

There's greatness inside all of us that just needs to be tapped

Marshall Shimon, SIA Prevention Services

Beginning in the early 1900's people became familiar with the common computer trademark "Intel Inside." Scientists at the University of Manchester announced in 2018 that, after a decade in the making, they'd activated a supercomputer equipped with a million processing cores and 1,200 interconnected circuit boards that together operate like a human brain. Though it may not feel like it first thing Monday morning, your brain is still more powerful and more capable of performing certain tasks than is the most powerful supercomputer. In fact, you have "Greatness Inside" that's just waiting to be activated.

Similar to the hard work that goes into creating neuromorphic supercomputers – a type of computer that mimics the firing of brain neurons – our neurons have enabled the enhancement of our development since the day we were born. Every experience, thought, environment and activity you've engaged in has made you who you are today. Stop reading momentarily to appreciate what you've accomplished in life. Every sacrifice you've made, every challenge you've faced, each perceived failure in your life has contributed to achievements that make up your character. Remember to celebrate your accomplishments daily and appreciate who you are now to build self-confidence and resilience. When facing new challenges remember that you can adapt and develop the resources to be successful. In fact, you may already have the internal resources from past experiences and just need to tap into them.

One of my favorite ID badge lanyards that I see at work reads "Be patient, I'm still learning." This simple statement embodies the character of greatness. To acknowledge that we're a work in progress is accurate, yet difficult, for the ego to accept. During this era of uncertainty we've been shown that we really don't have all the answers. Modeling this motto for our students, children and co-workers facilitates the idea that we're always developing, growing and working toward who we want to be when we grow up.



We're superior to technology in our ability to both create and process information from our surroundings. Our minds devise the reality in which we live, including stressful situations. To counter-balance some of this stress, practice creating a realistic mental image of your dream life. Go big, don't hold back when envisioning this scenario. Take a moment to ask yourself a few questions: What makes you feel alive? What makes you feel excited about life? What's something that you look forward to doing? What's something that you absolutely love to do, where time seems to fly by? What's unique, special and different that sets you apart

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COVID Updates

Looking for the latest information on coronavirus and your role as an employer? Visit SIA's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Schools page on our website at www.sia-jpa.org. You'll find the most current resources, links and tools.





Inspired leadership in challenging times

Michele Mariscal, SIA Prevention Services

"Leadership is not about titles, positions, or flow charts. It is about one life influencing another." – John C. Maxwell



Leadership is not necessarily about being strong, but more about being human. This is why the work of Brene Brown has caught fire in many organizations because she helps leaders recognize and practice the element of vulnerability as a skill

of leadership. **(Mark your calendars for January 21 when SIA will host a daylong training on this topic.)**

Using this concept as a guide, here are some helpful things to know and practice while confronting the often emotional aspects of leadership:

- 1) Provide connection for and with employees to share their experiences openly.** For example, I was able to share in my department meeting this week my deep sadness about canceling my flight home to be with my family at Christmas. This was in addition to sharing how my projects are going for work. I get to share *all* of me so that I'm not perpetuating two of the biggest myths in the world about grief: "Grieve alone" and "Be strong." Remember, it's about being human and it's our humanity that most influences others.
- 2) While naming emotions is important, you can also help yourself and your employees create commitment.** Naming those difficult emotions shifts the brain signals to activity in the pre-frontal cortex where creative problem-solving can occur. So, for example, one might be able to name a commitment such as "I take each moment as it comes today." Daily commitments help with staying present and away from future worries. (For more on the importance of naming our emotions, read "Navigating the Landscape of Emotions" in the September/October issue of SIA's Wellness & Safety).
- 3) The inability to lock in to something that feels certain creates hyperactivity in the nervous system.** Physical and mental exhaustion are outcomes of this. Share as much and as many resources as you can! EAP programs provide lots of options. Also, did you know that SIA has a YouTube channel with some great self-care videos? You can access it here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SIA4Kids>

There's greatness inside all of us

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from other people? What makes you feel free, creative and taps into your inner gifts? Who or what inspires you to work toward the ideal version of yourself? After answering these questions take notice of the key elements that represent your needs, wants and desires. It's important to dream about our ideal lives and create goals that align with turning dreams into reality. By no means am I implying that if you dream hard enough a genie will materialize and promise to grant you unlimited wishes. But you may find something realistic and tangible that you can do to enhance your life without winning the lottery.

Don't let your inner child down by not following your dreams. Be your own best friend...



People travel the globe out of curiosity and appreciation for what the world has to offer. Many who visit other places find they unlock the marvel and joy that's within themselves. Inside you is a treasure waiting to be discovered simply by experiencing life more fully. If there's an inherent benefit for both you and others with the experiences that discovery brings, then the rewards are multiplied.

We often fail to appreciate the important things that we've accomplished in life. Some of our toughest challenges have provided our greatest rewards. Don't let the apprehension of not being the best stop you from doing something that creates a positive change in your life. Most everything that can be "mastered" starts with fundamentals. Start with the basics and enjoy the process of building the knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences that will help you to progress. Don't let your inner child down by not following your dreams. Be your own best friend, not your own worst critic. Brighten someone's day by sharing the "Greatness Inside" treasures that are within you.

Resources: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-new-supercomputer-is-the-worlds-fastest-brain-mimicking-machine/>



Designed with school district leaders in mind.

The drain of 'virtual meeting fatigue' is real; here are some ways to confront it

Lyn Poll, M.S., SIA Prevention Services

How many hours are you spending looking at a computer screen or mobile device these days? Chances are it's much more than your pre-COVID work days. COVID-19 has accelerated the use of virtual technology in the work environment, making it possible for offices to stay connected while social distancing.

The days of in-person meetings have been put on hold for the foreseeable future. We're now all in virtual meetings all the time and it's making many of us feel even more exhausted at the end of the day than we felt pre-pandemic. Enter virtual meeting fatigue, a condition that drains energy, strains eyes and, based on a report from the BBC, makes us less productive. With this in mind, here are some of the most common culprits of the remote-work energy drain, as well as some ways to combat them:

Eyestrain: Eyestrain is one of the most obvious culprits of virtual meeting fatigue. Those who stare at screens for prolonged periods blink half as often as they typically do during face-to-face interaction. This can leave eyes feeling dry and irritated - and you feeling more tired.

To help reduce eyestrain, try to follow the 20/20/20 rule, which allows the eyes to rest properly. Under this rule you should work for 20 minutes, then stare at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This allows your eyes to get needed rest and helps reduce the effects of screen fatigue.

A "Zero Break" Schedule: It's tempting to schedule virtual meetings or classes back to back to get them over with. But this can severely drain your mental batteries because your body, mind and eyes need a break.



To avoid this, meetings should be scheduled with 5- to 10-minute breaks in between. This allows the brain to process the meeting material, make notes and prepare for the next conversation. Think of it as a brain dump to clear space for the next fill up.

Another option is to set aside one day a week as a "meeting-free" day. This can provide a distraction-free opportunity for really getting some work done.

Screen Anxiety: Think about your last virtual meeting. Did you move, swivel side to side and lean forward to take notes? Or did you stay in one place fixated on your screen? Chances are you opted to look attentively at the screen, staying perfectly centered and focused. This feeling of always being "on" can be exhausting.

The best way to relieve anxiety is to turn off your camera periodically. If this isn't an option, then intentionally moving your body more can reduce tension. Alternating from sitting to standing during meetings, walking around between calls, and doing some gentle stretching exercises can all help get your blood flowing and reduce mental fatigue.

Visual Overload: During in-person meetings, we focus on the main speaker, with everyone else on the sidelines or behind you. During a virtual meeting, you see everyone at once, including the

one person you don't usually observe - yourself. This creates visual overload.

When we look at a screen, whether it's cell phone, computer or TV, our mind is processing things as a unified whole. A virtual meeting in gallery view isn't a unified whole. It's the equivalent of trying to watch multiple TV shows, side-by-side, while checking a mirror to see how you look. It's very tiring.

To overcome this brand of visual fatigue, it's recommended that the screen be set to speaker view. This is the more "natural" option of having the mind focus on one main person at a time.

Another way to reduce visual fatigue is to stop video for part or all of the call. This offers the ability to change position in your chair like you normally would in a meeting, as well as reduce eyestrain.

Finally, if possible, do a phone call. A phone call can eliminate three of these four culprits immediately. You're not stuck in one position, you don't need to look at a screen and, most importantly, you don't need to take in anything visually.

Until we return to in-person meetings, virtual fatigue will remain a concern. However, by being aware of the energy-zapping culprits and addressing them properly, we can increase our chances of ending the day with a little more oomph and vigor.

Resources:

Jiang, M. (2020) The Reason Zoom Calls Drain Your Energy. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200421-why-zoom-video-chats-are-so-exhausting>

DuChene, C. (2020) 4 Causes of Zoom Fatigue and How to Address them. <https://riskandinsurance.com/4-causes-of-zoom-fatigue-and-how-to-address-them>



It's cold out there

Prevent freeze damage to campus pipes and buildings

Winter is here and so is the potential for damage due to freezing temperatures. Because many campuses are closed or have fewer staff on site, it's important to take extra steps to protect school infrastructure. Consider these tips for preparing your sites:

- Make sure interior/exterior pipes exposed to cold air are fitted with proper insulation.
- Seal cracks or holes in outside walls and foundations near water pipes with caulk to keep cold air away from vulnerable pipes.
- Let faucets drip during cold periods to relieve excessive pressure when the pipes begin to freeze. When both hot and cold lines serve the same spigot, make sure both lines are dripping, as both are subject to freezing.



- Open cabinet doors to allow heat to get to non-insulated pipes under sinks and appliances near exterior walls.
- Never try to thaw a pipe with a torch or other open flame.
- Don't use electrical appliances in areas of standing water because of electrocution risk.
- Monitor and maintain building temperatures at a minimum of 40 degrees during freeze conditions.
- Winterize sprinkler systems according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Blowing out excess water with a compressor may be the best way to prevent frozen and broken pipes.
- Disconnect the water sources and clear the lines of swamp coolers.
- Know how to turn off the water supply if a pipe bursts. Quick action can minimize damage.

If you have any property damage to your campus because of freeze or any other incident, it's essential to notify SIA right away to begin appropriate response and coverage. Contact the SIA Property and Liability Department at 916-364-1281.

SIA's 'Create Your Ideal Workstation' video is now available

SIA has created a short video to help you create a workstation that meets your needs. Tips on how to best set up your desk, make your seat comfortable and maximize breaks are included. You can view our newest video on the SIA YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SIA4Kids>.

Additional resources on the YouTube channel include tips for stress reduction and the benefits of exercise. Keep checking back for new offerings.



Visit the SIA's website page COVID-19: Remote Work and Wellness Resources to access resources for maintaining your mental, physical and financial health. Offerings include recorded training sessions, tips and links. www.sia-jpa.org

QUOTE TO NOTE

*"For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.*

And to make an end is to make a beginning."

– T.S. Eliot

**The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).
Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder.**