

Increasing Your Psychological Capital with the Mind Garden



By Dr. Chance T. Eaton

The power of the mind never ceases to amaze me. When our perspective is broad, our ego is at rest and our intentions are clear, it seems that anything is possible. But when our perspective is the size of a keyhole, our ego craves identity and our intentions are unfocused, we contribute to further chaos.

In the field of organizational development, we have a tendency to focus on and assess organizational culture and climate, preach on leadership and management skills and behaviors and recommend strategies for change; but we often forget that everything starts with the individual and their own personal psychology.

In the literature on this topic, one construct that seems to capture and characterize an effective mind is called psychological capital. Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman (2007) characterize psychological capital as being comprised of optimism, resilience, hope and self-efficacy. More specifically, a person that has developed psychological capital sees the

world with a positive attitude now and in the future (optimism), is able to sustain adversity and bounce back (resilience), is goal oriented and forward leaning (hope) and possesses confidence in their ability to be effective (self-efficacious). So how does one enhance their psychological capital? Several years ago I came up with a simple analogy to help build one's state of mind: the Mind Garden.

The Mind Garden

Begin by visualizing your mind as a garden, which includes the potential for crops and weeds. Crops represent desired experiences in life, be they stronger relationships, meaningful work or financial security. Weeds represent the subconscious sabotaging thoughts, feelings and habits that keep a person stuck living in the past. A person with high psychological capital may have bountiful crops that are clean of weeds and trash. A person with low psychological capital may be overrun with spindly crops and dry dirt and be overtaken with weeds.

The Mind Garden is indifferent as to what it grows or becomes, just as a garden is indifferent to growing crops or weeds. When we correctly set our intentions (plant the seed) and clear sabotaging thought patterns and feelings (weed the garden), we are essentially practicing a psychological mind hack where we shift into new paradigms and new realities. A bountiful Mind Garden requires that we simultaneously plant and nourish the seeds of intention while clearing the weeds of resistance.

Mind Garden Instructions

The instructions for creating a greater psychological capital are as follows. First, you need to identify what you want to grow or intend. When I was a farmer, deciding on appropriate crops was always a very strategic process. There were market conditions, crop rotations, crop diseases and seasonality factors to consider. Deciding on the right crops was very important to the long-term viability of the farm.

When it comes to the Mind Garden, this is easier said than done. It is normal for our psychology to live in the past, which is safe, comfortable and predictable. As a result, it is pretty common for people to know what they *don't want*. I've had clients that could write books on all the things they don't want, and when you challenge them to just stop for a second and think about what they actually *do want* in a given situation, they can't and resort to answering with more of what they don't want. They have no sense of the power of their own consciousness and their ability to activate free will, and as a result they have no optimism for the future, no resilience to bounce back from adversity, no hope for achieving their desires and no confidence in their ability to be effective – they have no psychological capital to work with. Effective people get in the habit of starting with the question "What do I really want in this situation?" If you can answer this question to any given challenge, I feel that you are halfway there.

Second, you need to plant the seed. All seeds need to be set in the ground with slight compaction so the nutrients are readily accessible. As a farmer, I remember that if the seed was planted too deep, it had to work too hard to sprout above the ground. If it was planted too shallow, it may not have the needed moisture to germinate and get a good start. So planting the seed correctly was critical.

In terms of the Mind Garden, once you know what you actually want, setting the specific intention is the next step. A common challenge I have faced with clients is that they know what they want, but their intention is placed in the ego. For example, they may want to pick up a hobby of photography and they tell me that what

they want is to have the capital to buy the best camera. But the mind really doesn't know what a camera is; at the neurobiological level, the mind only knows what the experience of the camera is. So I remind my clients to know what emotional experience they are seeding. In the case of the camera, it may actually be the experience of capturing family memories or a glimpse of the human experience, etc. Here is another example: A client wants to move into a managerial role at work. They have the job skills and abilities, have proven themselves and would be considered a viable candidate. But the mind doesn't know what a manager is; it only knows your interpretation and meaning of being a manager. So I challenge the client to think about the emotional experience of being a manager. If the client says that they want to be respected in their career, I would challenge them to instead consider the emotional experience of being recognized, respected and valued. Now this may not result in being a manager but instead result in relationships that provide them with being valued. Because five years down the road, if their intention of becoming a manager comes true but they still don't receive a sense of value, we have made no progress. So I always work to redirect the client into setting the intention on the emotional experience that is truly desired. Next, I have clients use a technique that will work for them, such as writing down a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-based) goal or writing down a one-sentence affirmation. This sets the stage so you are psychologically planting the correct crop in the first place.

Third, all crops need to be nourished to grow. Nourishment comes in the form of sunlight, water and nutrients. I've seen this many times while farming; even though the crop is planted correctly, if the rain doesn't come or there are insufficient nutrients, the crop will never yield to its potential.

In the Mind Garden, a person has to psychologically nourish their intention with correct thoughts and emotions. I like to have clients nourish their intention twice a day for five to seven minutes by meditating on correct images, thoughts and feelings associated with the intention. Psychologically, the act of vividly nourishing the intention starts to make the potential reality dump into the subconscious mind, where habits reside. After a while of doing this, this new reality starts to feel comfortable and natural. This is where we see new habits take form because the mind has been reprogrammed for a new way of being.

Finally, all crops get weeds. As a commodity farmer, I was often in charge of spraying for weeds. If the weeds weren't managed, they would compete with the

crop, robbing the moisture, the sunlight and, most of all, the precious ground nutrients.



In the Mind Garden, I can almost assure you that you will get weeds, which, in this case, are subconscious sabotaging thoughts, feelings and memories. They might include "I can't do that," "It has never worked before," "Last time I tried this I failed," "I don't deserve to have that," "Others may judge me," "I'm too old to try this," "I'm not smart enough to have that," "My mother told me to never be selfish," etc. It is almost like clockwork: About three to four weeks into setting new intentions, your subconscious mind will fight to take you back to where you belong – your past, where you are safe from uncertainty. To combat this, I have clients use calming techniques like Energy Psychology, HeartMath or Healing Codes (see the end of this article for links). These types of systems help to calm the fight-or-flight centers of the brain and, in some cases, even recontextualize the past so that the current intention becomes safe. Just to note, when I have a client that is trying to set some new life habits, we spend most of our time dealing with the weeds, or subconscious resistance. Considering that 90 to 99% of our thinking is subconscious, you can see how once we stretch the mind into new ways of being, the

sabotaging thoughts and feelings start to become very apparent.

Conclusion

In summary, the Mind Garden is not much different than farming: You know what you want to plant, you plant the seed correctly, you provide the seed with nutrients and, finally, you clear the weeds to not compete with the crop. The Mind Garden uses the same analogy, but essentially you are performing a mind hack. You start by knowing what you want and then set the intention that creates an emotional experience, nourish the crops by meditating with correct thoughts and feelings that support the intention and, finally, clear subconscious resistance with next-generation psychology techniques.

People that can get in the habit of activating the Mind Garden are using real mind hack tools to more easily achieve higher psychological capital. And at the end of the day, who doesn't want to have a life filled with more optimism, resilience, hope and self-efficacy?

Luthans, F., Avolio, B., Avey, J. B., & Norman, S. M. (2007). Psychological capital: Measurement and relationship with performance and job satisfaction. Personnel Psychology, 60, 541-572

To learn more about Energy Psychology, Heart Math®, and Healing Codes, please visit the following:

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www.TheHealingCodes.com

Dr. Chance Eaton has over a decade's worth of experience working in the field of Learning & Organizational Development. Due to his unique educational and work experiences in finance, psychology, leadership & management, education, noetic sciences, and agriculture, Dr. Eaton provides his clients with relevant business solutions grounded in theory and research. To learn more about Dr. Eaton's services, please visit www.HRSolutionsInternational.com.

