



Spring Clean Your Mind (and Your Company Will Follow).

Description

It's the time of year for clearing out the old to make room for the fresh and new. We typically think in terms of decluttering our homes or removing dead growth from our outdoor and garden spaces—but it's just as important to spring clean our minds and renew our spirits.

This is especially needed right now. It's easy to get bogged down with all the bad news we've been hearing the last few years. When we clear out the mental, emotional, and spiritual debris we free our minds to grow and thrive.

This type of spring cleaning is about getting rid of negative messages and outdated beliefs that prevent us from feeling good, thinking creatively, and doing our best work. When we get intentional about what we are feeding our mind on a regular basis, it can create a ripple effect that changes everything for the better.

As leaders we need to do this not only for ourselves but for our team as well. Our outlook shapes our own behavior, which sets the tone for everyone else. There is much to be gained from creating a culture of positivity and optimism and it's even more important when you're coming off a time of chaos, stress, and trauma.

When I was writing [*The Calling*](#) this was my primary concern: *How do you take a battered workforce and renew them?* The key is knowing that people thrive on positive messages and behaviors: gratitude, appreciation, recognition, and stories that show the impact we make on others. We need to feel good about our work. We need to be constantly reminded that what we do has meaning and makes others' lives better. When we build an entire culture around this kind of positivity, performance can skyrocket.

First, though, we as leaders need to get ourselves in a better place mentally and emotionally. A few actions to take as you start to do your mental spring cleaning:

First get super intentional about making a shift. Create a plan. Write it down, get some action steps on your calendar, and hold yourself accountable to doing them.

Get rid of negative messages and digital noise.• Minimize those things that bring our energy down and keep us in a cycle of depletion—for example, overconsumption of bad news and social media turmoil. Of course we need to know what’s going on in the world and in our business environment, but we don’t have to see it repeated 24/7.

When Warner Thomas, FACHE, President/CEO of Ochsner held a session at the recent ACHE Congress on [Resilient Leadership](#) he talked at length on this subject. Surge after surge had left his team beaten and battered. He had to get really thoughtful about where he allowed his mind to spend time and to control what comes in. He said when you are a leader, you have to create the space to think and resist the urge to isolate. You have to pull people with you and it’s not possible to do if you don’t have your head in the right place. You have to put your oxygen mask on first and show up with a renewed sense of optimism and that means protecting yourself from too many negative messages.

Fill your mind with positive messages. Read, watch, and talk about things that create hope and inspiration for the future. There is an endless supply of inspiring books, websites, and social media pages to choose from. When you are constantly depleted, you can’t energize your team. You can’t give what you don’t have.

Do an audit of your attitudes and ideas. Rethink what you believe. Spring cleaning is also about discarding old ideas that no longer apply. In light of the massive changes that have occurred recently, ask yourself: *What did I learn over the past three years? Do I have new beliefs now? Do my attitudes and ideas make sense or no longer fit the current business environment?* This is the starting point for making needed transformations inside your company.

Realize that what you tell yourself matters. Reframe some negative things into a positive mantra.

Take baby steps. Pick one thing to change at a time. If you try to do too much at once you may get overwhelmed and give up too soon.

If you’re struggling to make needed changes, try out some different mental, emotional, and spiritual tools. At various points in my own journey, I have found therapy to be incredibly helpful. Many people swear by prayer, meditation, journaling, visualization, and the use of affirmations. Take what works for you and leave the rest.

Start to notice how you feel. Don’t take your emotional temperature every five minutes but do pay attention to your energy level as you start to spring clean. This will help you realize what serves you well and what doesn’t.

Next, think about how you might help others in your company do their own spring cleaning. Part of this is around well-being. It’s urgent to help people manage stress and address mental and emotional issues that might be causing them to struggle. Another part is infusing tactics that keep people replenished and connected to mission—like gratitude, Reward & Recognition, Relationship Rounding, and more.

Leverage the power of storytelling. One of the things I talk about in *The Calling* is how to create a culture where good stories get captured and repeated. Once people start to see the difference they’re making, it’s easier to feel more positive and uplifted and reconnected to their personal calling. Put in systems that empower and encourage others to capture and share their own stories. A

steady flow of positive stories is a natural replenisher.

Of course, it all starts with leaders. We have to be the messengers that lift and replenish others, and that means helping ourselves. We can't help others until we put our own oxygen mask on first. Get your insides right; then you can help others work on theirs.

The best way to help our employees is to take inventory and renew and refresh our minds and spirits. We set the tone in organizations. When we replenish ourselves, we are in a much better place to help replenish others. We can all get better and better together.

Date Created

April 25, 2022

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