

S TOMACH ACID – WHAT ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT?

The responsibilities of leadership can be anxiety provoking – but the anxiety is often self-inflicted. The healthiest leaders have MindSets that help to control stomach acid. They understand that how we think determines how we feel, and as such, the way in which we label situations goes a long way toward determining our emotions. Such leaders:

- ◆ Do not “catastrophize”
- ◆ Remember that few things are as bad as originally reported
- ◆ Avoid overly dramatic and negative self-statements
- ◆ Often play out worst case scenarios in their mind so they grasp that even the worst possible outcome is not really all that terrible
- ◆ Keep perspective, i.e., they remind themselves what constitutes a real tragedy or catastrophe
- ◆ Anticipate physiological reactions to anxiety and utilize coping mechanisms such as relaxation techniques
- ◆ Accept that a dose of fear is fun and stimulates action

One useful MindSet with respect to anxiety control is to NEVER tell yourself (or anyone else) that you are anxious about any meeting or event where nothing but opportunity can be lost. Leaders having this MindSet love meetings that have no downside, i.e., you have something to gain and nothing to lose. In this situation there is no reason for anxiety; there can be good reason for excitement and eagerness, but not anxiety. Save anxiety for situations where you are waiting for a potentially life-threatening medical diagnosis or for when you hear the low rumble of a tornado headed your way.

Note: “I am anxious to...” is perhaps the single most misused phrase in the English language. Listen to how often it is said when it should be “I am eager to...” Language matters – avoid letting anxiety become a synonym, either in your words or mind, for excitement or anticipation.

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