



Stanford eCorner

Seeing Opportunity in Crisis

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/5119/Seeing-Opportunity-in-Crisis>

Returning to the low point in his career described at the start of his talk, Shirzad Chamine explains how high performers find the opportunity in every crisis, and how those moments confront people with the important choice of moving forward in fear and frustration, or with courage and curiosity. The choice you make infects the rest of your team and sets in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy, Chamine says.



Transcript

was experiencing was not going to secede unless I figured a way to find what's the gift inside of this craziness that I've got myself into. My life was breathlessly painful day after day and in order to get myself out of that pain I needed to ask the question, "How can I possibly take what has happened to me and actually begin to turn that into a gift of some kind?". And eventually what we found out in the research is that actually that appears to be one of the number one tools that high performers use, that every time life throws shit at them, one of the ways that they know how to quickly recover to the positive place that gets them to their highest performance, is ask the question, "How do I turn "into a gift or an opportunity?". The question of how do I turn everything into a gift or an opportunity is one that a lot of you, when things don't go according to your way, by the way life does to you every other day, every other hour of every other day, as things don't go your way you are at a fork in the road, and the fork in the road, either your saboteurs are gonna come in and say shit, shit, shit, you're screwed, or your sage is gonna come in and say you know what? I can turn this into a gift and opportunity. And whichever fork you take, whichever you do in this fork in the road becomes a self-fulfilling reality. That's the power of this, that whichever of these perspectives you bring becomes a self-fulfilling reality. So think about it, if you are in the middle of the most important project of your life, and mistakes and failures are happening by you and others, if the saboteurs come in and say goddamn it, this is terrible! This is awful, we gotta fix this, we're in trouble, and with that energy as you're running a team, you have shifted everybody in the first 30 seconds to their saboteurs, and in that vortex of negativity you have created, everybody's brain has gone from survival brain, which is not very creative, which is not very resourceful, which is just watching its ass, not really gonna come up with what's going on and to improve things as much as you could. But if you say, you know what? Mistakes aren't failures (mumbles), and we can turn this into a gift and opportunity, you become curious, you become compassionate, you become empathic to yourself and others. Being in this trouble together, the curiosity is gonna bring out a lot more information about how you fix this thing now, and your brain stays in the positive region of the brain, the (mumbles) region of the brain, so that you actually have access to your creative powers. So you actually take a mistake and failure and figure out how to turn it into an opportunity, not because it will automatically become so, but because it is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If you believe that, you activate the parts of the brain in yourself and others around you that will figure a way how to make that a gift and opportunity.