

Reference: Critical Advisors

INTRODUCTION

Human performance strategies continue to improve the more we learn about the brain's emotional centers and ability to synchronize the body for any given task. The Internal Critical Advisor Model is another critical decision-making tool that promotes corrective actions and recovery techniques based on real-time mental and emotional criteria. When practiced daily, the critical advisors enable an individual to perform consistently at high levels while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

INTERNAL CRITICAL ADVISORS

The model is based on monitoring and regulating three internal critical advisors: one's attitude (mental habits), one's philosophy (emotional states or motive), and one's self-discipline (behavior, actions, or lack thereof). *Internal* refers to self and *critical* refers to clarity and defects, whereas *advisors* refer to guidance or recommendations offered about prudence—the act of showing care and thought for future results.

This model is best used as a daily process and can be used as an effective problem-solving technique. The critical advisors are similar to the dashboard in a moving vehicle—all the gauges are constantly changing based on speed, fuel levels, etc. When used as a step-by-step thought process for assessing internal states, the model enables an individual to be in the moment and make on-demand corrective actions for self-checking and peer-to-peer evaluations.



CRITICAL ADVISORS

The Critical Advisor Model is like an on-board navigational system providing second-by-second intelligence to guide thinking and critical decision-making to achieve a desired result.

The goal is to give attention to self, as opposed to outside influences that become distractions and take up mental and emotional energy. As daily activities unfold, it is normal for an individual to have random thoughts

about cares and concerns outside of the current task. Top performers learn to shift their thinking from the external source (the distraction) and look internally to each of the four independent critical advisors and make changes to any one or all four to achieve the desired result.

The word *critical* or *hypercritical*, sometimes referred to as *faultfinding*, is defined as a means to look for and point out faults and defects. Humans tend to be self-critical by nature. As it pertains to self, the individual learns to make fair judgments and focus attention on using each of the four criteria, changing as needed to achieve the end result. In a case of immediate cares or concerns, an individual learns first to be self-aware of their own attitude and seeks to align the optimal thoughts or chatter to support the immediate need leading to the desired result.

ADVISOR 1: PERSONAL ATTITUDE

A top performer learns to self-assess and judge fairly their own attitude or habit of using mental and emotional skill sets to improve self-awareness. When an individual consciously seeks awareness of thought with a chatter check, self-regulation and self-motivation competencies gradually improve. As these skill sets continue to develop, the individual is able to consistently perform at new levels, especially under pressure.



Personal attitude is the root cause for personal performance improvement.

Attitude is defined as a settled way of thinking or a habit of thought. *Habit* is defined as a settled or regular tendency or automated response that can be especially hard to give up. It sounds trivial but must be recognized: changing a habit can be difficult, and changing a habit of thought can be even more difficult.

It is because of the difficulty that most emotional quotient training programs are designed for high risk, high performance, and leadership roles requiring frequent measures of self-discipline, reserved for only a few that are willing to perform at higher levels.

Survival Mode vs Learning Mode

As with all habits, there are some good and some bad. Many times, when difficulty and adversity arise it is easy to slip into a “survival mode.” Experts refer to two basic modes of the brain: survival mode and learning mode.

When an individual is in survival mode they are just trying to get through the day; there is no long-term or medium-term plan in place, which affects motivation. This survival mode can become a habit of thought over time and work directly against human performance, whether motivated personally or from work with the introduction of new performance standards. When stuck in survival mode, the individual feels like they will never dig them self out of the hole and barely have the resources to complete basic routine tasks.

When times get tough, it is tempting to allow a toxic habit of thought to become the dominant thought. If an individual is unaware of these internal automated thought patterns and responses, they can develop a survival mentality or way of thinking that will limit and hinder personal performance and improvement. The attitude becomes “just break even.”

As it pertains to improving human performance, the brain’s learning mode is now supported by neuroscience and cognitive science, both expanding our knowledge on human learning. Learning changes the physical structure of the brain, altering brain function. In other words, learning organizes and reorganizes the brain. This exciting and new frontier of learning the brain will continue to support new learning objectives, mental and emotional skill assessments, and improved educational tracks for improving human performance.

Consider the natural process of the brain and how an individual’s mental and emotional self-awareness skills come into play in each moment of the day. As chatter automatically runs through the individual’s mind, dominant thoughts will be processed by the brain, engaging complex brain functions and creating mental habits. An individual’s habit of thought may not support the current task or desired result. By using the critical advisor model an individual has a rational thought process with a framework or steps and can evaluate one’s own attitude, making onboard corrections as needed in the moment.

The Law of Concentration

People will always move in the direction of their dominant thoughts—this is the Law of Concentration. This is a natural law and will either help or hurt personal performance; there is no neutral or middle ground. If the dominant thoughts support the desired end result, the Law of Concentration works in the individual’s favor. If the dominant thoughts work against the desired result, the Law of Concentration works in opposition of the desired result.

Concentration is a natural law and a mental skill. Concentration is the act of focusing the mind upon a given desire until ways and means for its realization have been worked out and successfully put into operation. The mental skill of concentration is simply defined as the ability to repeat specific words and mental pictures on demand. As often as the mind drifts, an individual learns to bring a wandering mind back to ensure the law of concentration works in one’s favor.

ADVISOR 2: PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is the study of proper behavior and the search for wisdom. The original meaning of the word philosophy comes from the Greek root *philo-* meaning “love” and *-sophos*, or “wisdom.” Wisdom is defined as the quality of having experience, knowledge, and the capacity for good judgment.



Philosophy is personal, rooted in an individual's own personality style, attitudes, and experiences. Top performers are constantly defining and redefining their own philosophy.

When someone studies philosophy, they want to understand how and why people do certain things and how to live a good life. In other words, they want to know the meaning of life. A philosopher is someone whose job is to think these big thoughts.

A personal philosophy relates directly to one's own desire to perform better or at optimal states; an individual's thoughts, beliefs, concepts, and attitudes about everything. As it pertains to human performance, an individual makes this a personal and intentional self-study supporting the development of self-motivation.

In the critical advisor model self is the focal point and personal philosophy becomes an intentional navigational aide for day-to-day decisions. The individual makes a conscious effort to define their motives prior to, during, and after events unfold, understanding that human emotions and motives can change at the drop of a dime. Top performers learn to create a process of understanding one's own measure of wisdom and discernment for what is right and wrong.

Ironically, the brain and its multi-functional capacity is doing most of this with or without the individual's awareness. Self-awareness is the first competency and development step for improving personal performance. Utilizing self-awareness skills, a top performer can now take an active role in regulating these internal critical advisors. As to what separates right and wrong behaviors, top performers learn to remove the gray areas of what philosophy means to others and solidify their own personal belief statements, defining and redefining specific chatter that supports how they want to think, feel, and act.

Yogi Berra once said, "know what you stand for, or you will fall for anything." It is so easy to get distracted or off track and slip into survival mode. Using the critical advisor model in day-to-day thought processes becomes a regular habit or routine for high-performing individuals. Daily chatter-checks on what is right and wrong becomes a continual life long process through reflection and mental rehearsal.

Similar to Dr. John Maxwell's Law of the Process (taken from his book – *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*), humans develop daily, not in a single day. High-performing individuals use each new day as a new opportunity to refine what works and how they can improve for the future by focusing on personal best in the moment.

Purpose vs Object

Purpose is greater than object. This old cliché means that the "why" (purpose) is much more important to identify and understand than the actual item or goal. Self-knowledge of why the individual wants the new car, new house, or big bank account is more important than the car, the house, or the money. This is a common misconception in human performance and goal setting techniques.

The old, outdated method for goal setting was to define the object, write it down, look at it, focus on it, and a variety of other steps or techniques regarding the "object."

The key is to stir human desire and define why the individual wants the object in the first place. A million dollars is only a number in a banking system, but what the individual would do with the million dollars becomes the primary motivator. Purpose and reason stir the human desire as well as sustain continual efforts to improve and persevere during setbacks and adversity.

The key to defining one's philosophy begins with asking questions of one's self. The Six Cylinder Model provides a simple framework to begin asking critical self-assessment questions that support the development of one's own personal philosophy.

ADVISOR 3: SELF-DISCIPLINE

The third internal critical advisor is self-discipline, which is defined as the ability to regulate one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses or the ability or skill to pursue what one thinks is right despite temptations to abandon the necessary tasks to achieve the desired result.



Self-discipline is simply making oneself do what is necessary in the moment to achieve a desired goal; top performers learn how to develop a self-disciplined lifestyle.

Self-discipline is unlike the singular word *discipline* meaning the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior, using punishment to correct disobedience. Self-discipline is first and foremost personal. It is simply the means to make one's self do things they know should be done even when lacking the desire.

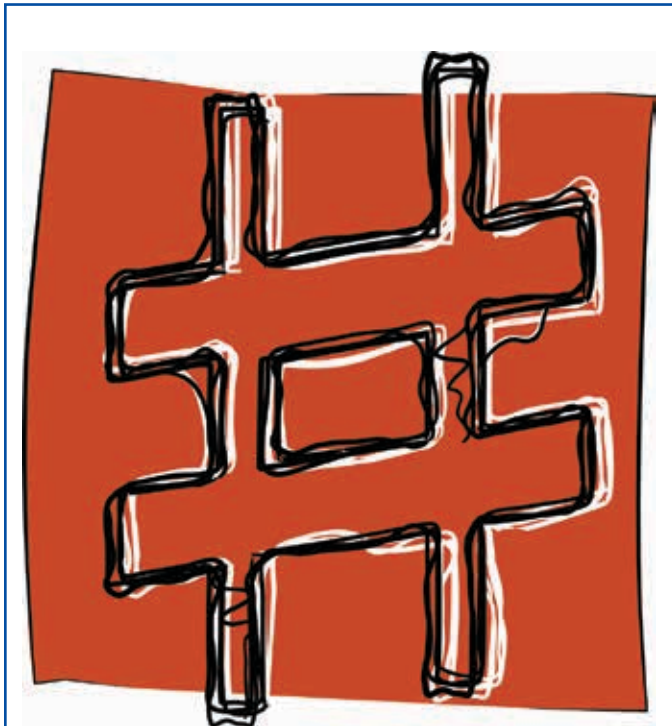
Self-Mastery

Self-discipline can include small behavior changes in life like a New Year's resolution or breaking a bad habit. Self-mastery is an advanced practice of regulating thoughts, emotions, motives, and self-disciplines consistently and requires daily routines to adopt the habit loop—a neurological loop that governs every human habit and consists of three elements: a cue, a routine, and a reward. Understanding these elements can help in understanding how to change bad habits or form better ones to improve personal performance.

Self-mastery is often defined as self-control, the ability to exert a strong will against desires and impulses in order to steer the future to one of our choosing. Self-mastery requires having a vision for the future self and harnessing the will or mental strength to realize that vision. As it pertains to advanced levels of human performance, we learn to master ourselves by getting out of the way of our own emotional states and impulses.

ADVISOR 4: RESULTS

The fourth, final, and primary critical advisor is results. The old cliché, “results are the name of the game” clearly remains relevant today in the field of human performance. Results are defined as a consequence, effect, or outcome of something.



Decision-making is the direct result of an internal process of all three critical advisors working together—the best results come from a combination of the right attitude, right philosophy, and right self-disciplines for the task at hand.

Taking the necessary time and defining desired results is a pre-requisite to the other three critical advisors, meaning one must define their individually desired results in order to begin asking key questions like, “what is the right attitude, the right philosophy, and what are the right self-discipline or actions to engage or avoid?”

A well-known management consultant once introduced this simple habit for highly effective people, “learn to begin with the end in mind.” Meaning, think first the desired result(s) and then plan accordingly.

The plan is using the internal critical advisors to define the right attitude, philosophy, and self-discipline.

Result oriented is a term used to describe an individual or organization that focuses on outcome rather than the process used to produce the outcome. The Internal Critical Advisor Model lends itself to shifting the focus from the end result, to reflecting and visualizing improved performance using the model as a rational framework for change. Basically, focusing on the end results by dissecting the process of all three critical advisors combined into human actions and decision making.

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Top performing individuals learn to accept personal responsibility for all four critical advisors. This is a statement of free will and directly reflects emotional maturity. In human performance, maturity is the ability to respond to the environment in an appropriate manner. Maturity also encompasses being aware of the correct time and location to behave and knowing when to act according to the circumstances and the culture of the society where one lives or works.

Today, given all the research on the brain-body sync, being emotionally mature refers to results and the process of regulating all four critical advisors in day-to-day situations—personal quiet time when alone and socially when interacting with others.

Top performers take responsibility for their own attitudes and habits of thought. Top performers continually ask personal questions to define their beliefs as to what is right and wrong in various situations—in other words, they are defining their personal philosophy. Top performers accept the challenge of self-discipline and work to adopt all four critical advisors to achieve their own personal results.

CONCLUSION

Human performance is personal and optimal performance requires self-knowledge and self-discipline. These personal, self-assessing techniques found in the Internal Critical Advisor Model involve making fair, accurate assessments from the results one gets from looking inside; both personally in private time and socially within interactions. In turn, taking an active interest in doing better and focusing attention on self, as opposed to others.

High-performing organizations are starting to realize the value of their own human-capital. If employees are stressed out, overworked, out of balance, emotionally immature, and emotionally unintelligent people will take little to no regard for personal performance. Common consequences lead to high turnover in personnel, absenteeism, increased sick days, internal complaints, and ultimately poor productivity and low profit margins.