PROBLEM PREVENTER

"The best way to manage a crisis is to prevent it from happening"

One of the most easily overlooked challenges in our lives is the lack of controlling the controllable. Now that we've called attention to self-kindness, forgiveness and Mood Health, now seems like the opportune time to explore what it takes to minimize mistakes and mitigating the life challenges we all face. These can become the source of stress that causes mood imbalance to begin with. In fact, you just created one of the best problem-preventers possible with your shiny new 3-Day Rule Contingency Plan.

Having said and done that, at which skill would you rather be better: having foresight or hindsight? Think about it. We have our past, our present and our future, but few of us talk about "the never happened." These are the life intersections and events specific to the bad decisions we didn't make. Even though less obvious, there are countless examples of sparing ourselves, many of which we do automatically without overthinking because, for one reason or another, we know better.

This skill goes beyond good decision-making. It's about "pre-problem-solving" by combining life experience with the anticipation of outcomes we want to prevent. The good news is that avoiding many problems is completely within our control.

Another dimension to this relates to being mindful to not take certain things for granted, especially life itself. Too often, many of us make terrible mistakes through which we only learn and appreciate to not make because we experience those consequences.

There are obvious examples like driving drunk or while texting that we know not to do but do anyway. The result of not wearing a mask during a pandemic or not using contraception during – you know – can be life-changing.

Do we really need to make poor choices before we have to contend with regret and to appreciate life? Of course not! Naturally, it's even easier to think of certain decisions we did make that we wish we hadn't. That's life. We have no control over the past.

This isn't intended to be a downer. It's about raising your awareness to improve your mindset to save yourself the trouble, especially with every day routine decisions. Before you decide what to do with your chess piece, hone your skills to think three moves ahead.

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ACTIVITY 1: TAKE A PREVENTION INVENTORY (TIME: 3-5 MINUTES)

What among the following items apply to your lack of prevention?

Choose all that apply.

HOUSEHOLD	PERSONAL	OTHER
● Change Car Oil (within reason)	● Covid Safeguards (mask/social distance)	● Secure passwords
● Baby Proofing	● Dental Hygiene (brush 2x/day)	● Identity theft precautions
● Active Smoke Detector	● Floss	● Computer back-up current
● Active Radon Sensor	● Moisturizer	● Phone saved to cloud
● Spare keys	● Hand Sanitizer	● Photos backed up
● Dryer sheets	● Sufficient Hand Washing	● Important papers fireproof safe
● Solar shield on car windows	● Insect Repellent	● Text while driving
● Salt Driveways/Sidewalks	● Mammogram/Colonoscopy	● Wear Seat Belt
● Sports equipment	● Other Medical Screenings	● Sufficient Insurance Policies
● Hard hat	● Purchase warranties (as warranted)*	● Other preventative measures?

ACTIVITY 2: PREVENTION REFLECTION (TIME: 15-20 MINUTES)

Almost nothing is a mistake unless it happens twice. Let's hone your foresight skills a bit more by doing the following. This will take some harder thinking. Stick with it. Choose and prioritize the Top 5-7 items for which you're most vulnerable (per above).

ACTIVITY 3: HINDSIGHT 20/20 (TIME: 15-20 MINUTES)

List some examples of past events, challenges you failed to prevent? Have you repeated certain mistakes?

OPTIONAL: If you think necessary or useful, write a letter to yourself about past errors, present vulnerabilities and create an action plan to which you'll commit doing to prevent concerns within your control from happening.

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