



EFL “Brieflet”: Engaging with Self-Management

The Challenge

The definition of *Self-Management* varies greatly, depending upon the context and whom you ask. It is sometimes linked with the concept of resilience. In a work-related context, resilience tends to refer to the ability to bounce back, or keep going in the face of work-based change and adversity. Recent research suggests that resilience involves having sufficient capacity, or energy, to bounce back - as well as the capability to do so. Being able to manage yourself effectively therefore contributes to ongoing resilience. In this *EFL Brieflet*, *Self-Management* is taken to mean the extent to which you can manage the combination of your:

- Time
- Headspace - thoughts and emotions
- Behaviour

Most people know what they should do to manage each of the above in order to remain resilient and be at their best. What is difficult is the ability to apply this knowledge, particularly at times of stress. *Self-Management* is often compromised when you:

- Believe that your time is not your own; that there is not enough time in the day; or that there is no time to do the things that you want - particularly for yourself and for the people for whom you care
- Cannot focus properly; or feel irritable, unmotivated, panicky, tired, or clumsy in your decision-making
- Are short-tempered with others; unable to maintain constructive or meaningful conversation; or are disorganised in your presentation

From time to time all of us think, feel and behave in ways that indicate poor *Self-Management*. And, it's often true that there is not enough time to do the things that we want to do or have committed ourselves to do. These experiences, and the fact that some things are out of our control, are not unusual. However, how we manage ourselves in relation to these realities is something we can control. The way that we do this reflects our skills in *Self-Management*.

Thinking about how much we are being paid can sometimes re-focus our *Self-Management* skills, as can the motivation to meet others' (or our own) expectations. Fear of failure, or of punishment can also influence how we *Self-Manage*. However, whilst these and some other strategies can improve *Self-Management*, they can be very draining, often unhealthy and can drain our resilience in the long term. One of the reasons for this is that it tends to narrow our focus to the exclusion of other factors that are essential for balanced and sustainable *Self-Management* and self-care.

Participants reported the benefits of having skills and techniques to apply across the timeline, [as well as] the importance of having the energy to implement [them]^

Engaging Self-Management

The purpose of this *EFL Brieflet: Engaging with Self-Management* is to reinforce your ability to maintain a balanced engagement with all that is important to you in your life. For this reason, you are encouraged to reflect upon the Core Values* that guide your life. Taking the courage to do so is rewarded by the realisation that doing what is important to you is a holistic process which requires a regular change of focus and priority. Having a clear sense of your values enables you to use them as an essential guide to how you organise your time, headspace, and behaviour in a way that is specific and important to you. Having identified your top 3-5 Values, it's more likely you will increase your motivation to engage better *Self-Management* in relation to:

- Time
 - *When do you feel the most energised?* Are you focusing upon doing what is important to you at the times when you perform at your best?
 - *To what do you need to give more priority?* Does your calendar reflect priorities that are in line with your values?
 - *Regular Breaks & Periodic Reviews.* Don't wait for these to occur: plan for them, every day - some on your own, some with important others
 - *Do it now!* You can make several calendar changes in just 5 minutes
- Headspace
 - *Expend your thoughts and emotions in service of your values* - rather than for something else. Doing what is important sometimes takes pain and effort - and requires self-affirmation and -compassion.
 - *Focus upon the things that are in line with your values* - and use your values as your compass to give you direction in demanding times
 - *Being vulnerable* - can be challenging: but it also allows you to be open
 - *Do it now!* Just before you go to sleep, practise focusing on the things that you have been doing that have been in line with your values
- Behaviour
 - *Relaxing, exercising, sleeping are essential* - for you to reach your values
 - *Bully buddies* - (especially those who share your perspective) can helpfully hold you accountable; and can encourage, challenge and support you to maintain balanced *Self-Management*

Leaders ... clearly felt that their ability to be resilient was influenced by their values^

Sources for your further interest

^Lawton Smith, C. (2017). Coaching for leadership resilience: an integrated approach. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 12 (1).

*Values Checklist - Google-Image these two words to find a plethora of Values Checklists from which to choose your values

Wasylyshyn, K. (2014). *Destined to lead: executive coaching and lessons for leadership development.* Palgrave MacMillan.

Sam Farmer is Owner-Director of Enhance Facilitation Limited. He is strength-based in his approach, passionate about collaborative coaching and advocates that leadership is a team responsibility. **Sam coaches and facilitates professionals and teams through change - strengthening their confidence to maximise their capacity and capability to work and live according to what is important to them.** He also provides professional supervision, and psychosocial support to professionals working within high emotional impact contexts. A registered psychologist, Sam is bound by the Psychologists' Code of Ethics and has regular professional supervision.

© Enhance Facilitation Limited www.enhanceltd.co.nz

Coaching

Psychosocial support

Supervision