

## PROCESS & OUTCOMES

**'Life is a process, and outcomes are its products'. Focusing on the process will always result in the outcomes I need, even if it is not what I expected.**

**I think of an outcome as the result I want and the process as the way I get there.**

**'I'm happy even if I do not know what happiness is, because what I feel fulfills my definition of happiness'.**

Being raised to think about outcomes, I would spend so much time worrying about how things were going to turn out that I would miss out on and forget to focus on what was happening in each moment and the series of actions that helped me achieve my goals.

Rather than worrying about how next year is going to turn out, I can simply realize that sixty good seconds equal one good minute, sixty good minutes equal one good hour, twenty-four good hours equal one good day, seven good days equal one good week and fifty-two good weeks equal one good year. As a result, I choose to focus on each unit of time more carefully.

A process is a series of actions, changes, or functions that produce a result. The outcome of a process is its result. "Life is a process, and outcomes are its products". Regardless of whether the outcome is what I expected or not, if I focus on the process, I will always get what I need.

When I put my outcome above my process, I run the risk of what I call a "process / outcome conflict," in which the process I am involving myself in does not align with the outcome I desire. As an example, I may want a healthy outcome, but spend a lot of energy worrying about how to achieve it, while not engaging in enough healthy processes.

When I experience a conflict between the process I am involved in and the outcome I want, the process always wins, and I am likely not to achieve a healthy outcome in this case.

In this regard, if I were wondering how to be "happy" (this is an outcome that I may not know what happiness means since I may not know what happiness is) I would simply reflect on the moments I am experiencing and how I feel in each

moment, adjusting it to approximate what I find enjoyable or satisfying, for example, when I open my eyes, how does that feel? If it doesn't feel good and I don't have time to do it again, I simply imagine what an "eye opening" experience would be like.

Process / outcome conflicts take up a lot of energy and affect my life direction, so I am very motivated to avoid them. It seems that conflicting processes and outcomes are often the reason that well-intentioned efforts that aren't in line with the processes of those they're meant for always fail horribly.

Changing or modifying my belief system could be an important step in achieving the outcome I want because it is integral to my ability to engage in processes. Similarly, every complicated process consists of simpler pieces, so being able to process these pieces increases the chance of achieving a desirable outcome.

Rather than thinking about what I hope to gain from it, I remind myself to take bite-sized steps, i.e. small baby steps, and be present in the moment rather than focusing on what you want. I try to focus on the journey instead of the destination. I also remind myself to stay in the present and enjoy the process. I strive to be content with where I am and trust that good things will come if I stay consistent and focused on the present moment.

If I were going to New York to see a show or purchase something that I thought was unavailable in Canada, getting there would be the outcome I wanted (outcome), but if I didn't buy a ticket, get my passport, pack, leave for the airport in time, board the plane, etc., then this would not happen. It is impossible for me to accomplish what I want without all these steps, which I call process. However, as I progress through the steps, I may find that I could accomplish the same thing without going that far.

Engaging in the processes that are likely to lead me to the results I want is just as, or sometimes even more, important than getting the results I want.

Process is a series of steps that lead to an outcome. The steps are just as important (or even more so than the outcome) and experience each step as part of the learning process. In most cases, people use an outcome-based approach, in which the steps are only important if they achieve the outcome, and ultimately, the goal is the outcome.

Process steps are a form of progressive planning that enables me to focus on the next stage in a series of stages, which enables my imagination to fully engage. To succeed, I am naturally afraid of failing, so my imagination may latch on to the idea of not trying to fail rather than trying to succeed.

To counteract this tendency, I focus on the process (steps to get there) rather than the outcome. The same thing can be said for my fear of heights, which I can overcome by focusing on each step and not on the fact that I am trying to cross a hanging bridge. Focusing on the results we want is important, but being aware of the steps that lead to those results is more important.

In addition to seeking out answers, I should also create a setting in which those answers will find me. I find routines helpful because they help me form the habits I need and create familiar patterns, but it is important to engage in routines that promote my desired outcomes.

When someone is consistently not getting the results they want, they may have become skilled at not getting the results they want, and a change of tactics may be needed. The skills I possess are the result of reinforcement by repetition, so I must act to maintain them.

Another thing I do is what I call "substitution of processes," so when I have a problem, I am not able to solve, I keep it in the back of my mind while I rearrange my furniture, and I usually find an effective solution to my problem within a short period of time when I find a very desirable arrangement. Initially, I thought this was a coincidence, but the frequency with which it occurs convinced those around me that it was real. My only drawback was that my sitting room kept changing and my kids did not realize that most people leave furniture in the same place for many years, but luckily, I have fewer problems now that I know this.

### **Points to remember:**

A process is a series of steps that lead to a particular outcome.

In a process-driven approach, the steps are as critical (or sometimes even more critical than the outcome).

There is value in experiencing each step as the goal is to become more skillful through this experience.