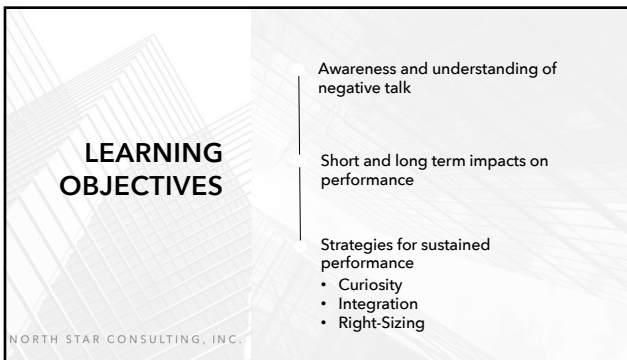




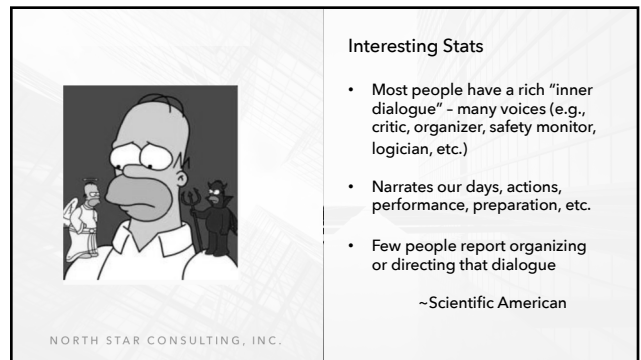
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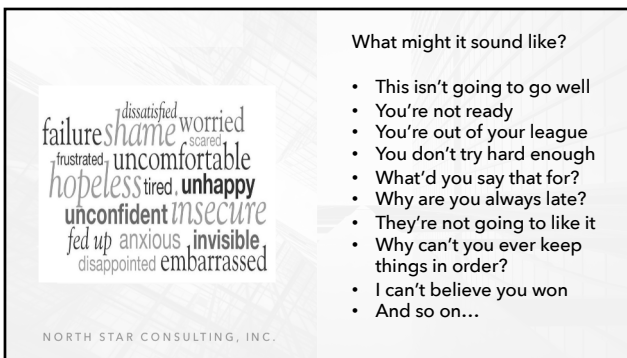
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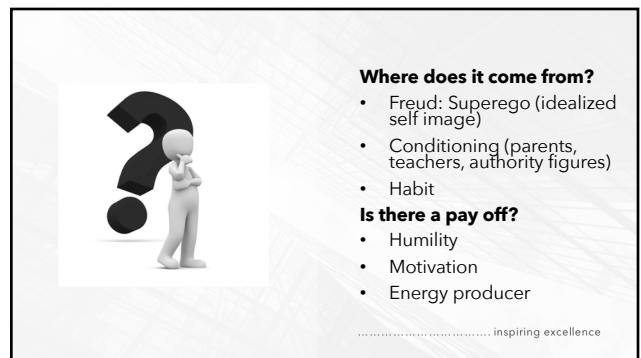
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## THE CHEMISTRY OF STRESS

**The fight or flight response**

Dilation of pupil  
Dry mouth  
Fast breathing  
Heart pounding  
Tense muscles  
Slow digestion  
Sweating of palms

1. The amygdala reacts to threat
2. The hypothalamus activates the sympathetic nervous system, release of adrenaline
3. The adrenal cortex releases cortisol for continued alertness

**Energy Producer/Motivation**

- Criticism triggers a stress response
- Releases cortisol and adrenaline
- In the short-term adrenaline enhances performance
- Adrenaline increases your heart rate, elevates your blood pressure and boosts energy supplies
- Cortisol increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream, enhances your brain's use of glucose and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues

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- When we over-index on inner criticism, we are artificially eliciting the fight or flight response
- Fight or flight (stress response) is intended to support us when we are in immediate and temporary danger
- Leveraging this in as a long-term motivator or energizer diminishes performance

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## IMPACTS OF PROLONGED STRESS

- Significantly decreased performance
  - Physical (sports, endurance, weight, etc.)
  - Mental (focus and clarity)
  - Relational (personal and professional relationships)
  - Psychological (increased anxiety and depression)
- Inability to experience joy
- Limits our ability to fulfill our potential

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**Develop A Litmus Test**

- Consider someone you love, care about, lead, etc.
- Now imagine barraging them with a steady stream of commentary from your inner critic
- What impact would you expect?
- Reflect and recalibrate

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**Pendulum Approach**

If negative self-talk isn't effective long-term, maybe positive self talk is the answer...?

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**The Limitations of Affirmations**

- May have that same dramatic, exaggerated quality as our inner critic
- Lack of authenticity
- Disbelief

*Remember your litmus test*

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**Integration**

- Awareness - notice the qualities of the voice
- Curiosity - what's the message?
- Rationality - is there merit?
- Action - what do you want to do? How will you problem solve the legitimate concern?
- Reflection - how did it work? What would you change? What would you repeat?
- Repeat

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**Scale and Rightsizing**


- Cultivate an awareness of the many aspects of inner dialogue
- Study the qualities of your inner critic (anger, fear, drama, scare tactics, etc.)
- Take charge - assign appropriate authority

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<p><b>Awareness</b></p> <p>When does your inner critic surface? What are the qualities of that voice?</p>	<p><b>Curiosity</b></p> <p>What's the message? Is it warning you of something legitimate?</p>	<p><b>Integration</b></p> <p>If there is merit, what do you want to do about it? If not, where will you assign authority?</p>	<p><b>Reflection</b></p> <p>How did the strategy work? What was the impact on you or the quality of your work? What will you repeat? Change?</p>
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**A BETTER CYCLE**



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**Benefits**


- Higher degree of creativity and innovation (problem solving under duress disappears)
- Professional success
- Better relationships (all kinds)
- Improved mental, physical, psychological health
- Stronger performance (athletics, school, work, etc.)
- More positive influence among those you lead
- More joy

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**What we think, we become.**

Buddha



The Buddha once said:

“The thought manifests as the word;  
the word manifests as the deed;  
the deed develops into habit;  
habit hardens into character.  
So, watch the thought and its ways with care.”

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**GREAT RESOURCES**


TEDTalk

- “This Talk Isn’t Very Good: Dancing with my Inner Critic”, Steve Chapman

Podcast

The One You Feed

- Episode: “On Your Own Side”, Dr. Aziz Gazipura



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