

## Creating the conditions to bring your best self

Here are some thoughts on the steps to follow to help you to be more in touch with, and therefore more consciously able, to bring your best self especially when you need it most:

### Step 1: Know who you are at your best

**Step 2: Understand the conditions that help you to be at your best (so you are able to recreate them)**

**Step 3: Create, develop and practice the habits that enable you to bring about those conditions more often and especially when you most need them**

**Step 1:** Spend a bit of time thinking about who you are at your best and what strengths you use. You could try asking yourself the following questions:

- Think of a time when you were at your best, what made you choose this – how did you feel and what did you notice about yourself? What strengths were you using and what did others notice? How did this impact the results or outcomes that you achieved?
- Maybe also try asking other people who you respect questions such as:
  - What do you believe to be my greatest strength?
  - Can you describe a time when you felt I was at my best, and what did you notice that made you choose it?

**Step 2:** Next, an important part to consider is what conditions need to be present to help you to be at your best, try asking yourself questions like:

- What conditions were present to help you be at your best? For example, had you been able to do lots of preparation, were you put under pressure to deliver, did you have space and time to think?
- In that situation what did you do to create those conditions?
- How often are those conditions present and what could you do to have them more often?
- What is within your control to allow you to create them?

**Step 3:** The final step to enable to be your best more of the time is to think about what habits you can develop that create the conditions which then allow you to bring your best self, questions such as these might help:

- What are the routines that help me to be at my best?
- What is the first steps that you could take?
- What habits (regular, repeated practice) do I need to start that will lead to these routines?
- What will help me to practice these habits?
- Who can help me?

## Here is an example from a client we have worked with:

Clare has a team of 10 people; she currently has to support them through a period of significant change but isn't clear or confident in how to do this and is currently so busy that she isn't prioritising this as an area of focus. This is leading to her having feelings of doubt about her abilities as a leader, and the impact on her team is that they are seeing her being very directive with them, and also inconsistent in how she is communicating, both of which are leaving them feeling disengaged.

When she reflects on her best self, she notices the following:

**Step 1:** She is at her best when she is able to use her creativity to think of tailored and engaging ways to overcome challenges and to support her team. Her colleagues feedback that they really value her strengths of strong emotional intelligence and fact that she treats them as individuals with care and consideration.

**Step 2:** She notices that she is at her best when she is able to create the space for herself to think creatively. She cannot always do this well when she feels under pressure and in those situations, it is the thing that she pushes to the bottom of her to do list in favour of more reactive / short-term priorities. The time of the day and the environment she is in are important conditions to her too. She knows she has the most energy in the mornings and being able to take time away from the office and reflects that she is the most creative when she can spend time in her garden without distraction. The final condition that she reflects on is the impact that doing exercise regularly has – she realises that on the weeks where she exercises twice a week or more she feels more focused and sleeps better which has an overall impact on her mindset and especially her self-confidence.

**Step 3:** As a result of the reflections in step 1 & 2 she commits to creating space in her diary – a morning every week where she removes distractions completely and uses the time for creative thinking to focus on the challenges she needs to overcome that week / month. She will also commit to exercise twice a week in the morning and will schedule all of these in the diary to ensure that they are built into her week.