

# APPELLON

## THE NEXT GENERATION WORKFORCE

---

**Authored by: Sue Jauncey,  
Registered Psychologist and Founder of Appellon  
Edition: February 2021**

**Neuropsychological science** provides the means to increase employee well-being and psychological resilience and, at the same time, achieve your organisation's purpose and performance goals. This white paper will show you how.

This is a blueprint for the critical workforce infrastructure required not only as a response to COVID-19, but for the next generation workforce. This is the methodology to be implemented if you seek to establish psychologically healthier workforces, focused on the collective achievement of organisational goals and individual improvements in well-being and work satisfaction.

Imagine a workforce in which employees leveraged off one another to reach for new solutions and opportunities, resolve challenges, and feel an ongoing sense of achievement, gratitude and connection to the collective achievement of your organisation's goals. Believe it or not, it's possible. Indeed, it used to be more commonplace.

In the post-war period around the middle of last century, people were often employed by one company for their entire career. The term "company loyalty" was commonly used, and people were rewarded for their loyalty to a single organisation.

These days, there is very little company loyalty — people move between jobs, employers and multiple careers over their working lifetimes. Whether company loyalty is good, bad or indifferent is a matter for a different discussion.

But the effect is clear: there has been a rise in workplace stress and anxiety, resulting in a marked increase in worker's compensation cases attributed to mental health issues.



## SO, WHAT CHANGED?

At Appellon we have seen a rise in what we call “personalisation”. Personalisation, for our purposes, is defined as “when people can only view the world and make decisions based on what the perceived impact will be on them personally”. Examples of personalisation show up when hearing comments such as:

- ***Why wasn't I invited to that meeting?***
- ***Why didn't I get that promotion?***
- ***This is my area of responsibility, it is not for you to make comment or be involved.***

And it can be seen in behaviours such as:

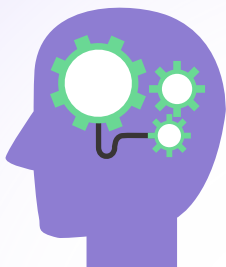
- ***Blaming others for their failure to achieve agreed outcomes.***
- ***Always trying to stay ahead of the game, to be seen as the most valuable.***
- ***Manipulating others to get what they want.***
- ***Behaving inappropriately towards others.***
- ***Treating others arrogantly or disrespectfully.***

In that earlier “company loyalty” period, the workforce was more likely to work collectively together, but this concept of “collective achievement”, has diminished over time. Now, the individual is more focused on either “what is in it for me” or “I need validation and to be noticed, in order to feel valuable”.

At some point, with the rise of anxiety and stress leave, employers collectively decided that we needed to try to understand what made employees happy. Employers thought if we could help make employees happy again, then maybe we would see an increase in company loyalty and achieve better productivity outcomes.

Not so. In fact, the reverse has been shown to be true. After decades of running engagement surveys designed to understand more about employee satisfaction and engagement, data shows employees are now unhappier than ever. And no matter how much we try to give our employees what they say they want, it is not enough and more is required.

The challenge is this: maybe employees do not really know what it is they need to be happy in the workplace. Maybe we need to think differently about workforce satisfaction and engagement, and instead give employees what they really need, rather than what they think they want. By understanding the science behind what employees need, we can create a workforce that is healthier, more resilient, productive, and focused goal achievement and connection.



## **\$2.2 Trillion**

The annual 'cost' of work related stress to the US economy is estimated at US\$2.2 Trillion or 12% of the US GDP. *(Source: TED)*



## **85% of employees**

are not engaged in the workplace, leading to productivity gaps that approach US\$1 Trillion. *(Source: Safety & Health Magazine)*



## **30% of people**

show moderate to high levels of anxiety and depression as a result of working from home during COVID-19 lockdown. *(Source: Monash University)*

## PSYCHOLOGY 101

The more you require external validation for your sense of worth or value, the lower your intrinsic self-worth becomes. When someone is asking “why wasn't I invited to that meeting,” what they are really saying is, “I need you to invite me so that I can feel valuable and worthwhile”. It is nothing to do with who needs to attend the meeting, or whether the time taken to attend these meetings would have been productive — it becomes all about the need to feel a sense of value in being invited.

If an employee who requires external gratification to feel valued is not invited, personalised feelings begin to rise as they question their value. They begin to look for reasons why they were not invited — by blaming others, becoming angry and frustrated, speaking inappropriately about others, and making irrational judgments and assumptions about why they were not invited.

No longer are they focused on the objectives of the meeting, or the best interests of the business. It has become all about me and what I need in order to feel valued.

No meditation rooms, jelly beans in the lobby, video games or ping pong tables are going to address these issues. No team-building exercises, off-site jaunts, or even new systems and processes are going to stop employees from personalising workplace interactions. No surveying the workforce to seek their views and opinions about what they need to be happy will actually change the underlying problem.

In fact, even when all these different methods have been tried, data continues to demonstrate a decline in job satisfaction, with stress and anxiety continuing to increase — with a corresponding requirement for mental health plans and stress leave.



These days, when we sign an employment contract with an organisation, we sign with the explicit agreement of what we agree to exchange in terms of skills versus remuneration. However, there is also a silent, implicit clause, that comes with the expectation that the organisation is now also responsible for the employee's personal happiness.

We have set ourselves up for failure. No organisation can meet the personal needs of their workforce members, and it was never their purpose to do so.

Organisations can, however, create workplace environments that encourage the development of individual wellbeing, connection and achievement. We have not yet succeeded (or only few have) in creating such an environment. This is largely because all of the current workplace methodologies we implement to measure workplace engagement are in fact, harming the workforce more than they are helping. We have unintentionally fostered this increasingly personalised, stressed, and anxious workforce environment by focusing on what we think the individual needs and wants.

Let's take, for example, engagement surveys that ask questions such as:

- Are you happy with the way in which leaders communicate?**
- What would you need to feel more productive?**
- Do you have the resources you need to get the job done?**

Notice that the intent of the questions is all about "you" — what do "you" need. Employees scramble to have their views and opinions validated, and if they do not receive it, they go home feeling exhausted, fatigued, stressed, angry or frustrated. All because they did not get what they think they "needed" to feel valued.

We have often interviewed C-Suite executives who report high levels of workforce engagement, and say that culture and behaviour is not an issue or a challenge for the organisation. They know this to be true because their engagement survey data tells them so.

However, once you go further down into the organisation and begin to interview employees, it is quite common to receive the feedback that “nothing ever changes around here”, “management do not listen or take action”, “management are on a different planet to us if they think everything is OK”.

The disconnect between management views and employee workforce views, is more common than we would hope for with many industries reporting the gap to be widening.

Remember, what we think we need, is not always what we psychologically need to be happy and contented. An employee might think they need to be invited to the meeting in order to feel valued, but that doesn't mean it is good, or productive, for them to be there.

The more we seek external gratification to validate our sense of self-worth, the more we need it. Pretty soon it becomes like an addiction, whereby we are constantly searching out external gratification just to help us get through the day.

Employees scramble to have their views and opinions validated, and if they do not receive it, they go home feeling exhausted, fatigued, stressed, angry or frustrated. All because they did not get what they think they “needed” to feel valued.

## RESEARCH TELLS US THERE IS A BETTER WAY

Many research studies looking at workforce engagement have shown that there are two main factors that increase job satisfaction: achievement and connection. Employees may tell you that they need more money, or a promotion, more resources, or different people to work with.

What they really need, psychologically, is to feel like they are achieving—and connected to—a common purpose, goal or people. If we create a workforce environment based on achievement and connection, intrinsic self-worth is a natural outcome and stress and anxiety decrease. When stress and anxiety decrease, employees can access creativity, and more able to see the solutions and opportunities available to them. Achievement increases, as does the desire to work collectively and connectedly.

To create a psychologically healthy and resilient workforce, we must take the time required to understand what constitutes a happy workforce based on the body of evidence that exists within the discipline of behavioural and neuropsychology. As executives of companies, it is our duty to understand the science behind basic foundation is this: if you focus your employees' experience on what they think they personally need, then you are harming them more than you are helping them. If you focus your employees on working collectively together to achieve a shared set of outcomes and you measure the outputs and progress, you will be helping your workforce to develop psychological resilience and wellbeing, and share in a sense of achievement and connection.

The key is to understand the difference between a personalised workforce focus and an objective one. Focusing objectively on the collective is vital in building employees' self worth and reducing levels of stress and anxiety, which can also help with the prevention and early onset of mental health issues.

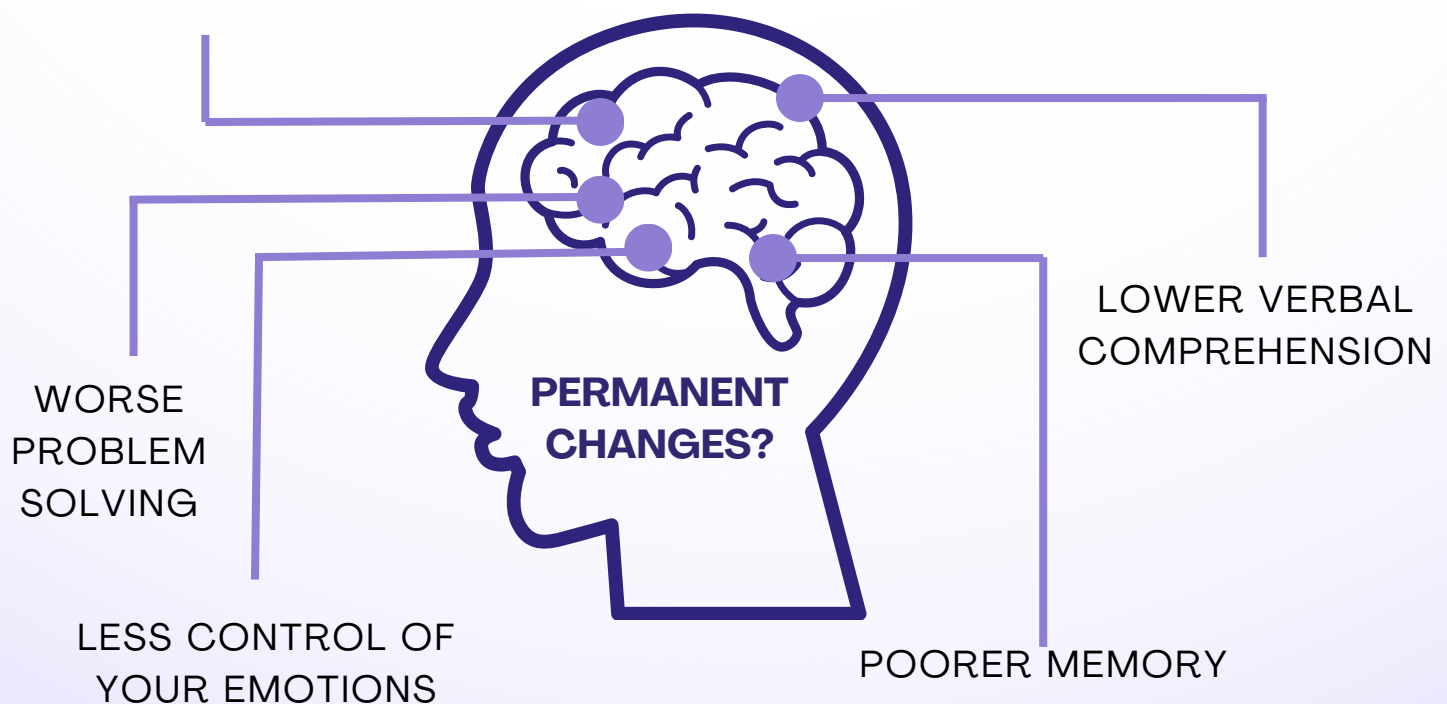


## NEUROPHYSIOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORKFORCE

Scientists have seen changes in how the brain processes information when people experience either real-life stressor stress manufactured in a research setting. Either type of stress seems to interfere with cognition, attention, and memory.

Less stressful states help to encourage better blood flow to the part of the brain responsible for higher thought.

SLOWER PROCESSING



Personalised negative emotions, meanwhile, are not good for your health. There is much evidence to suggest that persistent stress may actually rewire the brain. Scientists have learned that people under prolonged stress have less activity in the parts of their brain that handle higher-order tasks.

Imagine if you exercised one part of your body and not another. The part that was activated more often would become stronger, and the part that got less attention would become weaker.

This is what happens to the brain when it is under continuous stress — it essentially builds up the part of the brain that deals with ongoing threats, while the parts of the brain that enable more complex thought take a back seat. This results in a steady state of remaining alert to all possible threatening situations at the expense of being able to focus on new solutions and opportunities.

Your thoughts and emotions can, and do, affect your overall health. Rational thoughts that are freely expressed without judgment tend to flow fluidly, improving your overall health. On the other hand, personalised negative thoughts can significantly reduce mental energy, negatively affect your physical health and lead to possible future mental health challenges.

It's important to remain aware of your thoughts and emotions in order to understand the choices and responses you make, which impact on your physical health, behaviours and relationships.

Remaining objective and focusing on the issue at hand broadens your perspective of the world. It allows you to observe rather than be consumed, which in turn accesses the part of the brain that inspires more creativity in response to circumstances and situations.

It creates lasting psychological resilience, enabling you not only to survive, but thrive, in conditions that can be regarded as stressful.

The more we choose to respond positively, or remain objectively focused on the issue at hand, the higher the likelihood that we will feel a greater sense of achievement from workplace practices, and a greater feeling of connection to others and our purpose or goals. These responses lead to a healthy impact on our well-being and future physical and mental health states.

## **AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE THOUGHTS (ANTS)**

It seems obvious that if you want to feel happier, you should focus on remaining more objective. But most of us have no conscious control over our thoughts. They pop in automatically, and they're often overwhelmingly personalised and negative. These automatic negative thoughts (ANTs) take over your brain and steal your happiness.

When forming impressions of others, people also tend to focus more on personalised negative information. For example, studies have shown that when given both "good" and "bad" adjectives to describe another person's character, participants give greater weight to the bad descriptors when forming a first impression.

Whenever you have a personalised thought, a sad thought, an unkind thought, or a hopeless thought — such as "I'm never going to land my dream job" — your brain pumps out a dose of chemicals that make you feel bad. On the flip side, conjure an objective, happy, loving, or encouraging thought, and your brain gives you a blissful jolt of feel-good chemicals.



Think of these ANTs as you would the ants that might bother you if you were on a romantic picnic. One ANT, like one pesky insect at your picnic, is no big problem. Two or three ANTs, like two or three insects at your picnic, become a bit more irritating. But having hundreds of ANTs, like hundreds of creepy crawlies at your picnic, can ruin your day.

Not only do ANTs disrupt optimal brain function, they also tend to lie. Actually, they lie a lot and can wreak havoc in your life. It is important to become mindful and examine your thoughts to see if they are true and if they are helping you or harming you. Unfortunately, if you never challenge your thoughts, you will simply believe them — and the ANTs will rule your brain and ruin your life.

A brain imaging study conducted some years ago compared the effects of both ANTs and gratitude on brain function. Two brain scans were performed on the same woman — one while she was contemplating everything she was grateful for in her life, and another while her head was filled with personalised negative thoughts.

The first scan revealed that gratitude and healthy thinking enhanced brain function. The regions of her brain associated with mood looked calm, with optimal activity. Her second scan showed that her brain, when focused on personalised negative thoughts, looked vastly different from her previous healthy scan. In particular, two important brain regions showed a serious and concerning decrease in activity.

First, it looked like her cerebellum, usually one of the most active areas of the brain, had gone on strike. Located at the back of the brain, the cerebellum is involved in motor coordination and thought organisation and is essential for processing complex information. When this region is underactive, people tend to be clumsier — both in their physical movement and in their cognitive processes.

## TYPES OF PERSONALISED NEGATIVE THINKING

**Cynicism** — a general distrust of people and their motives.

**Hostility** — Unfriendliness towards others; unwillingness to develop relationships.

**Filtering** — Only noticing the bad in what should be a happy experience or memory.

**Polarised thinking** — The belief that if something or someone is not perfect, then they must be horrible. One mistake and we have judged them as inadequate and can no longer see the whole person, only the mistake.

**Jumping to conclusions** — Assuming something bad will happen because of previous experiences.

**Catastrophising** — The belief that disaster is inevitable.

**Blaming** — Placing responsibility on others for personal maladies, and feeling that you are a victim to life's uncontrollable events.

**Emotional reasoning** — Using your emotions to define what is real and what is not, instead of observation, facts and evidence.

**Fallacy of change** — The thinking that if other people or circumstances change, you can then be happy.

**Heaven's Reward fallacy** — The assumption there will always be a reward for hard work and sacrifice. When the reward does not come, you become bitter and depressed.

## NEUROPHYSIOLOGY 101

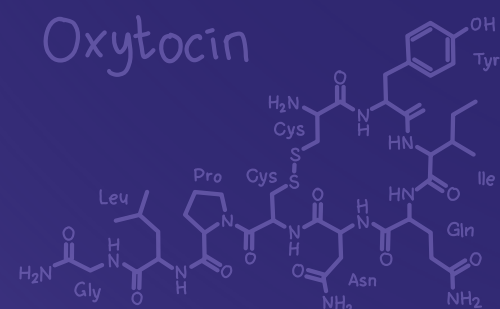
It is the chemicals in our brains, often triggered by our thoughts, that control our behaviours. We have two competing chemicals (among others) in a constant state of flux, called cortisol and oxytocin. Each is responsible for driving a number of our responses.

Cortisol is sometimes called the “stress hormone”. It is produced in the adrenal gland and triggered when we think ongoing personalised negative thoughts. It keeps us in the fight-or-flight state, as we stay permanently on alert for threats. If we remain in that state for long periods of time, we can become addicted to the cortisol rush and seek more of it over time.

Oxytocin is both a neurotransmitter and a hormone produced in the brain by the hypothalamus, secreted into the bloodstream via the pituitary gland. Oxytocin receptors project into the hippocampus, our hub for long-term memory and spatial location, where they promote neurogenesis and protect memory from uncontrollable stress.

Oxytocin has been called the “love hormone” and it truly lives up to that name. Its receptors stretch all the way to the heart, where it plays a role in healing and protecting against stress.

When oxytocin is present, we can lower our guards and begin to connect more fully with others, building lasting relationships of reciprocal trust and creativity, and work to achieve collective goals.





If you live a personalised life, your brain will tell you that you need gratification now. If you are living a more balanced, objective life, your brain will ask what issue you are focusing on and what decision will lead to the greatest good.

One pathway is harmful to you and others, the other is helpful. Your brain releases cortisol as a way to warn you of what it perceives to be an imminent danger. That's pretty helpful at times — if you are about to step off a curb and there is a car coming, or if you smell smoke and the alarm goes off.

Seeing the car come towards you triggers a jolt of adrenaline, which triggers the fight-or-flight mode – you need to respond quickly and urgently.

You assume the worst will happen: you are going to get hit by the car and die! Reacting quickly and getting back on the curb has obvious positive benefits.

The problem is that if you develop this pattern of response for all of your life experiences, you normalise it — so you no longer register the extreme jolt of adrenaline. If you're not invited to a meeting, you assume the worst: they don't like you or don't think you're good enough.

There's no useful way to react to that — no curb to jump onto — so it just adds to your stress as you continue to fight for survival.

You remain hyper-vigilant, which triggers the ongoing release of cortisol, which is counter-productive to overall health and quality of life.

That means that people spend too much time ruminating over minor frustrations — bad traffic or a disagreement with a loved one —and ignore the many chances available to experience curious enquiry and gratitude throughout the day.

Positive emotions and objective responses have a specific, proven purpose: to help the body recover from the ill effects of persistent personalised negative emotions. Thus, cultivating the ability to choose an objectively wise response over a personalised one helps over time to become more psychologically resilient in the face of crisis or stress.

Psychologically resilient people are able to experience tough emotions like pain, sorrow, frustration, and grief without falling apart. Psychologically resilient people do not deny the pain or suffering they are experiencing; rather, they retain a sense of objective focus that helps prevent them from over-personalising the negative effects of their situation.

In fact, some people are able to look at challenging times with optimism and hope, knowing that their hardships will lead to ongoing personal growth.

# CORTISOL:

## THE STRESS HORMONE





# OXYTOCIN:

## THE LOVE HORMONE



## NEUROPHYSIOLOGY 101

Research has shown that a personalised negative bias can have a wide variety of effects on how people think, respond, and feel.

A personalised negativity bias might lead people to expect the worst in others — particularly in close relationships in which people have known each other for a long time. For example, you might negatively anticipate how your partner will react to something and go into the interaction with your defenses already on high alert. Arguments and resentment are often the result.

Remember that negative comments usually carry much more weight than positive ones. By understanding what is often a natural human tendency, you can find ways to cut other people a break, and instead choose to respond objectively and wisely.

When making decisions, people consistently place greater weight on the possible negative aspects of an event rather than positive aspects. This tendency to overemphasise and personalise the negative can have an impact on the choices that people make and the risks they are willing to take.

Extended bouts of personalisation and negative thoughts can result in serious health problems. Though some stress is good for you — helping to remain alert and focused — too much cortisol, or remaining in fight-or-flight mode, can be detrimental to your health.

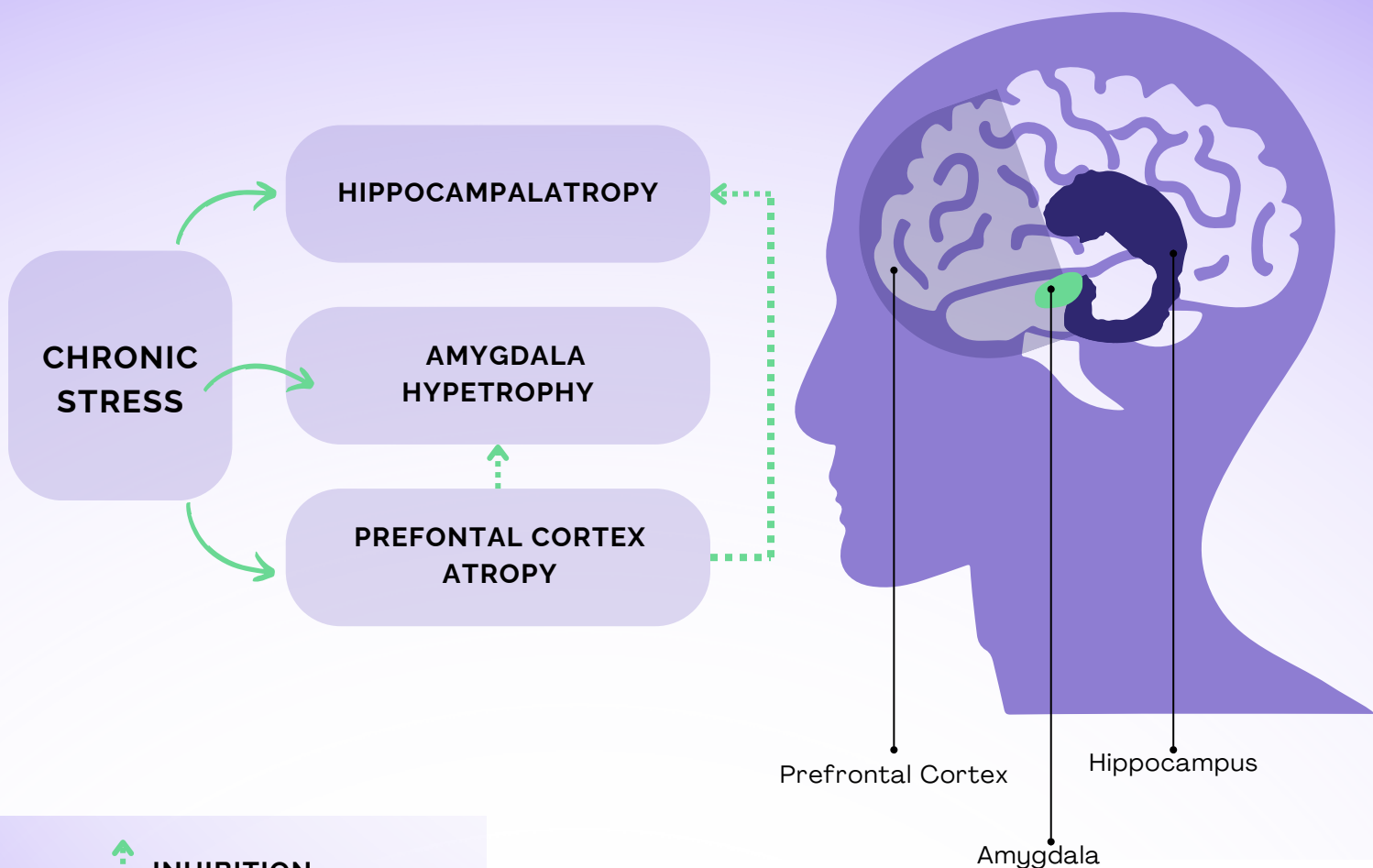
Stress slows digestion, and decreases the immune system's ability to fight inflammation. This is also why people who over-personalise are more likely to become sick than those who remain objective.

Some of the common side effects of ongoing personalisation include headache, chest pain, fatigue, upset stomach, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, social withdrawal and drastic changes in metabolism (such as over- or under-eating).

Prolonged personalisation or negative thoughts can also lead individuals to turn to smoking or substance abuse as a way of coping with elevated stressful conditions.



## CHRONIC STRESS AFFECTS THE BRAIN





## LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Personalised negative thinking effectively rewires our neural networks, strengthening pathways in the brain to make us more likely to continue seeing the glass as half-empty. Brain-imaging work shows that feeling bad further affects the brain, reducing activity that impacts self-control, judgment, and planning. This increases the odds of making bad decisions, which leads to more ANTs, which makes you feel worse.

Stress affects not only memory and many other brain functions, like mood and anxiety but also promotes inflammation, which adversely affects heart health. Thus, stress has been associated with multiple chronic diseases of the brain and heart. Protecting your brain from stress reduces the chances of developing cognitive problems that can ultimately result in the onset of dementia or cognitive dysfunctions, such as memory loss or memory recall.

Personalised attitudes and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness can create chronic stress conditions over a period of time. These conditions upset the body's hormone balance, deplete the brain chemicals required for happiness, and damage the immune system.

Stress even shortens our telomeres — the “end caps” of our DNA strands — which causes us to age more quickly. In other words, prolonged chronic stress states can actually decrease your lifespan.

### **This is how you make a difference**

In order to offset this personalised bias and experience a better more objectively wise state, we need to implement a wiser workforce blueprint.

Conversations are not just a way of sharing information; they actually trigger physical and emotional changes in the brain that either open us up to having healthy, trusting relationships or close us down so that we speak from fear, caution, and anxiety. The way we think and speak has the power to change the brain by boosting the production of hormones and neurotransmitters that stimulate body systems and nerve pathways.

Appellon's Lead-Rite and Work-Rite methodologies provide the power to influence our neurochemistry, and the neurochemistry of those with whom we interact — even in the moment. WIW and WC re-normalise our responses, to express thoughts and feelings objectively in ways that anchor and build our internal psychological resilience.

As we come to understand the power of consciously regulating how we feel and respond every day, and the role judgements, assumptions and language play in the brain's capacity to expand perspectives, we can learn to shape our world in profound and healthier ways.

Collective achievement is based on the mammalian biological need for connection, which is the ability to regulate physiological and behavioural states mutually. Understanding how the levels of oxytocin and cortisol shift during engagement — and how to regulate this neurochemistry in real-time with others — is the critical catalyst for enhancing your well-being.

Collective achievement is a supportive process where the activation of positive and helpful dialogue between people takes place more frequently and more consistently. Once people find giving objective feedback easy — and realise it produces positive changes and feelings in how they interact with others — they will begin to integrate it into their everyday lives.



## **PROTECT YOURSELF FROM DAMAGING STRESS**

**To remain cognitively healthy, it is important to consider how to minimise factors that increase daily stress levels and the impacts stress has on cognitive function, quality of life and wellbeing. A few strategies can be employed to avoid prolonged stressful conditions:**

### **1. Establish some control over your situation.**

If stressful events are not predictable, focus on controlling the things that are. Remain objective and focus on the issue of discussion or circumstance. Remaining objective supports a reduction in the emotional triggers that create feelings of stress.

### **2. Get organised.**

For example, create a daily practical list of tasks you need to accomplish. This way, the long-term goals you need to achieve won't seem as overwhelming. Making a list also provides you with a clear end-point so you can recognise your achievements. Preparing a daily list of tasks helps to reduce the feeling that the brain is being overwhelmed with cognitive overload. Making task lists also help you to manage your work/life balance and give you permission to finish work for the day.

### **3. Seek out support or counsel if needed.**

Reaching out to others to clarify your thinking, possible solutions or to simply talk through your proposed approach to allocated tasks or responsibilities can help you become more resilient and better able to manage stress. Early intervention may reduce illness caused by stress-related complications.

### **4. Change the way you think about stress.**

A life without stress is not only impossible, but also likely to be pretty uninteresting — in fact, a certain degree of stress is helpful for growth and development. It adds to your body of knowledge and experience, leading you to live a calmer, wiser life. So, rather than striving for zero stress, strive for healthier responses to stress. Treat your conscious acknowledgement of stress as a signpost at which you can ultimately choose whether to personalise the situation or circumstance, or approach it objectively and wisely.

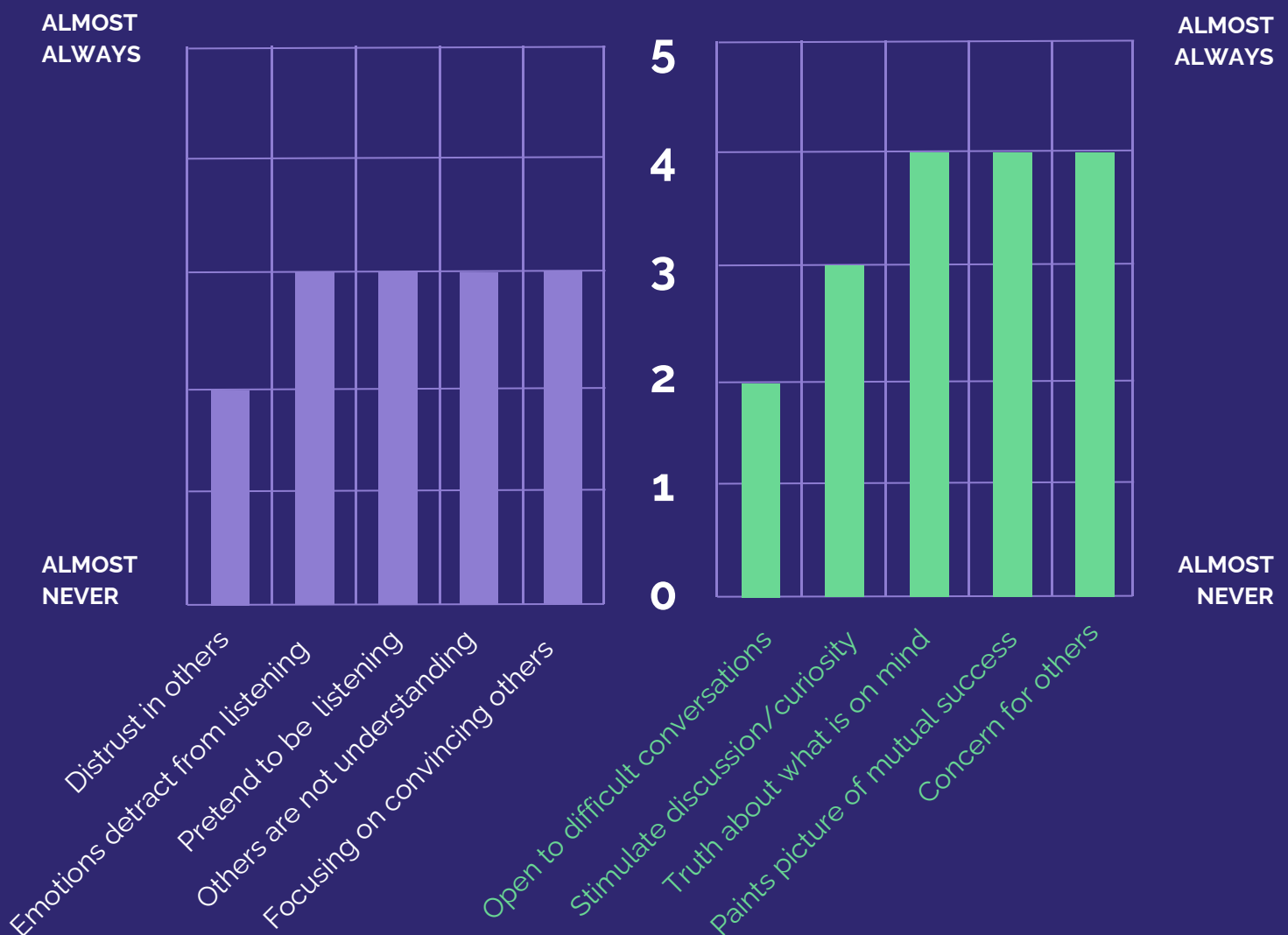


**The purple bar represents cortisol-producing behaviours.**

While cortisol is necessary for regular of stress, immunity and metabolism, too much cortisol can negatively impact the quality of our health and conversations.

**The green bar represents oxytocin producing behaviours.**

Oxytocin is both a neurotransmitter and a hormone that helps us open up, connect and bond better for better conversations.



Humans in physical proximity influence each other's nervous systems, whether they are aware of it or not. We can create emotional contagion, for example, of positive objective ways of interacting or destructive personalised feelings, that can quickly move from one person to another. Positive emotional contagion leads to successful collective achievement and connection.

When we work collectively, we use that resonance to move toward greater understanding, cooperation, trust, and compassion. When someone starts to become personalised and defensive, we can use the WIW methodology of asking open, genuine curious questions to help rewire and reposition the conversation. This then shifts the dyadic and group chemistry.

Neural coupling, or synchrony between speakers and listeners, predicts the success of a conversation. A study from Princeton University, using Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) to record brain activity from both speakers and listeners during natural verbal communication, showed how a speaker's brain activity is coupled with the listener's during successful communication. This coupling of brains disappears when we personalise our interactions with others.

As an example, when speakers communicate with a listener who does not understand the language of the speaker, they fail to sync. When we connect at a deeper level with others, our brain patterns mimic each other's — we actually start to see the world through their eyes.

Being able to see the world from others' perspectives is the benchmark for objectively working collectively to achieve shared and common goals. Understanding the neuroscience behind how the brain works is the key to unlocking the door to the full potential of our relationships — at work, at home, or in life in general.

There is almost always an objective response you can muster in any given situation. If the environment is so toxic you're finding that to be impossible, maybe it's time to find a different environment — a choice that is always yours to make.

We need to be very careful about the judgments and assumptions we are making, which are more often than not, accusatory or negative in nature if we are personalised. That person you thought was accusing you of something might be having a very bad day which has impacted the way they communicated. You could check in before making judgments, to see if they are OK. The sales call that went wrong was a bummer for everyone involved, but you could think about what you learned from the experience and how it could be approached differently next time. If you are always late to work, maybe you could refocus your thoughts on what you would need to do differently, to arrive at the agreed time.

## CATCH, EXPLORE, FLIP

To impact and change our neural pathways to lead psychologically healthier, more objective lives, we need to exercise our new insights and practise this thinking until we have renormalised the way we see, experience and respond to the world, or workforce environment. For this to be genuinely effective, these exercises must be practised daily, particularly in the short term.

Discipline yourself to recall three positive objective experiences for every real or perceived negative thought or experience. This can literally begin the reversal of the physical and psychological effects of personalisation and begin to build psychological resilience.

The first step is to “catch” your thoughts as they are happening. Learn to recognise whether your thoughts are personalised and harmful ways of thinking, or if you are thinking objectively and wisely.

It is important to be able to discern whether you are responding to an emotion you might be feeling, or responding to a wise and objective thought process. The next step is to “explore” your thinking. Why did you automatically think the worst, and was it harmful or helpful?

The third and final step is to “flip” your thinking. If you were to look at this situation objectively and focus on the issue rather than the feeling, emotion or heightened stress, what would you do?

This active self-reflection enables us to become more conscious of how we are responding to our life events — no matter how big or small. With disciplined practice we can begin to replace our automatic personalised responses to more considered objective responses. Learning the practice of flipping your thinking to replace one personalised negative response with three positive objective ones will lead to a significant changes in the neural pathways that impact the way your brain functions and responds.



## A BLUEPRINT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION WORKFORCE

It takes discipline to train your mind to respond objectively instead of personalising every situation. Natural instinct, socialisation, and even your own brain's chemistry are working against you. But the benefits of doing so are clear.

That person you thought was accusing you of something might be having a very bad day. You could check in before making judgments, to see if they are OK. The sales call that went wrong was a bummer for everyone involved, but you could think about what you learned from the experience and how it could be approached differently next time.

Intervene when you become aware you having negative personalised thoughts. Instead of fixating on past mistakes of self or others, or current circumstances presented that cannot be changed, ask yourself whether your personalised thoughts are harming or helping you. Then run through the "Catch, Explore Flip" exercise and consider how you can remain objective, what you have learned and how you might apply your insights in the future.

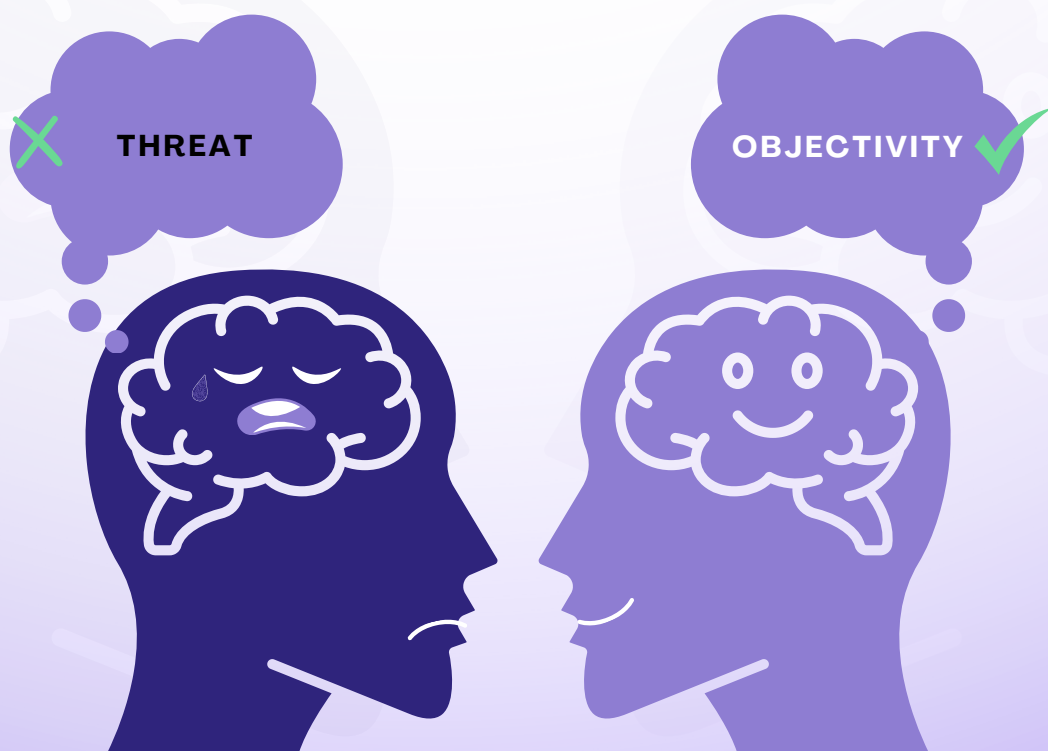
There is almost always an objective response you can muster in any given situation. (If the environment is so toxic you're finding that to be impossible, maybe it's time to find a different environment — a choice that is always yours to make.

Remaining focused on the objective issue at hand is harder. You have to develop new cognitive patterns and new ways of thinking. If you can discipline yourself to trigger oxytocin instead of cortisol, that will enable you to access the parts of our brain that can think about higher order matters such as problem solving and identifying opportunities. It will also allow you to practice forgiveness or tap into empathy.

In the same way that personalisation and negative thoughts create neural pathways in the brain, positive self-talk and reinforcement can also become a habit.

When something positive happens as an outcome of actions you have chosen to take, focus on the feeling of achievement and connection. Replay the moment several times in your memory and focus on the contented feelings the memory evokes.

Appellon's methodology has been designed to support the renormalisation and access to neural pathways that result in psychologically happier, healthier, resilient individuals who focus on working collectively to achieve agreed sets of common goals. Outcomes can be measured in terms of reduced levels of stress and anxiety, increases in wellbeing, access to neural pathways that trigger higher-order thinking that can be measured in solutions, opportunities and performance outcomes. A win-win for all — individual and organisation.



In order to understand the progress you are making it is critical to be able to measure your achievement. Unlike the methodologies that have been implemented in the past, whereby employees have been asked for their views and opinions on what would make them happy, the secret is to be able to measure their behavioural outputs.

This means the workforce and leaders work collectively to align their goals and objectives. Regular feedback reinforces accomplishments and promotes a sense of well-being in employees, while keeping them aligned to the collective and objective goals that have been set out.

Rather than asking employees what they think will make them happy, it encourages them to be happy, by achieving the goals — in terms of performance, productivity, and connection with their workmates — that they set.

**Appellon's Work-Rite methodology** not only enables employers to track results on a dashboard, providing objective insights into workplace behaviour and the impact on performance and employee wellbeing, but it fosters a wiser, more objective workforce, with a collective interest in the company's goals.

**Appellon's SaaS platform** enables any organisation, in any geography or industry, to implement this science-based neuropsychological methodology, cited as the critical blueprint required for the future of workforce health, transformation and performance optimization known as "The next generation workforce".



# ABOUT *Sue* JAUNCEY



**Sue Jauncey** is the founder of Appellon, CEO and registered psychologist who has over 25 years experience measuring behavioural and performance outputs for organisations such as the Royal Australian Navy, National Health Service, England and Northern Territory Health. Sue's passion is to support on mass, individuals who want to live better, healthier, wiser lives and organisations who seek to promote collective achievement, connection and performance innovation.

## FURTHER READING

- Emmons, R.A., McCullough, M.E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: an experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*; 84(2):377-89.
- Epel, E. S., Blackburn, E. H., Lin, J., Dhabhar, F. S., Adler, N. E., Morrow, J. D., & Cawthon, R. M. (2004). Accelerated telomere shortening in response to life stress. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 101(49), 17312–5.
- Fredrickson, B.L., Mancuso, R.A., Branigan, C., Tugade, M.M. (2000). The undoing effect of positive emotions. *Motivation and Emotion*;24(4):237-258.
- Friedberg, J.P., Suchday, S., Shelov, D.V. (2007). The impact of forgiveness on cardiovascular reactivity and recovery. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*; 65(2):87-94.
- George MS, Ketter TA, Parekh PI, Herscovitch P, Post RM. *Biol Psychiatry*. 1996 Nov 1;40(9):859-71. doi: 10.1016/0006- 3223(95)00572-2.PMID: 8896772.Reciprocal limbic-cortical function and negative mood: converging PET findings in depression and normal sadness.
- Harris, A.H, Luskin, F.M.,Benisovich, S.V., Standard, S., Bruning, J., Evans, S. and Thoresen, C. (2006) Effects of a group forgiveness intervention on forgiveness, perceived stress and trait anger: A randomized trial. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 62(6) 715-733.
- Glaser, J. E., & McEwen, B. (2018, April 25). Bruce McEwen WE-IQ TV Interview. Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/279129730/51778834fb>
- Groves SJ, Pitcher TL, Melzer TR, Jordan J, Carter JD, Malhi GS, Johnston LC, Porter RJ. *J Affect Disord*.2018 Jan 1;225:91- 96. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2017.07.049. Epub 2017 Jul 27.PMID: 28802727 Review.

- Lane RD, Reiman EM, Ahern GL, Schwartz GE, Davidson RJ. Am J Psychiatry. 1997 Jul;154(7):926-33. doi: 10.1176/ajp.154.7.926. PMID: 9210742 Clinical Trial. [Studies of cerebral blood flow in metabolism in depression using positron emission tomography (PET)].
- Mayberg HS, Liotti M, Brannan SK, McGinnis S, Mahurin RK, Jerabek PA, Silva JA, Tekell JL, Martin CC, Lancaster JL, Fox PT. Am J Psychiatry. 1999 May;156(5):675-82. doi: 10.1176/ajp.156.5.675. PMID: 10327898
- Porges S. W. (2009). The polyvagal theory: new insights into adaptive reactions of the autonomic nervous system. Cleveland Clinic journal of medicine. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3108032/>
- Porges, S. (2015, August 30). Social Connectedness as a Biological Imperative:. Retrieved from <https://www.attach.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Attach-Porges-handout.pdf>
- Tibbits, D., Ellis, G., Piramelli, C., Luskin, F., Lukman, R. (2006). Hypertension reduction through forgiveness training. The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling; 60(1-2):27-34.
- Toussaint, L.L., Owen, A.D., Cheadle, A. (2012). Forgive to live: forgiveness, health, and longevity. Journal of Behavioral Medicine;35(4):375-86.
- Wood, A.M., Froh, J.J., Geraghty, A.W. (2010). Gratitude and well-being: a review and theoretical integration. Clinical Psychology Review; 30(7):890-905.
- Worthington, E. L., Jr., Witvliet, C. V. O., Pietrini, P., & Miller, A. J. (2007). Forgiveness, health, and well-being: A review of evidence for emotional versus decisional forgiveness, dispositional forgivingness, and reduced unforgiveness. Journal of Behavioral Medicine. Neuroanatomical correlates of happiness, sadness, and disgust.



# CONTACT APPELLON

If you would like to speak to Appellon about how we can support your organisation, then please feel free to contact us by phone, email or [www.appellon.com](http://www.appellon.com).



## AUSTRALIA

**Location:** Level 36, Gateway Tower,  
1 Macquarie Place, Sydney, New  
South Wales 2000

**Email:** [enquiries@appellon.com](mailto:enquiries@appellon.com)

**Phone:** +61 (0) 2 9229 6700



# Appellon

This document and its contents are for the intended recipients only. All intellectual property, copyright and materials are fully owned by Appellon and its connected and associated businesses (which may include any license to reproduce). Any reproduction, copying or any other utilisation of this document is strictly prohibited unless written permission from Appellon is obtained. The contents of this document are to be considered confidential and commercially sensitive.

Australian Company number: ABN 34154929450

Registered address: Level 36 Gateway Tower, 1  
Macquarie Place, Sydney