

# Why your state of mind matters more than your CV

By Jenny Brockis

**“It is your attitude not your aptitude that determines your altitude.”** Zig Ziglar

In a world that places so much value on knowledge and expertise, having a bright shiny CV positively glistening with academic accolades would appear to be the guaranteed passport to career success.

This might have been true in the past, no longer. What matters now is knowing how to handle things when they go pear shaped and deal effectively with the tides of

uncertainty, the swell of change and the consequence of all our errors.

Our state of mind is fashioned by our attitudes, values and beliefs established in early childhood that are highly influenced by the people we spent the most time with, (usually our parents) and individual experience.

In any given situation our mindset also depends on a number of other influencers. If you're hungry, sleep deprived or worried about a sick child at home, you've already got

a load on your mind. Add in an unpleasant conversation with a disgruntled client, or accidentally spilling coffee over your laptop just prior to walking into that important meeting means the outcome will depend on your conscious choice of response to those events.

Carol Dweck is well known for her work researching mindset and believes is either fixed or growth orientated at any given moment. Having an open mind allows us to see the value of effort to gain improvement, be less afraid of failure



and welcomes feedback to promote further personal and professional growth. Whereas a fixed mindset that views intelligence as innate and effort something that stinks of hard work, means we are more likely to give up when faced with a challenge, and take feedback more personally.

Moreover because emotions are contagious a state of mind can become a collective. A workplace can quickly become stuck in the “that’s the way we do things around here”, mentality that shies away from innovation and possibility.

Managing your state of mind to maintain your performance can be helped by the following.

### 1 Avoid fatigue.

A tired brain is a stressed brain making it far harder to maintain a positive mood and good cognition. Fatigue can lead to blinkered thinking as your brain desperately seeks to conserve energy. Your sense of perspective disappears and that small problem now starts to look monstrous. Getting enough sleep at night and using power naps as appropriate will help keep your mind in a positive place.

### 2 Give yourself a break.

Working too hard or for too many hours is mentally exhausting and denies your brain the breathing space it requires to refresh and reboot. Too many thoughts jostling for position in your mind can lead to continuous loops of worry and anxiety. The dark side of our brain’s plasticity is that the more we ruminate the stronger those fears and anxieties become, leading to unhelpful thinking habits and limited self-beliefs that become increasingly

hard to dislodge.

### 3 Make a run for it.

The best workout for our mental wellbeing is physical activity. Prolonged sitting is linked to a multitude of health problems including raised levels of anxiety, reduced concentration and poorer cognition. Using a variable height desk, conducting standing meetings and choosing to move more, along with 20-30 minutes of huffy-puffy exercise daily lowers stress levels and elevates the production of our feel good brain chemicals - endorphins, serotonin and dopamine.



### 4 Check into hotel reality.

We often don’t hear the language we use when talking with others. Try checking in and question the validity of your statements. Dweck has revealed we can choose to develop a more positive mindset for example by changing our language from “I’m no good with technology” to “I’m not good at understanding technology yet.” Acknowledging our feelings allows us to modify their intensity.

### 5 Find your thinking space.

Being perpetually busy can get in the way of reflection. That’s why scheduling in an appointment with yourself promotes deeper thinking. Whether at 35,000 feet or in your

office with the door closed, taking time out to be quiet, connect with nature, listen to some music, or meditate provides the space needed to still your mind.

### 6 Get comfy with failure.

I’m sorry to break this to you, but you’re not perfect and nor am I. However our fallibility and propensity to make mistakes can be one of our greatest strengths if we allow ourselves to take responsibility for when things go wrong and view failure simply as an indicator that the correct solution hasn’t been found yet.

### 7 Be grateful.

Practising gratitude on a daily basis reduces stress levels and boosts tolerance and understanding. Journalling, practising loving kindness meditation and being more mindful boosts our sense of calm and wellbeing that elevates our confidence, competence and capability and leads to greater happiness.



*Dr. Jenny Brockis is the Brain Fitness Doctor. She is a speaker, mentor and author of Future brain: The 12 keys to Create Your Own High-Performance Brain (Wiley) available online and at all good bookstores. [www.drjennybrockis.com](http://www.drjennybrockis.com)*