



Staying Clear and Focused in Times of Pressure.

Sarah Bird outlines how simple energy psychology techniques can eliminate stress and lead you on to peak performance.



An Investment in Yourself

No matter what the stock market may be doing right now, there's one investment opportunity that always pays off – an investment in yourself. And with demands on management and individuals running at levels that have rarely, if ever, been experienced before, it's essential that you're delivering peak performance - despite the fact that you may well be experiencing peak anxiety.

That's easier said than done, of course. Because when extreme pressure is applied to any aspect of our lives, the negative beliefs and emotions that have been running quietly in the background rapidly come to the surface. To counter this, it's essential that you create enough calm in the middle of the storm to make sure that your responses to today's challenges are based on logic, and not on these negative beliefs and emotions.

Every single one of us has a number of 'stories' that we like to tell ourselves. This can be quite harmless a lot of the time, but if the stories are negative – and if they're repeated often enough – we can start to believe them, to identify with them, and eventually to let them control our lives.

Common Stories

Most people will identify – at least occasionally – with some of the following common stories:

- I have simply too much to do and I'll never be able to make enough time to slow down and consider just what I'm doing.
- No matter what I do, outside economic factors mean that I just can't win.
- Even though I'm more talented than others, they seem to get the plum jobs.
- Things are going to get worse rather than better in the future.
- I'm always too tired at the end of the day to go out or have a decent personal life.

If you identify with any of these self-sabotaging stories, you owe it to yourself to simply tear up the script and write some better, more constructive and more helpful stories - then start telling them.

And if that sounds like mere wishful thinking, rest assured that deep, meaningful change is possible – assuming you're willing to make an investment in yourself. Because if you fail to make the changes that you deserve, you'll join countless individuals out there right now who are avoiding making tough decisions because of emotional factors such as fear of change, fear of the consequences of failure – or even fear of success?

Coping with Extreme Pressure

Coping with extreme pressure – and the negativity that can accompany it, is a skill. And like any skill, it can be acquired, whether through a formal personal development programme, or perhaps a less formal mentoring initiative.

The skills that are in greatest demand in Irish management right now are the skills of self-mastery and awareness, which allow you to clear out the emotional turmoil that's preventing you from making focused value judgements.

Successful self-management can only be achieved when executives display appropriate levels of empathy, hearing, encouragement and confidence in their own position. It is this last element – confidence - that is so often the stumbling block. If

executives don't feel secure and in control of their lives, they are bound to reflect that in their day-to-day business decisions.

Such emotional blocks to peak corporate performance can be easily removed by a number of simple, easily applied techniques that are available to all. Of specific benefit are a number of interventions under the heading of Energy Psychology, a scientific discipline that seeks to harmonise the body's natural bio-field for the treatment and relief of emotional challenges such as stress, anxiety, limiting beliefs and trauma.

Energy Psychology

Energy psychology interventions work with the body's natural energies to shift the chemical patterns in the brain that maintain unwanted habits, inappropriate emotional responses and self-limiting ways of thinking.

The field of Energy Psychology is making a very deep-rooted contribution to how we can manage our emotions and maximise our potential. Whether used for corporate, relationship, leadership or sporting development, it allows us to access the master switch that is our energy field.

And in controlling this master switch, we can learn how to enhance our ability to succeed and to enjoy life to its fullest. The bottom line is that it can help business professionals to:

- Become more self-aware, knowing and trusting their own gut feelings
- Manage their moods, being able to modify their own emotional state
- Develop greater levels of self-motivation, being able to generate feelings of enthusiasm, confidence and optimism.
- Control impulses – those who can delay their gratification tend to excel
- Improve people skills, as those who can develop genuine networks with a wide range of people tend to be peak performers.

And the best part is that they are quick and simple to learn, so you can very soon have this resource at your fingertips on a permanent basis.

The impact on an individual's working and personal life can be truly astonishing. The Managing Director of a leading financial services company approached me with a view to reducing stress levels and becoming more productive on a day-to-day basis.

"No matter what the stock market may be doing right now, there's one investment that always pays off - an investment in yourself."

At the end of a series of sessions, he was applying a number of simple techniques in his business and private lives, with excellent results. He reported that "my head is definitely free of whatever blocks were in the way and I am now thinking

more clearly and making faster decisions, which in turn, is increasing my productivity."

There was further good news on the personal front: "My relationships with those around me are also improving - not that they were bad in the first place. It's just that they are more fulfilling because I am focussed on what is important. And would you believe it, my golf has improved dramatically!"

A second example relates to a middle-ranked manager who believed that she simply didn't have the ability to perform well enough at interview to land the kind of jobs she knew she was qualified for. Using a range of Energy Psychology techniques, she managed to completely turn around her negative attitude to interviews.

She reported that "using these techniques has helped me greatly to get through emotional and difficult times, both at work and at home. Recently I went for an interview for a very senior job and I was successful. Your techniques were an integral part of that success. I see them as the tools for enabling me to make the most of myself."

The bottom line is that achieving genuine, deep-rooted change is not just a self-help pipe dream, but a realistic prospect that will repay the investment in yourself many times over. It's also an investment that will yield dividends for the entire rest of your life, and right across the full spectrum of your business, personal and sporting lives.

Quite simply, there's nobody who's more deserving of investment than yourself.

Some Simple Exercises To Get You Started

- Notice when you're talking about what you don't like or want, and then immediately make an effort to focus on what you do like or want.
- Notice when you're complaining, and then mention something you really appreciate.
- Notice when you're hearing yourself telling yet another person what went wrong in your week, and then remark on something that went right this week.
- Notice your focus - and then make the change.
- If you're under severe stress and need to re-calibrate your brain to deal with it, here's a simple exercise called 'Box Breathing'. Breathe in on a count to four, hold the inhalation for a count of four, exhale on a count of four, and then hold the exhalation for a count of four.

Biography

Sarah Bird is a leading Personal Development Consultant specialising in Corporate Mentoring and Sports excellence. She is an International Speaker and Trainer in Energy Psychology Techniques, and is part of an international team developing a programme for working with Combat Veterans and service personnel suffering from the effects of combat trauma. Sarah can be contacted on sarah@sarahbird.ie.