about the situation are no longer only negative.

There are many examples of reframing for us to be encouraged by. My favorite is Terry Fox

An active 18 year old Terry Fox was diagnosed with bone cancer, resulting in an above the knee amputation of his right leg. While hospitalized he was overcome by the suffering of other cancer patients especially the younger children and he decided to run across Canada to raise money for cancer research. He called his journey the Marathon of Hope. After 18 months of preparation Terry started his run with little fanfare. Enthusiasm grew and so did the money collected as he ran 26 miles a day, but after 3,339 miles Terry was forced to stop, the cancer had spread to his lungs and he passed away on June 28, 1981 at the age of 22. It was a journey that Canadians will never forget, the heroic Canadian was gone, but his legacy was just beginning. To date more than \$400 million has been raised worldwide for cancer research in Terry's name.

This is such an encouraging example of the strength and effectiveness that comes from a positive attitude.