



**How do you avoid those energy-draining thoughts?  
By engaging in intellectual humility and curiosity!**

With lockdown being implemented in various States around Australia over the last week, it wouldn't be surprising if you feel frustrated, discouraged, and pretty pessimistic. Let's face it, most of us are so tired of COVID-19, with many hoping that 2021 would bring a fresh change and a hint of normality. The thought of having another year like 2020 is daunting and can so quickly put us into spirals of negative thinking.

Research shows that when we are intellectually humble and curious, we not only create a greater sense of meaning and purpose in our lives but are less likely to engage in energy-draining thoughts. Here are some practical ways you can avoid this energy drain, which might help you through this period of unpredictability as your stress levels rise and your energy tanks are challenged.

- **Keep an open mind by adopting a learner's mindset.** We don't have to have all the answers, nor do we need to feel guilty for not knowing. Rather be curious about what you could learn today that you never knew before. Learning is something fun, and that may challenge your long-held perspective in a positive way.
- **Don't take things for granted.** The fact that you've seen this before or know this already and therefore don't need to pay attention may close you off to staying in the

moment and seeing what else you may see, hear or feel that was previously out of your awareness.

- **Ask questions relentlessly.** Often when people behave in a way that perhaps triggers us emotionally, we jump to judgement. Instead, be curious as to why a particular behaviour is being observed. What emotion is driving this behaviour, and perhaps a question from you may open the opportunity for this person to share their struggles? By judging them, you push them away. By asking questions, you may create a safe space for others to share what's getting them down.
- **Read and explore diverse kinds of readings and ideas.** As humans, we tend to gravitate towards what we know and the familiar. By reading widely and exploring various ideas, we open ourselves up for growth mentally and emotionally. Who knows what you could learn about yourself by stepping out of your comfort zone?
- **Challenge the status quo to help create breakthroughs.** Reflect on how you show up in your life or how others impact your world. Is this how it should be, or have you merely become complacent and put it in the too-hard basket to change?
- **Build high performing networks of people around you with disparate views, even if slightly unpopular.** Surrounding yourself with people who may challenge your viewpoints, attitudes, and beliefs could open your eyes to seeing the world differently.
- **Be empathetic and draw out the best ideas from each individual, rather than try and fit a person to predefined roles.** Don't assume their role limits people's ideas. We all have different lived experiences and a backstory that, if tapped, could realise unique ideas for one another.
- **Use curiosity to ask the right questions** to help cut through political fiefdoms or firmly held legacy or policy-driven points of view. Even if someone has a political view that is in opposition to yours, remain curious about what drives them to that side? You may find through curious questioning that you have some surprising commonalities and gain a deeper understanding of what motivates them.

Getting through 2021 is going to require a lot of physical, mental and emotional energy. We need to focus on keeping these energy tanks topped up, and avoiding negative thinking is a step in the right direction.

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