Kakenya's Dream
**Mentor Digital Content**
By Shirley Snoyman

Learning to focus the mind for success
Study, university life, stress and managing your life in a positive way

Hello, my name is Shirley Snoyman and I am going to share with you my experience on learning to focus the mind for success. There will be times where life becomes stressful or you have feelings of being overwhelmed especially with your studying, university life, being away from family,…

I am a high school Mathematics teacher but also spent 21 years in Finance and Banking. I am now back in the education space coaching in both Mathematics and life skills. I also have an exciting company that connects communities through technology. I am passionate about finding innovative and fun ways to grow and to teach.

I would like to share with you a toolkit that can help you manage your life in a more positive way when you find you are in a stressful state. In any aspect of your life, remember that 80% is psychology and only 20% is skill. So we all need tools to work on our minds.

The toolkit I will explain here is a triangular model, called the triad.
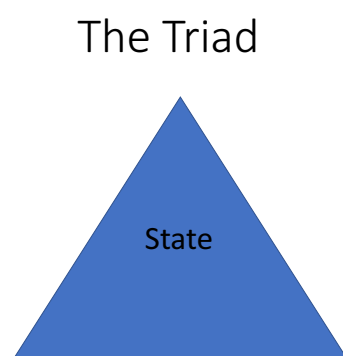
The Triad

We are going to use this triangle to frame the ideas to focus your mind for success. In the middle of the triangle is the word STATE. This is your state of mind. You could be in a beautiful state of joy, happiness, adventure or you can be in a stressful state like feeling anxious, overwhelmed or angry. The 3 sides of the triangle will give you tools to change your state.

The Triad
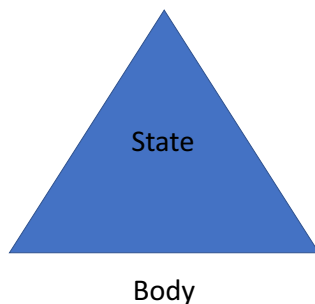
State

Body

When you are feeling stressed, you can change your **Body (physiology)** to get you into a more resourceful state to be successful.
One example is breathing
doing 3 conscious breaths
Close your eyes
Breathe in for 4 letting your stomach out
Hold for 2 (shoulders down)
Breathe out for 8 pulling your stomach in.
Repeat 2 more times
When you are ready, gently open your eyes.
You can also breathe in for 8, hold for 4 and exhale for 16 or any version in this ratio (there's some Maths for you!)
Always exhale for DOUBLE the amount you inhale.

There are other ways to change your **physiology**,
Doing exercise, for example, go for a walk, a run, a gym class
being grateful – I think of 3 things I am grateful for every day and it puts me into a great state,
drinking water – 3 sips in a row; did you know the number of millilitres you should drink is 3 and a half times your body weight in KG per day? So for a 50kg body weight you would need to drink 1750ml or 1.75L of water.
Eating healthy food –eat plenty of greens to alkalise your body
Movement (quick moves) Example do Egoscue - for pain free backs from sitting too much.
I will leave it to Brian, the trainer who trained me, to guide you through the 3 exercises on his video.
doing meditation - one meditation that I do every day is the Soul Sync Meditation. It is used all over the world. It only takes 12 minutes. Try it for 21 days; it takes 21 days to create new neural pathways in your brain. I will put a

link to this, the video of Egoscue and other resources on the website for you to access in your own time.

The Triad

Focus

State

Body
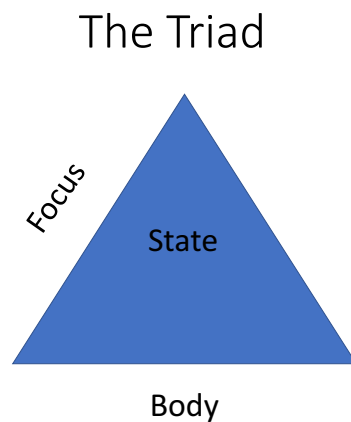
The second way to change your state is by changing your **focus**. For example, focus on seeking opportunities for diversity; I suggest you join organisations even if you don't have an interest in them. So, if you have no interest in robots, go and join the robotics club for example. Or join a yoga club or a team sport rather than going to the gym and doing exercise on your own. In this way, you will meet new people and it will give you a sense of adventure.

Chunking is another example of focusing. If you feel overwhelmed by the amount of work you need to complete, focus on breaking the big task into small chunks and just making a start and completing even one small chunk of one subject's assignment. The completion of this small chunk will motivate you to tackle the next chunk and the next until the task is complete.

Never be afraid to ask for help. Most universities will have career advisers you can talk to. Also speak to your professors, friends and of course your mentor. All universities will have different resources; focus on finding out what resources are available when you begin university.

The Triad

Focus

Language or meaning

State

Body
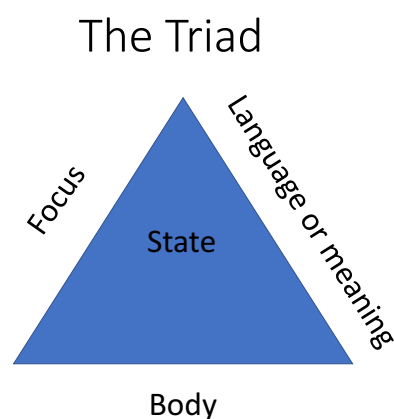
The third way to change your state to be more resourceful is using **language or meaning** in a more empowering way. Instead of beating yourself up, use different words to change your state. For example, instead of saying "I suck at Economics as I failed the assignment", say "I learned so much from the feedback I received on my Economics assignment which will help me do better in my next one."

By changing one area of the triad you will find that the other 2 areas become more effective too. For example, as you calm your mind through the 3 conscious breaths, you are able to focus more on the assignment you need to complete.

Now if we add a <u>compelling future</u> it will give you reasons to use your skills.

Create a compelling future
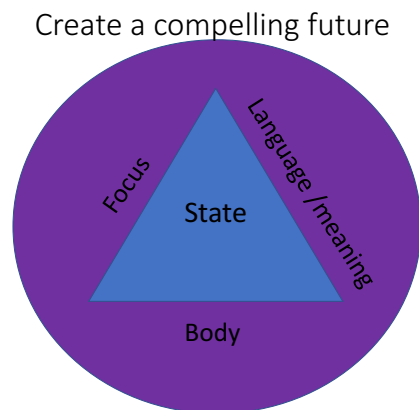
So start by dreaming big. Imagine a compelling future that creates a burning desire for how you want your life to be, and the person you want to become. Tony Robbins quotes "A compelling future is the food on which our souls thrive; we all need a continuing sense of emotional and spiritual growth"

So the two key points I would like you to take away from this talk are
1. The Triad – Changing your physiology / Body, your Focus, your Language / Meaning and having a compelling future
2. Seek out resources that are available to you - these resources will help you when you start to feel stressed.

As I mentioned, there are links on this site of ideas for all 3 areas of the triad. To change your physiology, I have included the Soul Sync Meditation, Egoscue, a gratitude meditation and also this triad as a reminder of ways to change your state so that you can focus your mind for success. If you try one of these ideas and it does not help you, do not feel like a failure or give up; try something else from this toolkit.

As Nelson Mandela said, "I never lose. I either win or learn.