

HOW TO CULTIVATE A PRODUCTIVE MINDSET

There are many factors in agriculture that farmers have no control over. Beyond the uncertainty of the weather, destructive crises such as disease outbreaks and short-term incidents such as machinery breaking down or accidents can and do occur. One powerful factor that we always have the opportunity to control, however, is our mindset.

Farmers and those within the agricultural industry have a tendency to be eternal optimists, but with all of the variability in agriculture there are times when we can become overwhelmed and stressed more than normal. Having the right mindset can help increase productivity and resiliency, so we are better prepared when times are tough, and more able to manage our farms and take care of our families and ourselves.

Think of your mindset as a free tool you can use to save time and energy, and get the most out of what you do.



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FACTS

- The human mind has 70,000 thoughts each day. That's 70,000 opportunities.
- The typical brain is about 2 percent of your body weight but uses 20 percent of your energy.
- 80 percent of repetitive thoughts are negative. But they don't have to be.
- A brisk 10-minute walk reduces the amount of cortisol (stress hormone) in the brain by 50 to 70 percent.

To learn more, visit msue.msu.edu/managingfarmstress.

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MINDSET TACTICS

USE SELF-TALK

The body hears what the mind thinks. So choose your thoughts with purpose. Tell yourself that you can overcome any challenge. You can adapt. You have come through rough times before. You can do it again. You can't always avoid difficult situations, but you can choose the thoughts you have when you experience them. Try choosing three words to tell yourself to help maintain the mindset you want – like calm, capable and controlled.

USE YOUR BREATH

When faced with a challenge, first use your breath. Deep breathing calms the mind and can help

you focus. It can also reduce chronic pain and improve sleep. Try breathing deeply five times, releasing the air slowly. Combine deep breathing with self-talk to boost productivity and stay on task.

USE ACCEPTANCE

When things are beyond your control, the most productive step you can take is to accept it. Making acceptance a part of your mindset can save you time and energy by letting you focus on the solution instead of getting frustrated by the problem. Try making the word “accept” a part of your self-talk and using deep breathing as a time to pause, accept and begin problem solving.

RESOURCES

FURTHER READING

- “Stress Free For Good: 10 Scientifically Proven Life Skills for Health and Happiness” by Fred Luskin and Ken Pelletier
- “Full Catastrophe Living” by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- “Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World” by Mark Williams and Danny Penmanship
- “The Book of Forgiving” by Desmond and Mpho Tutu
- “The Miracle of Mindfulness” by Thich Nhat Hanh

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text “GO” to 741741
- Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255
- Michigan Association for Suicide Prevention: 734-624-8328

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MSU EXTENSION MINDFULNESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Stress Less with Mindfulness

The “Stress Less with Mindfulness” series introduces participants to the experience and practice of mindfulness to reduce stress. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness is effective in reducing stress-related symptoms such as worry, depression and physical tension and may be helpful in managing chronic conditions such as cardiac disease and diabetes.

To learn more about Stress Less with Mindfulness or register for a class visit msue.msu.edu/stressless

RELAX: Alternatives to Anger

How individuals handle their anger and stress affects a radius of people around them. The goal of “RELAX: Alternatives to Anger” is to help young people, parents and caregivers foster healthy relationships so they can live, learn and grow in a safe, affirming and fair environment free from violence, abuse, bullying and harassment. Youth, parents and caregivers will learn to better manage their anger and stress at home and in the workplace.

This multisession program can be provided in a variety of community educational settings. The “RELAX: Alternatives to Anger” series is also available online.

To learn more about RELAX: Alternatives to Anger or register for a class visit msue.msu.edu/relax

