

Thriving Workplace

Hecticity, Imperturbability & Intelligence

Hectic – *adjective*. (From Greek *hektikos* “habitual”; from *hexis* ‘habit, state of mind or body’.)

Full of incessant or frantic activity; constantly busy and hurried. Characterised by continual activity and haste, the lack of any time to rest or relax, and a sense of things barely under control.

Imperturbable - *adjective*.

Consistently calm, not easily worried, disturbed or agitated.

Hecticity - *noun*. (Invented), derived from *hectic*.

An energy-sapping, performance-limiting state of mind afflicting people who are committed to and passionate about acting responsibly on behalf of those they support or serve. Unchecked, the condition passes through four stages:

- 1: Unhealthy levels of agitation and stress
- 2: Severe anxiety
- 3: Panic
- 4: Meltdown (freaking out, spinning out or lashing out).

Stages 2 – 4 are often experienced between 2am and 3am, and may occur within daylight hours when the sufferer attempts to add to a list of priorities considered both urgent and important, further matters afforded similar priority.

Imperturbability - *noun*.

A consistently calm state of mind enabling high-level mental functioning even in the midst of disorder, confusion, and other people’s agitation or unfocused activity.

Notes on Causes and Remedies

Hecticity is caused by unguarded thinking that is excessive, unnecessary, inappropriate or obsessive, and its emotional and behavioural consequences. *Hecticity* may be suppressed temporarily by changing external events but can be resolved effectively only by dealing with it at source – the (often unaware) willingness to dwell on thoughts based on beliefs that cause the condition, e.g. -

- *My efforts are never enough – there is always more to be done and I should and must complete it perfectly, on time*
- *My role requires heroic effort*
- *If I don’t complete it all, unaided, I am a failure*
- *Asking for help is a sign of weakness or failure*
- *If I am not constantly busy, harried and anxious about external events, something is wrong*

“Consciousness can be shown to be a constructed reality . . . What is experienced as reality is actually only a representation [and] consciousness may be altered simply by changing the manner of its construction.”

[Robert Ornstein, *The Psychology of Consciousness*]

- *Despite the apparent improbability of ever “getting on top of it all”, I should continue with my present strategy and practices as though I will “get there”, one day.*
- *Despite the sometimes enormity of the task and sheer impossibility of one human being able to achieve it unaided, I would be foolish to point this out, resist, complain or ask for help.*
- *I am guilty of not being good enough*
- *Perfection is required in all that I do*
- *I am responsible for all the consequences of others’ efforts and initiatives*
- *My integrity depends on other’ positive regard of me*
- *Competency in my role depends on getting everything right or on fully achieving all my responsibilities at all times.*

Imperturbability is achieved by working on root causes rather than trying to control external events. It arises from, training our thinking to default (especially upon recognition of stress) to ideas which enable access to constructive perspectives.

Characteristics of Intelligence

*“Although I do not think it is possible to give an adequate definition of intelligence, I believe it is possible to describe certain characteristics of it. First, people acting or thinking with intelligence are good at separating cause from effect. Geographer I.G. Simmons, for example, tells the story of an eighteenth-century protopsychiatrist who developed an infallible method of distinguishing the sane from the insane. Those to be diagnosed he locked in a room with water taps on one side and a supply of mops and buckets on the other. He then turned on the taps and watched: Those he considered mad ran for the mops and buckets; the sane walked over and turned off the taps. I keep a file of mop and bucket proposals by persons well paid and honoured for their reputed intelligence, the contents of which range from the ridiculous through the absurd to the potentially criminal. The common characteristic of these is the recurrent inability to ask questions having to do with big causes and large consequences.” [One of various characteristics of intelligence described by [David W Orr](#) in *Earth in Mind: on Education, Environment and the Human Prospect*, 2004]*

Additional Support

For beliefs and ideas that counteract *hecticity* and support *imperturbability* see the ***Hear & Be Heard*** workbook (if you’ve attended the training programme of that name).

For further helpful discussion, see these articles within this website:

[Delegation](#)

[Facing Reality](#)

[Understand and Manage your Attitudes](#) (this, for beliefs and thoughts that support *Imperturbability* – and a discussion of metacognition).

For additional perspectives, check these Jim Clemmer articles in his website:

[Growing with Change](#)

[From Phase of Life to Way of Life](#)

[Change Management is an Oxymoron](#)

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