



SHAPING OUR POTENTIAL

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

March 2020



SHAPING OUR POTENTIAL: A SUMMARY



“ A GOOD LIFE IS ONE RICH IN, ABOVE ALL, HUMAN POTENTIAL”

Umair Haque, Betterness 2011

WHY POTENTIAL?

As a society we are preoccupied with efficiency, productivity and effectiveness. We often gauge how well we've performed by the number of mishaps or mistakes we've avoided or how well we've complied with the rules and regulations.

What if instead, we viewed and measured our performance differently. What if we asked ourselves what is truly meaningful, authentic and fulfilling in our lives and made a conscious decision to pursue and develop it.

Individual potential is grounded in personal meaning, accomplishment and purpose. It goes beyond the traditional definition of achievement and explores what's possible. It can lead us to greater and greater levels of happiness and personal fulfillment.

If we tap into what authentically matters to people and help them evoke their fuller potential then we can scale greater heights of human performance.

A DEFINITION

At Yellow Edge, we define human potential as *“the capacity to develop and fulfill our unrealised ability to be the best version of ourselves to lead happy and fulfilled lives.”*

We see four integral and mutually reinforcing components to human potential, demonstrated in the diagram above.

THE SHAPING POTENTIAL SURVEY

In November 2019, Yellow Edge and our partners ORIMA Research surveyed 455 adults living in Canberra to find out how they thought their potential was being fulfilled. We tested over fifty unique factors linked to human potential and in the process discovered that:

- 76% of respondents felt they had made significant headway in fulfilling their potential.
- 78% of respondents feel they have about the right amount of purpose in their lives.

- 72% of respondents feel that they have enough reward in their lives.
- 85% of respondents felt supported and encouraged to develop their potential.
- 75% of respondents feel that living in Canberra somewhat or greatly helps them achieve their potential.

THE SEVEN ENABLERS OF REALISED POTENTIAL

We also found that there were seven factors which played a significant part in enabling the fulfillment of potential.

There are the social opportunities available and accessible to individuals, their work and career, their internal drive or aspiration, the effects of living in Canberra, their health, their sense of purpose and reward and the importance of institutional support in their lives.

Top 7 factors enabling human potential

Aspiration	Drive, Reward and purpose
Engagement	Social opportunities
Capacity	Health, Work and career, Importance of institutional support,
Context	Canberra effect

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The importance of having a “Team YOU”

Canberrans, particularly females, are telling us that their family, friends and their social opportunities play a significant role in helping them to reach their potential.

Reaching your full potential is not a solo game. It’s about

building a supportive team around you of family and friends as well as colleagues, advisors and mentors who can challenge and stretch you. Who’s on your team?

What a way to make a livin’

Unsurprisingly, Canberrans with high realised potential said that they were very pleased with their work and career. Three quarters of this group felt that working in Canberra helped them with developing their potential.

Meaningful work and careers are important vehicles for us in reaching potential. Is your work inspiring and stretching you or are you stuck in a rut?

Aspiration has a shelf life

Canberrans want to achieve more in their lives. Yet, people with high levels of drive may also be less satisfied with the amount of potential they’ve fulfilled.

As we age, our level of drive dissipates. Focusing on your interests, passions and strengths can re-ignite drive, especially for older Canberrans.

Place matters

Where you live and your ability to fully engage with that place is an enabler of potential. Those Canberrans with the lowest reported levels of realised potential do not see great benefits for them or their families in living in Canberra or with the various changes taking place in their city.

Place matters. Where you live, where you work, where you socialise impacts your ability to develop your potential.

Mind over matter

Canberrans with the highest realised potential are prioritising their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Living up to our fullest potential requires more than just a healthy body – it requires a positive mindset, being emotionally and spiritually healthy, energised as well as being

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fully present, focused and enjoying yourself.

Cultivate a sense of purpose

The amount of purpose in an individuals' life is a strong predictor and enabler of their realised potential.

Asking yourself the questions what for?; to what end?; and why? can help you hone in on what's important in your life and help shape a stronger sense of purpose and direction.

Government support welcome

Institutional forms of support including from government, health and social welfare institutions appear to be especially important for older Canberrans and those who feel that their potential is relatively unfulfilled.

In good and bad times, Australia's institutions play an important role in supporting and enabling citizens. If you feel that there are factors that impede your potential, reaching out to government, social and welfare groups for assistance may help.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Further chapters will explore each of the seven enablers in more detail including identifying what we, our families and friends, our employers, our communities can do to optimise human potential.