

Sarah Cirone:

Hi everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, Navigating Uncertainty: Leveraging Emotional Intelligence. Hosted by HRDQ-U and presented by Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry and Bill Benjamin. My name is Sarah, and I will moderate today's webinar. The webinar will last around one hour. If you have any questions, just type them into the question area on your GoToWebinar control panel, and we'll answer them as we can or after the session by email.

Sarah Cirone:

Today's webinar is sponsored by the Institute for Health and Human Potential. IHHP is a research-based learning and training solutions provider, and has been a leader in emotional intelligence for over 20 years. IHHP built a methodology and teaching of these skills with life-changing results to Olympic and professional athletes, hundreds of blue chip companies, including Goldman Sachs, Intel, and IBM, and many government agencies, including the US Marines and NASA. They have also literally written the book on pressure, with it becoming a New York Times bestseller. Learn more at www.ihhp.com.

Sarah Cirone:

I'm excited to welcome our presenters today, Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry and Bill Benjamin. As an emotional intelligence keynote speaker, JP brings something different than the usual. He combines teaching experience from Kellogg, a world-class business school, named an award-winning entrepreneur by Profit Magazine's fastest growing companies, authored a New York Times bestseller, as well as works with Olympic, NFL teams, Navy SEALs, and a who's who of Fortune 500s to blend deep, real world leadership experience with a powerful stage presence to help people and organizations thrive in the midst of change.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Sarah, apparently, it looks like I've aged since this picture was taken.

Bill Benjamin:

I haven't.

Sarah Cirone:

Bill, he discovered the power of managing emotions while he was working in the technology industry. His real world experience in technology and sales means he understands the challenges that organizations face. His degrees in mathematics and computer science led him to take a practical and scientific approach to helping people understand how the brain responds under pressure, and to leverage that to increase leadership and performance. It's an honor to have you both speaking with us today.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Fantastic to be here.

Bill Benjamin:

Yeah, thanks Sarah, and thanks to all of you who've made the choice to attend today. The title is Navigating Uncertainty: Leveraging Emotional Intelligence, and I don't have to tell any of you about the amount of uncertainty that we're all facing. We've heard from some of you. Some of you have lost your jobs. Some of you, your income has really dropped dramatically. Some of you are working in jobs where suddenly it's overwhelming because there's so much demand. Some of you are in frontline environments, working in hospitals and healthcare settings, and thank you, of course, to all of the frontline people, whether it's the grocery store or the truck deliveries, whoever it is. Thank you to those of you doing that. Of course, there's all of us who are suddenly isolated at home. What's common, regardless of what uncertainty you're experiencing, is that it triggers strong emotions, and, if we're going to show up at our best, for our teams, for our families, for ourselves, we've got to learn to manage those emotions, and that's what today's about. JP, you want to make any opening comments?

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah, just to welcome everyone. It's fantastic to have you here. We're really excited about this information. We've seen it work on the front line of folks under pressure, whether it be NASA, US Army, Navy, Navy SEALs or Olympic athletes, NFL, NBA teams, but what we also know is that it can help all of us who may not have those kind of jobs, but are feeling the uncertainty and the fear. It's like we've been hit with two viruses. One is coronavirus, and the other is the virus of fear.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

We want to give you tools. We want to give you insight today, but we want to give you concrete tools so you can manage yourself as close to your best as is possible, and, by the way, help the people who you're supporting, the managers, the leaders, the employees who you're supporting, to do the same. So it's great to be here.

Bill Benjamin:

And your families, too, right? All of us at home-

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

[inaudible 00:04:36].

Bill Benjamin:

Those of us that are at home with our kids, or, by the way, I'm coaching people who are home alone. That's also a challenge.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, what are we going to learn today? First of all, you've got to understand what a last 8% moment is and why it matters. I'll tell you that COVID-19 and the coronavirus and this whole situation is a last 8% moment. Sorry, I have to get my screen out of the way here. We're also going to talk about the importance of emotional intelligence during a crisis, and we're going to leave you with some brain-based strategies that you can use to manage emotions during this difficult time.

Bill Benjamin:

Where we'd like to start, though, is we want to get a sense of where you're all at. We're going to use the chat feature. The question feature you use if you want to pose a question. The chat is where we will want to hear from you. What we want to hear is: tell us two words that describe how you're feeling. You don't have to give a description or a sentence. Just go into the chat and tell us two words that describe how you're feeling. While we're waiting for people, JP, what are two words that would describe what you're feeling?

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

That's a great question, Bill. I'm feeling a little bit of fear, in terms of the uncertainty, so that's there. I also do feel quite a bit of hopefulness. Part of it is just because I feel such a big purpose around bringing our work to the world right now, because of what's going on. I know these skills, these tools, these insights, can help, so I'm feeling quite a bit of, maybe purpose, instead of hopefulness. So a little bit of uncertainty, but certainly a lot of purpose. That's what I'm feeling.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay. I actually see that things are going into the question area, which is fine. Bonnie's feeling excited and happy, that's great. Lauren, challenged and frustrating, totally understandable. Mary-ellen, tired and depressed, oh gosh, of course. Anxious and bored, happy and comfortable, hopeful and stir-crazy, uncertain and anxious, so you get the idea. The list goes on, and what we noticed there, and what we notice from our work, is that a lot of those emotions are negative emotions that can derail us. Feeling positive and happy and confident, those are emotions that really help, but feeling frustrated and bored and sad and depressed, they're emotions we want to honor, but, if we don't manage them, then they can really impact us.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, so JP, you want to talk a little bit about people's aspiration on this?

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah. In some ways, all of us on this webinar, we're on a journey and we have an aspiration. We're good people wanting to do good things, so we have an aspiration. We want to show up as our best in these difficult situations. We want to survive. First and foremost, safety and security. We want to survive. We also want to adapt. We want to try to manage our way through this challenging situation and adapt. We want to serve the people who we need to serve in HR or in our different organizations, so we want to be an exceptional leader. We want to be an effective coach. We want to show up as our best and make good decisions.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Just pause there for a minute, though. We've got tough decisions to make. Do we need to let people go? Do we need to let other managers and leaders have the kind of difficult conversations that might result in letting people go? These are tough decisions. We also want to, as an aspiration, you can keep moving on Bill, is we want to be a great listener. We want to do our best to be able to be a great partner and parent, and what's interesting is, especially on that great listener piece, when we are under pressure, we get very self-referential. It's not because we're bad people. Everyone does this, and it's because we're trying to survive and stay secure, and it means that we can stop listening to others.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Just think about this on a number of different levels. What do the people we're serving with in the organization need? Let's say within HR. What do our customers, our external customers, need? Sometimes we get so focused here that we forget how we can serve out there. So what's going on is there's something that's getting in the way.

Bill Benjamin:

JP, by the way, you were on a call with me this morning where I didn't listen to someone as well as I could have, and you actually rescued me. Fortunately, I know I have a lot of grace with that person, but I know, for me, when I get triggered, what gets in the way, one of the things, my predictable default behavior that we'll talk about is not listening.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah. I have no idea, Bill, exactly what you're talking about, but I'll take that as a compliment. What gets in the way is this idea of the last 8%. What is the last 8%? It's that difficult situation or moment that we struggle with. So we go through our life, and think of this in a conversation. Think of this as we need to have some conversations to decide how are we going to adapt? Maybe we need to let people go. Maybe we need to change the way we're doing things, because of all the challenge we're facing. So here's what we've seen in our research, and, by the way, we survey 40,000 people a month.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

From our data, here's what we find: we get to 85, 90, 92% of what I want to say in a conversation, and okay, I'm fairly effective at that. But when I get to the last 8% of what it is I want to say, speaking a truth, maybe, to power, someone above, someone who we're having challenges with, let's say, when we get to that last 8%, it's an interesting thing that happens. We're getting to the last 8%. That other person is sensing where we're going with the conversation. We feel their emotions. We get infected by their emotions, and as opposed to going in, approaching that last 8%, having the last 8% conversation, many of us can avoid it, and we never have the conversation. Here's the problem: that person can't read our mind. They don't know we didn't have the full conversation. We think we had most of the conversation because we talked about most of the things we wanted to talk about, but we didn't. So we didn't have the full last 8% conversations. But it's not just conversations. That's where it started for us-

Bill Benjamin:

JP, you know, a couple of examples of [inaudible 00:11:50] this time of conversations is having to have difficult conversations with a partner, spouse, about finances.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Right. Bill, that's a great one.

Bill Benjamin:

People have talked about, "Do I still give performance feedback to someone who's worried about their job?" There are lots of conversations where, we still need to have them, but we want to do them skillfully. We've also found that there are last 8% decisions that are very difficult to make that we sometimes avoid.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Right, and the bottom line is that, between the conversations or decisions, in a sense, coronavirus is really showing us how acute this last 8% situation is for us. So we found this in our research before coronavirus, but now it's pretty clear that that's what people are facing. The thing is, is that we fall into what we call a predictable default behavior. We either do one of two things. Number one, we either avoid, and I've described that. We don't have the conversation. We put off the decision. Think about the difficult decisions, again, to figure out what we're going to do on the people side and how we can avoid those decisions.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

We either avoid, or we do our best, but we make a mess of it. What do I mean by that? We impact people in ways we don't intend. Maybe the way, Bill, you were talking about this morning, because of what you described. I'm starting to now remember that example. By the way, I don't think you were that bad, that impactful, but the thing is, imagine everyone's feeling more emotional now. It's almost like we're more sensitive to when people are making a mess. When we make a mess and impact them.

Bill Benjamin:

And JP, that's what I'm hearing. I'm coaching people. What I'm hearing is a lot of other people not treating them the way they might normally would, because their emotions and anxiety are heightened. We're all in this state of heightened anxiety and emotion. Some people are avoiding, some people are making a mess. By the way, we all sometimes have situations where we do one or the other. It's not just only one or the other, but definitely we're seeing more people having an impact.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

What I would ask everyone right now, I want you to think to yourself: what's your predictable default behavior? Do you avoid more frequently? Do you make a mess more frequently? There's no right or wrong here. It's just know your default behavior, because then you can build some tools so that you don't fall into that, because here's the thing: when you fall into that, there are consequences. First and foremost, there's an external consequence, which is people see us as someone who didn't handle ourself as well, and they lose a bit of confidence in us. That harms our external reputation. That diminishes our status, which matters a lot for us in organizations. There's also an internal reputation that also gets diminished. What happens here is we know we took that off-ramp, we avoided, or we made a mess. And we feel shame and regret because of that, and that diminishes our confidence, and then we get smaller. Then we're not as confident. We're not as strong and powerful.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

The problem is that that becomes either a virtuous cycle or a vicious cycle, so the next time we face a last 8% situation, we'll fall into that default behavior again. We're in a difficult time. We just are. But I wonder, is it possible for us to see this time as a way to build this skill of being more effective in our last 8% situation, because what I do know is this. I've been to six Olympic Games, and the worst thing you can do is leave an Olympic Games feeling regret. Feeling like you didn't take your shots. So I want to challenge everyone right now in our session to take your shots. To kind of steel yourself, if you're an avoider or if you make a mess, get to know that, and do your best to manage that, because one thing we do see is it's not great to live life feeling regret and shame.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

This sounds a bit strong, but they're wasted moments, or wasted life, if we feel this internal consequence of not doing our best. Now, we're not going to be perfect. I can tell you from our data, no one's perfect. The best athletes aren't perfect under pressure, but we want to take our shots, however it works out. I would say those are the consequences, Bill.

Bill Benjamin:

Yeah, thanks. I've experienced both, and the reason this work has meant so much to me, I was working in a computer software company. This is going back 20 years now, and I got promoted because I was a hard-driving salesperson, but I wasn't a very good leader. People didn't really like working for me. My external reputation was not very good, and internally, I was feeling that regret and shame, so this work in emotional intelligence that we're going to talk about has made a huge impact for me personally.

Bill Benjamin:

So, we want to go back to hearing from you. It seems that people were having trouble finding the chat, so, instead of using the chat, just use the question area. Now that we've explained what last 8% moments are, your situations, your decisions, your conversations, go ahead and share in the question area, what are some last 8%, the difficult moments and situations that you're finding now? We'll ask you to share that in the question area.

Bill Benjamin:

Somebody saying future employment is unclear. There's another example of where I've had people say, "I don't know if I should speak up to my boss about something important because I'm worried about my job." Conversations, especially when confrontational, are difficult. Workload. Again, we've got this mix of people who don't have enough work or are out of work to people who are overloaded and overworked. These are coming in so fast they're hard for me to read, but when the deciding factor depends on others. Adjusting to being inside a long time. I do have somebody saying performance feedback conversations. So, again, clearly all of you, and here's one: demand of work and balancing that with homeschooling. Oh my gosh. That is such an experience that so many people are having.

Bill Benjamin:

JP, what's obvious here is that this group are facing a lot of last 8% [inaudible 00:19:01].

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah, and I would say this. There's a term in psychology called terminal uniqueness, where we terminally think we're the only one going through an experience, and I think, just from what Bill read out, we're not. You're not. Just know that. I would say this. You're probably not dealing with things as badly as you probably think you are. The thing is, we don't get the break that we used to get. We can't go to work and kind of have a break from home and we don't get to go home and have a break from work. This is a really challenging time. Really be tender towards yourself. Really be compassionate towards yourself. We're going to give you some great tools, and some tools that you can use after this webinar, but there's one tool called ETA. We'll tell you how you can get access to it. A real big part of that tool is how can we have some self-compassion? That matters.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Again, working with people under pressure doing tons of research, I can tell you, that little piece of having a bit of tenderness and compassion for ourselves, is one of the most powerful antidotes that we have in our arsenal. We'll let you know how you can get that as we carry on here.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, we all want to do better, be as close to our best as possible in our last 8% moments. What's required to skillfully approach our last 8% moments? That's really what we want, during this coronavirus situation and also beyond, as we reemerge and get into whatever the new normal is. How can we just be at our best. Here's what we know-

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Bill?

Bill Benjamin:

Yeah.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Bill, let me just add one thing, because I want to make sure people track to where we are. Everyone on this call, we're good people wanting to do good things in this tough time. But we've faced almost a villain. This last 8% challenge in the form of the situation itself, or many moments of a decision, a conversation. It's like we faced a villain. What we need is a plan, and that's what Bill is really saying here. We need a plan, and, after 20 years of doing this work, I can tell you, and I don't think it's boastful, we have a really fantastic plan that can help you. Emotions get in the way, so we need a plan to help us manage emotions more intelligently, so we can, more frequently, and we won't be perfect, but more frequently be our best in these last 8% situations. I just want people to track with you're doing the best you can and you face a really tough villain. Now we need a plan, and that's what we're going to build for the rest of the webinar.

Bill Benjamin:

Right. I'm just going to go through this quickly. Many of you may know this. In the research that's looked at what defines star performers, and by star performers, the research is people who do well in business, accumulate wealth, or do well in sports, but also psychologically, how they handle difficult situations. There's three domains of competence that we all operate in. There's our IQ, that's how smart we are. If we have anyone under the age of 16 on the call, you've still got a good chance of improving your IQ. However, for those of us that are over the age of 16, there are some small things you can do, but you can't really improve your IQ significantly.

Bill Benjamin:

There's your technical skills and job knowledge. That's whatever you learn to do your job, whether you work with medical devices and it's your experience there, whether you're a finance person. Those jobs. If you work in IT. There's all the job knowledge. And then there's everything else that's come to be known as our emotional intelligence. What the research is really clear about, it started with the Harvard Research that was written about in the book Emotional Intelligence by Dan Goleman, it's almost 25 years ago now, and it has since been reestablished over and over again is that IQ and technical skills are threshold competencies. Of course you need a certain amount of IQ and technical skills to do any job. I've delivered our emotional intelligence training to [inaudible 00:23:09] surgeons. You want your

surgeon a high IQ and technical skills, right? But even in the case of surgeons, once you get over the threshold, getting more IQ and technical skills does not significantly differentiate performance. It's emotional intelligence that actually, in the research, counts for twice as much as IQ and technical skills combined, even in the case of surgeons and especially at this time.

Bill Benjamin:

You're all seeing it. You've all come on this call, probably, because you are experiencing how emotions are impacting your ability to show up at your best and everyone else. So, without belaboring the point, I think you're here because you understand the importance of emotional intelligence. Interesting data that, again, came out before the coronavirus, is the World Economic Forum had ranked emotional intelligence as one of the top 10 skills needed in 2020 and beyond. McKinsey Group has predicted that the need for social/emotional skills will outpace the need for cognitive skills by 2030. Here's the challenge: most organizations still struggle. The Harvard Business Review said that only 18% of organizations have emotional intelligence integrated into their culture. That's a quick summary of why EI matters and, as we all know, it matters even more now that we're in this period.

Bill Benjamin:

A favorite quote of mine summarizing the importance of emotional intelligence. Warren Buffet said, "If you have an IQ of 150, sell 30 points to someone else." You need to be smart, but not a genius. It's not that IQ and technical skills don't matter, it's just you need a certain amount of them. After that, it doesn't matter. Most of you are on the call, you have enough IQ and technical skills. This managing and developing emotional intelligence so you can approach your last 8% moments is your critical skills.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, so we want to do a bit of a poll. We want to hear from all of you. I'm going to go find the poll. We have one quick poll here, and we want to ask you: how is your organization doing at operating with agility during times of challenge and crisis? Clearly, there's a time of challenge and crisis. The question is, my organization is operating with agility and resilience during a time of crisis. We'll let a few more votes come in.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah. Clearly, Bill, already, I can see, and this makes sense, by the way, that people are on the two top boxes of agree and strongly agree-

Bill Benjamin:

Yeah, I'll share the results.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

We're somewhere around 80%. And, by the way, that makes sense. When we face a really challenging villain, like last 8%, like COVID-19, coronavirus, it actually brings people together. I have to say, I've been so heartened by seeing how people have come together, organizations that are going out of their way to be helpful. Leaders, sometimes, working together and doing their best, which is very heartening, because that's what we need. We need all of us working together.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

There's a great Japanese proverb. You've heard me say this before, Bill. All of us are smarter than any one of us. I'm so heartened to see this poll.

Bill Benjamin:

I have to say that the amazing thing is, when we did this, even just six weeks ago I did this poll, it was the reverse. People feel, "Oh, my organization is slow. They don't operate with agility." It's funny that people are coming through in a crisis. I think what we have to remember is that, when we come out of the crisis, what we don't want is people reverting back to that lack of agility, that lack of innovations, so that's something we're looking forward to and saying, "Okay, in six weeks, in eight weeks, in 12 weeks, as things are changing, how do we make sure that leaders and organizations and our families are still operating with that agility that we found during the crisis?"

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah. That's a great point.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, with that, we're going to dig deeper into what is this emotional intelligence thing that can help you be more skillful in your last 8% moments. JP, take us through our model.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

The plan to manage our emotions so that we can take more skillful action in the last 8% conversations or decisions or situations. It starts with knowing our predictable default behavior. Do we avoid? Do we make a mess? Then it moves to, okay, what do we do to manage that? What are our strategies? What are our tools? Again, depending on what your default behavior is, you need a different tool. Okay, as Bill mentioned earlier, when we're under pressure, and, by the way, whether it's COVID-19 or coronavirus, or something else, on an important project or what's going on at home, if we're not managing ourself, we can stop listening, and so we have trouble emotionally connecting. The model really comes down to, first, self-awareness, then emotional management, then emotional connection.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

As I like to say, Bill, this model clearly came from when our kids were young, because of the toy model. But really, at the end of the day, it's can we manage ourself, be a personal leader, take risks when we need to take risks, take our shots, learn about ourself. What's interesting, Bill, when you were going through the three circles, the Venn diagram of IQ, technical skills, and EQ, I was thinking to myself, everyone on this call who are in HR, they fully understand that. They are having to deal with people who are not always so emotionally intelligent. Plenty bright, lots of technical skills, but they can't even really connect with others.

Bill Benjamin:

It's so true. JP, what I love about this model is self-awareness is the foundation and everything else rests on it. When you were first teaching me this, I might be in a meeting and I might be feeling some anxiety and tension because we're in a difficult situation, and someone might make a suggestion that felt like a criticism of my idea, and I would immediately get defensive. Okay, now I'm moving to the make a mess behaviors because I'm not managing my emotional response. Doesn't mean I accept somebody criticizing me in a meeting, but how I respond. Can I connect to that person and ask a probing question? I do love the way this model works.

Bill Benjamin:

I also, because I have degrees in mathematics and computer science, I'm very analytical, JP, one of the things that I really learned from you and loved about this work, is that there's some brain science to this. JP's now going to explain some of the brain science behind this idea of emotional intelligence.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Thanks, Bill. There's a couple parts of the brain that we want to make ourself familiar with. First there's this amygdala out loud. Amygdala.

Bill Benjamin:

Amygdala.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

There you go, thank you Bill. This amygdala is the emotional part of our brain, part of the limbic system, and it allows us to learn for the first time. Why? Because it's our source of emotional memory. You'll never forget where you were when you saw those images of 9/11. That stays with you. That's called the cortisol effect, by the way, because when we're under pressure we have more cortisol, a stress hormone. That cortisol does many things, including it sears in our memories in a more profound way. That's why you don't forget 9/11. The amygdala is our source of emotional memory. That's why the amygdala, which has all of this memory, also answers that one critical question of human survival: do I eat it, or does it eat me?

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

When we go through any experience, our amygdala has this historical template, this experience template, and compares whatever is coming at us to that template. By the way, the information coming at us is very ambiguous. There's not much detail, because speed matters more than accuracy at this stage, so it's doing this to protect us. This is the amygdala or the emotional part of our brain.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

The other part to make ourself aware of is above the eyes, behind the forehead, right here. Our prefrontal cortex. This is where cognitive intelligence is, essentially. It's our site of working memory. What is working memory? We love to talk about markers. Put that in front of my blue. Because I want to describe thinking to you. A very simplified way of thinking about it. We go through our day. Bill and I are having a meeting. We had a meeting this morning with our senior team. I'm sitting there and I'm listening, and I'm pretty relaxed. I have all my markers.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

What I mean by that, is I have a space above the eyes, behind the forehead, where I can hold on to about five or six ideas. For all human beings, it's five or six plus or minus one or two, so at least I have four ideas I can hold onto at any one time. Everyone on the call, we can only hold onto four ideas. Think of it as markers. It's almost like, I'm on the call, and I listen to what somebody said, that's one. Then I think back to an experience I had, let's say, and that's two. And then Bill says something, and maybe he reacted not as well as he'd like, I don't know, three. And then there's four, something else. I'm thinking about what I'm going to have for lunch, whatever. But the point is, we can hold onto four ideas at any one time in our brain.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Now, thinking is literally when we move these markers around on the scratch pad in our brain. We move it around, so I can come up with the best possible response to whatever is going on in the meeting. Bill says this, Bill says that, I'm moving these around, and I hopefully form my best response. In fact, when I have four markers, I can form closer, more frequently, my best response. However, we face last 8% situations. Decisions, consequences, or decisions in situations. What happens, go ahead, Bill, you can go forward. Let's say Bill said something to me that I find kind of upsetting. What happens is that I'm going to feel that before I can think about that. That's the way the brain is designed. Because speed matters more than accuracy and emotions prioritize what matters, in that moment, maybe he's coming at me in that meeting. He wasn't, but maybe he was, and now I'm feeling, "Oh my gosh, I've got to protect myself." My emotional brain, the amygdala is going to process that before my cognitive brain is going to process it.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Why does that matter? So what? Here's why that matters: if I feel that I'm going to get eaten, if I feel at risk, this amygdala, the emotional part of our brain, will hijack our higher centers, flood working memory, and now I can't think straight. I literally lose the capacity for complex thinking. Let's go back to our markers. Literally what happens is that I have all my markers. I hear this, my brain moves very fast, hijacks, and then I literally drop a marker.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Here's the question: when I have four markers, go back for a minute, Bill, just to add that one marker. When I have four markers, and I move these markers around, what's the maximum possible number of combinations I have in my repertoire to answer the situation? Bill?

Bill Benjamin:

I'm a math guy, so it's four factorial, $4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1$. You can make 24 combinations of the markers.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

That's right. So, in a tense, I have 24 possible responses. I'm not going to necessarily use 24, but that's what's kind of possible. When I drop a marker, did I just lose 25% of the possible combinations in my response, or did I use more? Bill?

Bill Benjamin:

Well, now it's $3 \times 2 \times 1$, which is six possible combinations, so we actually just lost 75% of our thinking capacity, of our ability to approach those last 8% decisions, situations, and consequences skillfully, just by that little trigger, dropping that one marker.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

I think everyone on the call has been here, right? We know we can't think. We can't retrieve that memory file. It's like, "I know what to say, but I can't say it. I'm at a loss for words." In fact, if I drop another marker, what happens is now I'm down to binary thinking, black or white, right or wrong, and from my brain's perspective, let's say Bill and I are having a tough conversation. From my brain's perspective, if someone's going to be 100% right and someone's going to be 100% wrong, guess who is going to be wrong from my brain's perspective?

Bill Benjamin:

You're going to be wrong, JP. That's you. You're wrong.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Exactly. This is literally the case that, in that moment, because of strong emotions, I'm unable to be my best. This happens, we see it at Olympic Games, we see it with banks during the global financial crisis, we see it with all of us during coronavirus. Here's the thing: while this is true for all of us, it's not a fait accompli. We can learn tools to manage our brain under pressure. That's, to me, why I get so excited about our work, which is why I feel so strongly about the need for this right now, because there are ways to manage, so we can maintain our markers. For 18 minutes, because of this cortisol effect, for 18 minutes, we do not have all of our markers. That's the half life of cortisol. Which means we're not going to be as smart as we normally are in this time. We need to learn how to manage our brain so that we can make good decisions, so we don't avoid or make a mess.

Bill Benjamin:

JP, another good example that I've heard from people that I've coached, is, when we get into this yes/no right/wrong thinking, again, if somebody senior is asking for me to do something, and in my brain I'm like, "That can't be done, we don't have the resources, we're overwhelmed," but I feel like, "But if I say no, they might fire me," I'm more likely to say yes. So one other default behavior, there's avoid, there's make a mess, but there's also give in and say yes. So there are a lot of subtleties to this. The hallmarks are that we either avoid or make a mess, but there's other things sometimes we do, blame. [inaudible 00:38:32] love to blame people, but those aren't good last 8% strategies.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah, absolutely. We avoid and make a mess. Keep going, Bill. All right, we have this negativity bias. This is important. The brain is trying to protect us. The brain is trying to protect the body, is really what's going on. The brain is constantly searching the environment, trying to get information in to say are we okay? Are we at risk? So it's going to prioritize negative information. There's a negativity bias.

Bill Benjamin:

Yeah, and I think the other kind of language that's really been helpful for me is this idea that only one of the emotional or cognitive brain can be in the driver's seat. So, if we're in the jungle and there's a tiger jumping out at us, we need the emotional brain to jump in, get the cortisol and adrenaline running through our body, we're going to fight or flight. But this negativity bias, what if we just hear wind rustling in the bushes? What do we assume the wind is? Well, we assume it's a tiger. Now there's two tigers. There's the real one, and there's the one we're reacting to. That's the other thing we're seeing a lot of during this time. You hear that little bit of news. Oh, a pork factory closed down. Everybody's rushing to the store to buy up as much meat as possible because one pork factory closed down. Now, I'm not saying, if all pork factories closed down, that might not be a bad solution, but we're making a decision from the emotional brain that amplifies the negative.

Bill Benjamin:

So we do want to be checking in with ourselves, and this is language we use in our training: is this wind or tiger? Sorry, there we go. Back to my screen here.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

And the final piece is that, if you put three people into a room at Harvard Medical School and Business School where they do joint study, the person most emotionally excitable, whether negatively or positively, will infect the other two people within 30 seconds, whether they say a word or not. So, on top of everything else, we will infect others with this dominant emotion. That's why coronavirus is so hard, because we're self-isolating. We're there, we're at a tough spot. Go ahead, Bill.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, we want to go back and then we want to do a little self-awareness exercise, so that some of you can get to recognize what does it look like when someone has dropped the marker? We call it an amygdala hijack, because the amygdala literally hijacks their thinking mind, but maybe just when they drop one marker, so not when they've lost it and they're yelling or they're crying, but what does it look like when someone's just lost one marker? What are you seeing right now? Yes, slower to think and react, not listening. Deer in headlights, have you ever had that happen? You've been giving somebody difficult feedback, they're just staring at you? Guess what? They don't have any of their markers. They can't hear the feedback. Silence, panic. They check out. That's an avoid strategy. I have two teenage daughters. "Whatever, Dad. I don't care, Dad." Well, in fact, they do care. Telling me they don't care is their emotional strategy. That's not their cognitive brain, that's their emotional brain jumping in.

Bill Benjamin:

Anger, talking over people. Sometimes, I like this, sometimes the real emotions start to show. Defensive, less focused. That's the other thing, is when we're down markers, we can't focus as well. Never mind being innovative, thinking of new ways to solve problems. There are just so many reasons why we don't want to be in a situation why either we or others are down markers.

Bill Benjamin:

The next little exercise we want you to think about, that's what everyone else looks like when they're down markers. What does it feel like for you? Because your body's an early warning system, so, if we're going to start to manage this during our last 8% moments during this crisis, we've got to recognize when it's happening, when we're dropping markers. JP, I know you've got a big three that you identified.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah, yeah. Think of this as each of us have what we call a big three. Three signs that say, "I'm dropping markers." Oftentimes, we can be so cognitively involved in the situation, we don't even know we're dropping markers. What you want is to come up with how does it show up for you? I'll tell you my big three, so it gives you an idea. Number one, I feel heat right here. I feel heat in my forehead. Some of my athletes feel butterflies. Some people feel shoulder, jaw, chest, throat even. That's not me. I feel it right here. If I feel a bit of heat there, that's the first sign maybe I'm down a marker. The other two for me are I get really certain I'm right and they're wrong, and it's like, "No, my way is the right way." It makes sense. I'm dropping markers, so I get less curious and more certain that my way is the right way. Heat, certainty that I'm right, and then this sense of urgency. I've got to act right now. I've got to send this email right now. I've got to say this in this meeting right now.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Those are the three, whenever I feel that, and I'm certainly not perfect. We are not perfect on this call, but let me tell you, when you know this, it gives you a chance to maybe not act out of that less than best self place so we don't make that mess. So we don't avoid and go quiet. This is it, you can learn this stuff.

I want you to start to think about what are your big three? Because we don't have a lot of time, this is all part of our EI training program, so we don't do as much time on this one hour, and at least come up with your one physical sign that says Sally or Chris or David, all the different people on the call, maybe this is when you're dropping markers.

Bill Benjamin:

Yeah, and the other thing, for me, tight chest, anxiety, shaking hands, and interrupting. Both you and I kind of have more of the make a mess fight responses, but I coach a lot of people who, their throat suddenly feels constricted, they feel frozen and they shut down when they know they should step in, when they know, "Oh, I should tell that person that. I should ask for the thing I need," but they feel shut down, and neither is good or bad. It's really just what's most effective.

Bill Benjamin:

By the way, my favorite quote personally, because of my default behavior, on this idea of emotional management self-awareness is from Peter Drucker. He said, "I no longer think of learning how to manage people, especially subordinates, is the most important thing for executives to learn. I am teaching, above all else, how to manage oneself." I think we underestimate the degree to which we can change all our circumstance around us by changing ourselves. At the end of the day, that's really the only thing we have control over.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, we've done a quick lesson in self-awareness. Now we want to move and talk about emotional management. One thing I want to let all of you know is this work we're doing comes from our full training program. This is not a sales pitch because we are going to tell you later how you can get access to our full training program, so we're just going to give you a couple of things that you can do and you can use to manage those emotions when you drop markers. JP, talk to us about last 8% morning?

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah. Let me just step back even before I do that, Bill, because I think I want to just pick up on what you just said. You can just keep it as is, that's fine. Because of what's going on right now, we feel moved to actually make our flagship EI training course available to you for free. We normally charge several hundred dollars for this. It's an online course, you take it over the course of a week, it's live.

Bill Benjamin:

JP [inaudible 00:47:00].

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah.

Bill Benjamin:

I built a slide describing the whole thing.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Yeah. I guess the key is that we want to make this available to people who are really in need of this right now, so we've doubled, actually tripled, actually quadrupled the number of courses we have going this

month, and we'll tell you how you can get access to it. It's six hours over the course of a week, three two hour sessions, and you'll work with a group of 30 people and a live facilitator. It's a fantastic course. We want to make that available to you, so that's one of the free tools.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

The other free tool is what do you do when you wake up in the morning? How do you start your day? For most of us, we pick up our phone and we look at our newsfeed and we look at our texts and emails, and it just shoots our cortisol up even higher. Cortisol is higher in the morning because it wakes us up for the day. We get excess. It's a stress hormone [inaudible 00:48:07]. Here's another [inaudible 00:48:09] that we're [inaudible 00:48:12] you get. As opposed to picking up your phone, download this podcast. It's called the Last 8% morning. What it is, Bill, if you want to go to the next slide.

Bill Benjamin:

Sure.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

What it is, it's what we do with Olympic athletes. This is a tool that we've kind of designed and developed over the last 24 years. It started as a diary, but now we've made it into an audio form. It integrates three things. You wake up in the morning and you don't look at your phone. You do a 15 minute morning routine that integrates movement, so you go on a walk, that's very important [inaudible 00:48:54] mindfulness. It's actually me, I'm in your [inaudible 00:48:59] my morning routine. Doing my routine, just verbalizing it, and then you can download it and we can do it together in a sense, and then some of the mental training exercises that we've taught Olympic Athletes and individuals. You don't have to be an Olympic athlete, but individuals and organizations around the world, and the idea is, let's start our day, let's set the tone. Let's build emotional intelligence so we can more skillfully take action on our last 8%.

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

This is a great way, it comes out Monday, Wednesday, Friday, but a great way for you to get some drip learning for these important skills, because we're not going to teach you in an hour, but we're getting some great feedback. It's just a really great way to kind of start your day with movement, and where you're saying, "Okay, what matters most to me for today?" Again, you can go, wherever you get your podcasts. [inaudible 00:49:50] you can get in on our website, but [inaudible 00:49:54] your podcasts, Apple or [inaudible 00:49:58], download that. Go ahead, Bill.

Sarah Cirone:

Doctor-

Bill Benjamin:

There seems to be a bit of a problem with JP's audio.

Sarah Cirone:

Yes, the audio seems to be cutting out. You can try to dial in via the phone, JP?

Bill Benjamin:

Your audio.

Sarah Cirone:

Yes, it echos-

Bill Benjamin:

Because your audio [crosstalk 00:50:35].

Sarah Cirone:

As well.

Bill Benjamin:

Pardon me?

Sarah Cirone:

It seems that your audio is cutting out as well. Can you try calling in via the phone under the audio tab? Yeah, I'm thinking GoToWebinar might be experiencing an issue, but if you try [inaudible 00:50:58] in via the phone. Am I cutting out as well?

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

Hey Bill?

Sarah Cirone:

All right. GoToWebinar issue. Does it seem like my audio is coming back as I'm dialing via the phone? Okay [inaudible 00:51:32].

Bill Benjamin:

Sarah, can you hear me now?

Sarah Cirone:

I can hear you now, yes.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, great. All right. JP, are you dialed in on the phone? No, we can't hear you. Okay-

Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry:

I'm not [inaudible 00:51:48].

Bill Benjamin:

Okay. Here's what I want to say about the Last 8% Morning. It has been hugely valuable for me. I have faced some anxiety. Our business has faced a huge hit. I have a 16 year old daughter who has struggled due to social isolation, so I have felt a lot of unease, disease, and anxiety, and this has been really helpful. What I love about it is it takes a lot of the techniques that we have been teaching for 20 years, combines it with movement. I'm typically not a, I have trouble with podcasts. I even have trouble with

mindfulness, but, because this is walking, I've found it so much more effective. I'm just going to highly recommend that you go find these Last 8% Morning podcasts and you'll get a sense of some of our work.

Bill Benjamin:

Here's the other thing that we promised, and JP, sorry, I did interrupt you a little bit, but I just knew I had the slide coming. Here's the other thing. We can't teach in an hour what we've been teaching in full days over the last 20 years, so we've got an online training program. What can you do, if you want to dig deeper into this talk about emotional connection, stepping into difficult conversations, we have a fully online EI training [inaudible 00:53:11], it's three two-hour sessions spread over three days during a week. There's a live facilitator, so this isn't some self-paced snoozer. It's highly interactive, you're with a cohort of 20 or 30 other people facing similar challenges.

Bill Benjamin:

We spent 20 years developing this. We've got highly skilled facilitators. We've got producers running this, so there's a lot that goes into this, and, because we know just how challenging it is for everyone right now, because we know training budgets are being cut, we're offering this world-class training program for free in April and May. As JP said, we are adding capacity as fast as we can. We just want to bring this work to the world, because we know what a difference it will make. So you will be receiving an email tomorrow where you can get an access code.

Bill Benjamin:

I do want to let you know that we have had high demand for this, so please be patient if the class time you want is full. I also just want to make a special note. We do have some folks on the call, and we're so glad you're here, that are, yourself, professional coaches, professional trainers. You do a lot of this work for a living, so, when there's space, we want you on here. But there's also a lot of people, you work in businesses and this isn't the stuff you normally do, so you don't have access to this kind of training. So, for some of the independent coaches and facilitators and trainers, we may ask you to move a seat to allow someone who doesn't get this kind of learning all the time. We really appreciate your patience on that.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, I'm just going to skip that quote, because we're coming to the end. What are your key takeaways? This last 8% situation, this coronavirus and all the rippling effects of it, it matters how you show up, how you handle the decisions, how you handle the situations and the conversations that you have. Managing your emotions will be the key. That's the plan. As JP said, all these last 8% situations are like the villain we face. Learning to manage emotions is the plan. You're all on the phone because you're aggressive learners. Continue to be aggressive learners. We know that high performers, and I know that, JP, this is one of your favorite statistics, extract three to five times the amount of feedback from a learning opportunity as your average performer.

Bill Benjamin:

Here's the opportunities. Go to the ihhp.com website, try the Last 8% Morning podcast. We have a Last 8% Project Facebook group. We've just started that, so we're really wanting people to come in and share their experiences, their challenges, what worked, what hasn't. JP and I are doing livecasts from there. The live online Emotional Intelligence training program, as I mentioned, the three two-hour sessions

that we'll be offering for free. Like I said, you'll receive an email. And connect with us on LinkedIn. JP and I love sharing latest research. For those of you that are tech-savvy, if you want to connect with us on LinkedIn, you can actually just take your phone, open up LinkedIn, click the QR code, put the little square next to either one or both of us, and it'll immediately take you to our page.

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, with that close, we've just got a couple minutes. Sarah, are there any questions that we want to do before we do our final closing?

Sarah Cirone:

Yeah, so if you have any questions, you can type them into the question area on your GoToWebinar control panel. Bill, can you hear me okay?

Bill Benjamin:

I can hear you great.

Sarah Cirone:

Perfect. We did have a question come in earlier that they were asking if you could explain the internal consequences in a little bit more detail?

Bill Benjamin:

Okay, yeah, sure. When we face a difficult conversation, a last 8% decision or just a tough situation, here's an example of a last 8% situation: somebody giving us critical feedback. Never mind how we do giving someone else critical feedback, but when we receive it, do we get defensive? Do we shut down? Or do we listen and try to find the learning in it? When our emotional system triggers and we drop markers and we don't respond well, we go to one of our predictable default behaviors, and maybe I got defensive and I didn't really listen, or I just shut down and that person could tell I was rolling my eyes. After that, there's the external impact on that person, but there's the internal impact because I know I didn't do my best. I might get feedback, somebody might tell me, "Hey, Bill, you were kind of defensive." And now I feel a bit of regret. Boy, I wish I'd listened better. I might even feel a little shame.

Bill Benjamin:

That's the vicious cycle we want to be careful we don't get in. We want to honor that we all make mistakes, we're all not perfect, and that it's okay. JP's tool of ETA, which is one of the Last 8% Morning podcasts is a great tool when you're feeling some of that shame and regret. And then really to take some action and to say, "You know what? I'm going to own that. I'm actually going to call that person back up and say, "Hey, you know what? I didn't respond the way I wanted to. I really want to hear your feedback."" So then we take action to respond.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. We have two more minutes here, maybe, for one or two more questions. We had a question come through. I may mispronounce this word, but they would like to know if amygdala hijack always presents itself physically.

Bill Benjamin:

Absolutely. Within 85% milliseconds, so incredibly quickly, the first thing the amygdala does is it causes a cascade of chemicals in our body. Adrenaline, cortisol, blood moved to the major muscle groups, our heart rate increases. It's because it's fighting tigers. It's the same system. Or if a bus is suddenly coming at us, it's the thing that's going to cause us to first react physically, but then it's also going to do that reduction of our working memory. We're going to start to lose and drop markers. So it's both the physical response and then the cognitive response. But yes, it drives our physical system and our physical responses.

Sarah Cirone:

Great, and then the last question we'll ask here is someone would like to know how you can work through those moments in which you've dropped the markers when you have to respond?

Bill Benjamin:

That's the SOS strategy. Actually, in its full form it's SOSS. What I'm going to do, rather than describing that all here, is I'm going to say go get the Last 8% Morning podcast where JP describes the SOS. Attend the live online training that we've made for free that goes through that SOSS strategy in full. But I'll just tell you quickly what it is. It's Stop, Oxygenate, Strengthen appreciation and gratitude, and Seek information, but there's a lot more to how we put that into practice in that moment, because, by designing that moment, we've lost markers, so it's hard to think of a new strategy. So our training has a whole process on how we can kind of install that SOSS so that, when we are under pressure, when we have dropped markers, we can go to that strategy. I'll leave it at that.

Sarah Cirone:

That will bring us here to the end of today's session. Thank you to the Institute for Health and Human Potential for sponsoring today's webinar. You can learn more about IHHP at www.ihhp.com. Thank you both JP and Bill for joining us today.

Bill Benjamin:

Oh, Sarah, thank you so much for hosting us and JP, I don't know if your audio is working, but I just want to say to all of you, kudos to you for being on this. Most of you stayed on it, so clearly I hope you were learning something, and please do take advantage of the free resources. We just want to help people. We know it's a really difficult time, and we just want to pay it forward and make the same difference for all of you that I know it's made for me personally.

Sarah Cirone:

Yes, that really is a wonderful opportunity that JP and Bill are offering, and I would like to thank you all for participating in today's webinar. Happy training!

Bill Benjamin:

All right, and look for that email from us tomorrow. Bye, everyone.