

NEWS RELEASE

New Book Helps Us Navigate Through The Information Age

We revel in the Information Age. We love that all of our information can be mobile, global, available 24-7, and ready in various user-friendly formats. But we abhor the burden it has become, as many feel enslaved to their gadgets, obligated to respond to every email, friend request or Twitter feed. How is one to take advantage of technological advances without feeling consumed by them?

A new book explores, both with a philosophical flare and a practical approach, how to get through the inbox clutter and overcome digital overload.

“The core message of *The Principle of Relevance: The Essential Strategy to Navigate Through The Information Age*,” says author Stefania Lucchetti, “is that in each of us is the power to transform a continuous information flow from distraction into a tool of empowerment. Each individual can do this by deliberately training himself to change his response mechanisms from a reaction principle to a relevance principle.

The Principle of Relevance trains the reader’s mind to become aware of its information processing habits and become more effective in processing digital information without succumbing to information overload. This is essential as today’s competitive edge is no longer based on availability of information, but rather on the ability to navigate through a flood of high speed data and to select, access, use, and respond to the information that is most relevant. This is especially applicable to people in the corporate and professional world, who are constantly distracted by an incessant flow of emails in their inbox.

“The vision and purpose of this book is to deepen the reader’s awareness of the complexities and opportunities offered by the current era and to give the reader strategic tools that will empower effectiveness through deliberate awareness: building and choice of action; choice about what to do and when to observe; find, and pay attention to the data, events, things, and personal interactions that are of importance; and, ultimately to move on when a particular journey has come to an end,” says Stefania.

Her book was an outgrowth of her professional experience as an international corporate lawyer. “During the negotiation and due diligence phase of a high-profile business deal, I noticed that most of the professionals and business persons involved in the deal were not able to control the time spent on managing the constant digital information exchange by email, due to their inability to pinpoint what was relevant and what was not,” says Stefania. “This was rendering them very ineffective and unproductive, and it created the constant, unnecessary need to work late at night.”

So how do we take back control of our lives over websites, blogs, Google, Facebook, iPads, Xboxes, Blackberries, smart phones and email? It begins by training your brain to recognize the relevance of the

information. Stefania lives by five principles for discernment, attention, and self-knowledge and self-mastery.

Stefanie explores the following:

- 6 steps to stay in charge of your email.
- How to change the response mechanisms from a reaction principle to one of relevance.
- How to process information so that it is empowering and not distracting.
- Identifying the most important resource in the digital age.
- Surfing the Net is making us dumber, less effective, and shallow.
- How the blessings and curses of the Information Age are playing out.
- Why society feels overwhelmed by information and how one's attention span is slipping.
- How to master time management in a 24/7 world...

“We have information coming faster at us than ever and in a disorganized fashion,” says Stefania. “It has become hard to choose what is most relevant to us.” By using the tools and strategies employed by the author, one can take steps toward an enhanced ability to process information, unleashing a higher level of freedom to perceive choices and select opportunities.

“As our daily information overload drama unfolds,” says Stefania, several questions become more and more essential: What is worth knowing? What is worth doing? What is worth responding to? How do I have time to think clearly and creatively?”

Stefania lives by three rules for processing her email:

Rule 1: Eliminate your “inner efficiency” (getting more things done by doing everything in order).

Rule 2: Make sure you have collated and understood all the relevant information before responding.

Rule 3: Wait at least 15 minutes before responding to any email.

The difference between success and failure is no longer based on availability of information but rather on the ability to navigate through an overwhelming amount of data and select, access, and use the information that is most relevant.

Some of Stefania's proven methods include:

- Making the decision to turn off your gadgets for specific hours in the day.
- Never looking at emails first thing in the morning.
- Making sure you don't become an information polluter by overloading others with emails.
- Take your digital information and put it on a diet.
- Use your printer – by reading printed material you aren't distracted by links and continuous online prompts.

Acting on the basis of the principle of relevance means expanding your brain's capability to acquire and process data, while at the same time having the ability and mastery to discriminate the data which are relevant and respond to those, and those only. In other words, the principle of relevance is based on two concepts: **Creative intake**: letting inputs come in; and **Deliberate action**: responding only to those inputs to which you choose to respond.

“You must learn to refrain from responding unless and until you have gained a clear idea of all the information that you are meant to process, have processed it and have come to a conclusion,” concludes Stefania. “Otherwise you will swim in an ocean of information without a life preserver.”

Publication Data: *The Principle of Relevance: The Essential Strategy to Navigate Through the Information Age* by Stefania Lucchetti; 180 pgs; Trade Paper; February; \$20, ISBN: 978-988-99758-2-1.

Contact information: Planned Television Arts

Brian Feinblum 212-583-2718 feinblumb@plannedtelevisionarts.com.

Stefania Lucchetti

Biography

Stefania Lucchetti, a dynamic speaker, consultant, and corporate coach, is the author of a new book ***The Principle of Relevance: The Essential Strategy to Navigate Through the Information Age***.

She has practiced corporate law for over a decade, in Europe and Asia focusing on the telecom, IT, media and Internet industries. She knows firsthand the burdens and rewards of 24/7, mobile, global communications.

Stefanie, who has traveled extensively around the world throughout her life, often presents her ideas with passion and vision. Based on her career and personal experiences, she has developed an effective methodology for overcoming the information overload that consumes global citizens.

Stefania has presented her ideas at numerous corporate speaking engagements. She regularly speaks on the following topics:

- Relevance and effective information processing (including inbox management).
- Thought and technology.
- Simplifying work
- Time management and making time your own.
- Women leadership -- balancing career, family, intellectual interests.
- Meditation for the logical, business mind.
- Ideas to really make ideas happen.
- Motivating and innovating for Generation Y.

Recent appearances as a speaker include: Time Warner, Citibank, Royal Bank of Scotland, Women in Publishing Association, Women Media Networks, Noah Brand Energy, Bank of New York Mellon, Asia Pacific Alliance of Coaches, Hong Kong Corporate Counsel Association, and the American Chamber of Commerce.

She is a member of The Information Overload Research Group.

Stefania is an official blogger on the Huffington Post. She also regularly publishes articles on Technorati and publishes a newsletter. For more information, please consult: www.theprincipleofrelevance.com and www.StefaniaLucchetti.com.

She resides in Hong Kong with her husband and new-born boy.

Stefania Lucchetti

Q&A

The Principle of Relevance

1. **We are in technology overload. How do we sort through it all?** Information creates stimuli, knowledge, and choices. And yet, the paradoxical consequence of data overload is total chaos and loss of the ability to choose. The new technologies allow not only fast production but instant distribution of information. This leaves us with a permanent processing deficit, although most of us, in the digital age, handle nothing else but information for a living. We create it, process it and consume it, and feel overwhelmed most of the time. The problem is that technology has evolved, but our information-processing habits have not. We still process information in a linear, reactionary way. We need to learn to process information in a multileveled way, becoming masters at taking in information and then sorting out what is relevant for us and what is not. Then we should take action only on what is relevant. It is very simple, although not always easy to do, as it requires a serious degree of discipline. You have to become aware of your information processing patterns and make a conscious choice to take control of the information you process and respond to, just like you do with your diet, just like you do when you select a movie to see at the cinema.
2. **What inspired you to write *The Principle of Relevance*?** Some time ago I was working on a business deal – one of the painful ones where a huge team is called to work 24/7 to produce a result in record time. There was a lot of work to be carried out, everyone was stressed by the long working hours and the deadlines. And yet we all would be submerged with a flood of incessant emails, sometimes more than one per minute. Someone would send some information, question or comment – most of the times about an infinitesimally small and sometimes irrelevant issue compared to the big picture we were aiming to draw together - to a whole list of addressees and everyone would answer with their comment, and so on. As a result, I – like most others – spent all of my time reading emails and responding to them in a reactionary work flow, and did not have time to do my research until very late at night. Most of these email interactions were superfluous and unnecessary at the end of the day when, having finally been able to carry out the analysis that was required, we had all our answers and someone was able to put together a thoughtful summary. That night, frustrated and exhausted, I took out my notebook and wrote: “Relevance. Does anyone have any sense of what is relevant and what is not?”
3. **How did you come up with your method for handling the overflow of information that bombards us daily?** My method is based both on research and personal experience. I noticed that the brain is best able to sort through information overload when it is able to use one of its most important functions: the ability to see patterns between information and link data.
4. **Having traveled extensively and working for multinational corporations in Europe and Asia, do you feel Americans handle their approach to technology better or worse than other countries?** Americans are very pragmatic, while Europeans and Asians both are very academic and tend to prefer philosophical depth. This somehow makes Americans more skillful in their

approach to technology. I admire Americans because they are always at the edge of thought leadership. US President **Barack Obama**, in the commencement speech at Hampton University on May 9, 2010, addressed the information issue by saying: *“You are coming of age in a 24/7 media environment that bombards us with all kinds of content and exposes us to all kinds of arguments, some of which don’t always rank that high on the truth meter. And with iPods and iPads; and Xboxes and PlayStations information becomes a distraction, a diversion, a form of entertainment, rather than a tool of empowerment, rather than the means of emancipation. ... this is a period of breathtaking change, like few others in our history. We can’t stop these changes, but we can channel them, we can shape them, we can adapt to them. And education is what can allow us to do so. It can fortify you, as it did earlier generations, to meet the tests of your own time.”* I am not aware of other presidents who have discussed this issue.

5. **We live in a world where information does not match knowledge and knowledge does not match with comprehension. What are we to do?** Information consumes attention! And attention is an intrinsically scarce resource. For this reason, the most popular use of digital interaction has come more to do with getting attention (or making your presence “known” to the addressee of the conversation) than with transmitting valuable and relevant information. This results in a constant exchange of “attention prompts” from different sources at the same time. The danger of this is that our brain is not yet trained to an appropriate response to these different simultaneous attention prompts. Most people still have an automatic response instinct based on the assumption that if someone is sending you a certain message, it is relevant enough to be worth your attention. This instinct is a fundamental building block of human social relationships. But in the digital world, we have to learn to continuously assess whether the message received is worth processing, and whether it is worth your attention.
6. **Does the Internet need a filter, a gatekeeper, or a librarian to help us separate and organize all of the information out there?** Although the absence of traditional knowledge and information gatekeepers creates the potential for a slippery fall into mass mediocrity, how can one be confident that the information received is trustworthy? The power of the Internet lies in this absence of gatekeeping. Mass collaboration may ensure that errors are immediately corrected, but even collaboration has pitfalls. It is well known that there is a general tendency of the masses to follow the opinions strongly expressed by a leading group of people, and this may allow errors to go unnoticed or mainstream opinions to be formed without substantive background. However, I believe that with some deliberate effort, we can counterbalance this dark side and harness the enormous power of the net revolution to bring about a shift to a new generation.
7. **You note five key areas that we must master in order to make sure we’re not a slave to our digital data. Tell us about the first step, which you call “clarity of purpose.”** Clarity of purpose means having a very clear purpose in mind for your actions, in particular for processing data. It means setting a goal for your actions. We have all taken goal-setting seminars and have been lectured about the importance of setting clear goals, but this is such a fundamental point, and so easily overseen, that it is always important to go back to basics. As Tony Robbins loves to say, repetition is the mother of skills. Clarity of purpose also means becoming aware of your options and hidden goals and then make a conscious choice about which among them is your priority. This is a very important point because often the issue is that you do not know what your options are. Once you have set your purpose, you need to (1) decide on an evidence procedure—how will you know if your outcome meets your values?—and (2) notice what feedback you are getting to assess whether you are going in the right direction.

8. **What role does “pattern recognition” play in this mastery process?** Pattern recognition is the ability to detect underlying regularities in data and information. So instead of focusing on single data you accept and perceive the flow of raw data in all its volume and chaotic naturalness. Essentially, it allows you to make sense of information in its overall context by making connections, identifying relationships and shifting context fluidly rather than focusing only on one piece of data. Mastering pattern recognition is essential for digital information processing – it allows you to process information faster and more creatively.
9. **Is it a mistake to try to respond to all emails immediately?** There are several reasons why it is a mistake to respond to all emails immediately. First, by answering immediately you do not take time to structure your thoughts, which means that you might need to send more emails later to clarify those thoughts to the other person. You are producing more emails than necessary, which backfires as the more emails you produce trying to get rid of emails in your inbox, the more emails you receive back. More emails do not increase productivity and effectiveness, they actually dilute it. Also, have you ever responded immediately to an email without noticing that a few unread emails later there is another email on the same subject that changes the question you have responded to? By waiting you increase the chance of having all relevant information before your respond.
10. **What are the advantages to having down time from our gadgets?** Having down time from your gadgets is an essential, fundamental element in maintaining your creativity and mental bandwidth – the ability to think, be creative and see perspective. And this to me is a fundamental element in maintaining your self-leadership.
11. **What are the biggest challenges posed to us in trying to navigate the streams of information out there?** You can view information as being similar to food. You need information for your mental development, just as you need food for your body. A good diet however includes digestible portions from several food groups. Likewise with information, you need useful, good quality portions. Especially, you need to know how to exercise discretion and discipline in deciding which information you ingest. And this is very hard for people to do!
12. **Why do you say human beings are now in need of learning to use information in a different way?** Your attention is the scarcest, most precious resource you have, and attention is the resource that is most used now in the digital age. If your “attention bandwidth” is completely used all the time your time will be as well. Going back to my buffet metaphor, an epic buffet orgy may be fun, occasionally, but it poses a serious threat to our health when it is continuous and uncontrollable. The constant flow of data to which we are constantly exposed carries a cost, both physically and mentally. If you don’t put a limit to data flow, your memory and attention span shrinks. You lose the ability to be creative, think and see perspective. You feel scattered and lose your self-leadership. I believe the solution is to evolve with the medium: we have to step our game up and become more skillful at information processing. Our traditional, linear way of processing information doesn’t work anymore.
13. **Why do you believe we need an evolutionary transformation from a traditional, linear way of processing information?** We need to reassess our understanding of what knowledge is. Knowledge is of two kinds: either we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information on it. Because of this, some have argued that the Net dilutes the most traditional kind of knowledge: knowing a subject ourselves. It therefore makes our brains shallow, diminishing our intelligence and killing our inner memory. However, I think this is a limited perspective and we should evolve in our understanding of what brain power and memory are. The magic of the information age is indeed that it allows us to know less, in terms of depth of what we know. It

functions like an outsourced brain and the positive side of this is that we are free to expand our awareness of subjects we did not have space, or availability, to explore before. Our memory now has a different function: it is an index, it remembers the existence of a subject and what the best leads to find information on that subject are. You don't need to memorize the content of a book, you just need to be aware of the existence of a book. Your outsourced memory – the Net - allows you to be aware of the existence of information you would never have come across before when you were limited to what your inner memory could hold. It allows you to increase the quantity of information that you can process because you do not always have to worry about memorizing every single detail of it, and for this same reason it allows you to use more brain power in linking concepts and applying them rather than remembering them. It therefore empowers you to think and process information faster because your brain has the space to hold links to so much different information, and in doing so it expands your subjective time. Back in the analogue era, the difference between a deep brain and a shallow brain was the availability of information and the choice of whether or not to take in that information came second. Now that everything is available, the power is back to you: it is up to you to take responsibility of what content goes into your mind and how you use your outsourced memory.

14. **What will be the legacy of The Information Age?** A more empowered, more connected, wiser world if we can learn to step our game up and evolve with the medium! I am positive about it.
15. **How can one apply *The Principle of Relevance* to their work, when it comes to having effective team play?** Each team member has a sub-goal in his or her role that feeds into the overall team goal and he will need to deal with some information elements. Because there is always some overlap between each member's sub-goal and information flow, team coordination has a lot to do with knowing where these overlap. For a team to function well, team members must share a common understanding of the information that needs to be shared. A team does not work well when information that needs to be shared is not shared or at the opposite end of the spectrum when all information is indiscriminately shared (a practical example that we face every day: a team project where every email is sent to everyone in cc). So you can apply *The Principle of Relevance* to assess which information needs to be shared.
16. **How is it applied to critical situation management?** When a sudden problem or crisis arises, most people seem to become completely unable to deal with it. This often happens because they have not clearly set priorities beforehand, in times of calmness. Once you have set a priority for your critical situation (what are you going to do first?), you have to do gather data and do scenario planning. Applying the principle of relevance will help you do scenario planning and reach a decision on how to act.
17. **Is the act of processing information more important than the merits of the information?** This is exactly the question that most executives should stop and ask themselves before answering an email on their Blackberry on a Saturday night at midnight, at the dinner table or before having any clue as to what that answer should be. In the last few years, processing information, in the form of churning out emails, has become more important than the actual content of those emails.
18. **Please share the three of your best time management techniques.** One: Schedule your day so that it has a defined time slot for emergencies or "urgent" last minute things. If nothing comes up... well, that's perfect! You can use that time for anything you want. Two: Schedule your own personal time in your calendar. If there is something you want to do - schedule it as if it were a meeting. This will ensure that you take it seriously. Three: this is the most effective time management technique I have used to get just about anything done during a day. Be aware of

your attention span and schedule your activities around it. Make two to do lists: one list of things that require your best attention (finish a project, write an article, study something (and one list of things that you can do more easily (check your email, flick through your Facebook page etc). Use your attention span flow moments to your maximum advantage by doing the more focused activities for the whole time your attention span lasts, and then when you are distracted move on to the list of minor activities. You can repeat this cycle throughout the day.

19. **What are your three rules for processing email?** They are very simple: RULE 1: Eliminate your “linear efficiency” (getting more things done by doing everything in order) instinct. RULE 2: Make sure you have collated and understood all the relevant information before responding. RULE 3: Wait at least 15 minutes before responding to any email.

20. **What are the two things most of us do wrong when it comes to information management?** One is what I call the automatic response instinct. Most people still have an automatic response instinct based on the assumption that if someone is sending them a certain message, it is relevant enough to be worth their attention. Second is what I call the linear efficiency distortion. When you are overloaded with inputs, like emails, the predominant, natural, need that arises is that of putting an end to the data overload as quickly as possible. There are generally two immediate opposite reactions that might kick in: the fight response and the flight response. The flight response means you will do nothing at all. The fight response means you will try to be efficient by “getting rid” of things one by one as quickly as possible.

Mastering The Principle of Relevance

“When the brain is overloaded with data, it tends to cut down on data-gathering, jumping to rapid conclusions, and responding to data immediately as they come, in an unconscious attempt to put an end to the data overload,” says Stefania Lucchetti, author of *The Principles of Relevance*.

The “principle of relevance” consists of expanding the amount of information you are able to let in, while at the same time being able to invest the right amount of energy in the right place at the right time, eliminating the unnecessary, responding only to what is relevant, and seeing the big picture with a strong awareness of priorities.

To master the principle of relevance, you have to work with the following elements:

1. **Clarity of Purpose:** Set a clear purpose to your actions. Become aware of your options and hidden goals and then make a conscious choice about which among them is your priority. Once you have set your purpose, you need to (1) Decide on an evidence procedure. How will you know if your outcome meets your values? and (2) Notice what feedback you are getting and assess whether you are going in the right direction.
2. **Situational Awareness:** Situational awareness is the ability to create, acknowledge, and understand a comprehensive and coherent situational representation of an existing situation, which is not static, but rather, continuously updated in accordance with the results of recurrent situation assessments. It is the ability to maintain a constant, clear mental picture of relevant information and its interactions within a complex, dynamic environment. Situational awareness has three stages: perception, comprehension, and projection.
3. **Pattern Recognition:** Pattern recognition involves becoming skilled at seeing the raw data in all their volume and chaotic naturalness, and infer from those data the patterns that lie underneath. The ability to see and perceive patterns takes time and effort to be developed. However, once refined, it allows fast awareness and decisions can be based on an instant ability to recognize assonance or dissonance of patterns.
4. **Attention:** Attention is the process of selection of certain bits of information from the potential millions of bits available. The shape and content of your life depends on how you use your attention. Entirely different realities emerge, depending on how it is invested. Paying attention involves energy and mindfulness, and it is the mind’s most powerful tool.
5. **Self-Knowledge And Self-Mastery:** The value of refined situational awareness, pattern recognition skills, and attention is magnified if they are linked to knowledge of the way one reacts to that situation. Self-knowledge allows the identification of incongruities in one’s values, thoughts, and feelings. By knowing ourselves, you learn to work within your strengths, limitations, and incongruities, thus building internal power in your attention, focus, and decision-making.

The Six-Step Plan To Owning Your Email's In-Box

Do you feel overwhelmed by the growing demands of your in-box? You are not alone in feeling this way. The good news is there is something you can do about it short of throwing away your cell phone and iPad.

“At any given time, to be able to reach an objective effectively, you need to be able to recognize what is relevant for you in relation to that objective and what is not, and then take deliberate action by responding to that which is relevant only,” says Stefania Lucchetti, the author of *The Principle of Relevance*.

You need to rewire your brain to abandon its old mechanisms and develop a new, deliberate, response discipline.”

On the other hand, you want to acquire all the important information you need and avoid falling into the trap of responding based on limited knowledge. If you need, or want, that information, you cannot avoid reading your emails. The key point however is that reading an email does not automatically equate with having to respond to it immediately.

First Step: Quickly Read Everything.

You need to know what information you are working with before responding, otherwise you will be responding to an email only to find out that five emails later someone else has changed the question or the information based on what you have answered. Read everything first. This will also ensure that you abide by the 15 minutes rule.

Second Step: Eliminate Unnecessary Emails.

- Delete emails you do not need.
- Flag emails that you need to process and respond to later.
- File emails that you need to keep for your records but do not require your attention at the moment.

Third Step: Aggregate Your Information.

Aggregate in one single place (a folder, a draft email, a word file) all the content of several emails received from different people or at different times that relates to the same project or subject. Read those emails and process the information they contain. Understand it. Decide how to respond.

Fourth Step: Make A Decision.

Flag the emails you will respond to. This may also mean making a decision to answer one email only with all the relevant people in cc, summarizing all the questions you are answering to.

Fifth Step: Clear The Ground.

Move to other folders (file them, delete them) the other emails relevant to the subject matter (but that you have decided not to respond to).

Sixth Step: Answer!

Answer only those emails you have flagged.

Selected Excerpts

The Principle of Relevance

What Shall We Pay Attention To?

“We live in a world where information is so readily available that wealth and time no longer constitute a barrier to knowledge and learning to anyone possessing a computer and an Internet connection. Information creates stimuli, knowledge, and choices. And yet, the paradoxical consequence of data overload and an abundance of equally attractive choices is uncertainty of purpose. This uncertainty undermines resolution and focus, ultimately devaluing the very freedom that an abundance of choices unlocks. This factor has introduced a new level of complexity that reflects not only on our social structure, but also on our cognitive processes and on our ability to find meaning and purpose in the activities we pursue. As the complexity of culture evolves and choices increase, it becomes increasingly difficult to achieve a degree of resolve as to what we should pay attention to and in which direction we should dedicate our energy and efforts. Our souls are in a state of confusion because of our ability to find meaning and purpose in a range of seemingly unlimited opportunities. As our choices increase, the questions that seem to press more and more on each one of us are “What should I pay attention to? What should I get involved with?”

Navigating Through The Information Age

“We must cultivate our ability to work through the tangled bundle of conflicting inputs being addressed to us and choose to respond only to the ones that will give purpose to our actions. We must find a way to master our ability to surf through unlimited data and options and become skillful at making fast choices as to what is worth our time and our energy, because time and energy spent on something makes us who we ultimately become, our lives. How do you train yourself to navigate through the information age, being able to take advantage of data, tools, and resources without being overwhelmed and swallowed by the seemingly unsustainable demand of data overflow? How do you become effective, rather than being simply efficient? How do you keep our competitive advantage when information is so freely available? How can you understand which information and tools are relevant to your goals and which are not? How do you navigate through increasingly complex interactions?”

Constant Information Flow

“Ideas are being created, shared, and updated continuously. The Web is a huge collective conversation going on at the same time, so much so that information no longer needs to be produced and searched for; rather, it seems to generate itself and finds us – even haunts us – in the form of e-newsletters, content updates, and messages. As a consequence, everything becomes miscellaneous, and the responsibility to harness, critique, organize, and choose what information to pay attention to is left to the user. Given the abundance of information and information sources available, and in the absence of the gatekeepers on whom we used to rely, information has greater volatility. Each user is left to his or her own when deciding how to use a certain piece of information and the level of importance to assign it. It is like being seated at a table around which everyone is talking at once: to whom do you listen, and whom do you trust?”

The Lack Of Gatekeepers

“The absence of traditional knowledge and information gatekeepers (those with the requisite knowledge to be knowledge creators and sharers) creates the potential for a slippery fall into mass mediocrity. How can one be confident that the information received is trustworthy? Mass collaboration may ensure that errors are immediately corrected, but even collaboration has pitfalls.”

Evolutionary Information Processions

“Human beings now need to learn to use information in a different way and to evolve in their cognitive abilities by moving away from linear processing. The new way means learning to scan and process different items of information at the same time, making sense of them all and choosing a response based on relevance. For every individual, the difference between success and failure will be shaped by his or her ability to navigate through this vast, overwhelming amount of information and stimuli available and then select, access, and use the information that is most relevant in the moment in reaching the individual’s objective.”

The Power Of Relevance

“To enhance one’s ability to make use of the wealth of information available, one must develop the capability to see overall patterns, integrate knowledge from different sources, understand intuitively the knowledge from different sources, understand intuitively the knowledge that is essential for a given task, differentiate between trustworthy knowledge and developing knowledge, and synthesize all of this into a body of information that will enable one to make decisions and reach an objective not only efficiently, but effectively. This represents an evolutionary transformation from a traditional, linear way of processing information. The key to this transformation lies in developing a new mind-set and new tools that will enable one to harness the incredible power of information, without being overwhelmed by it, in other words, understanding and applying that special set of skills that I have come to identify as the power of relevance.”

Feeling Obligated No More

“In personal interactions, you respond to inputs sent out by the other person because you feel that if the other person is sending you a message, it is relevant enough to be worth processing. This automatic response instinct is essential in interactions that involve a one-on-one conversation, but it does not apply in the world of multileveled digital interactions, where a number of different messages are sent through to us at the same time by different people. The digital world requires an assessment as to whether the message is worth processing. A communication itself will implicitly make manifest *the intent to communicate*: this does not mean that the actual content of the communication is relevant per se for the mere fact of being communicated.”

Feeling Like Everyone Is Talking At Once

“The information age creates a situation similar to being in a room where one hundred people are talking to you at once. Your immediate instinct is to try to respond to each one in turn, to treat each conversation in a one-on-one manner, or alternatively, to shut everyone out and not respond to anything. To adapt your response and communication instincts to the information age, you need to learn how to filter out quickly those different inputs, to focus in on the one face addressing you with the information you need or to which you want to dedicate attention – that which is relevant for you.”

Testimonials

“If you often find yourself in information overload, this principle, when mastered can change your life. As a logical, linear thinker, I had to laugh at how the author “pegged” my actions and the urgency of my distractions. Stefanie provides tools to assist all of us in breaking the habits that keep us from being truly effective.” --**Judy Irving, Executive Coach, Moving On, USA**

“This book is most of all an experience for those who recognize how hard is the job of living in a world where information does not match with knowledge and knowledge does not match with comprehension. Her way - the principle of relevance – is the key to convert information from a chaotic and shapeless mass into an instrument to empower ourselves, our capabilities and our ambitions, whatever they are, professional or private.” --**Maria Cristina Ferradini, Director, Legal Department, Vodafone Italy**

“The book lives up to its name. To discover that it also excelled at offering practical, best practice advice was an absolute blessing. Navigating the streams of information that now cascade towards us is not realistic. With the aid of the ideas and solutions laid out in easy to follow steps, the readers will hone their “new media” instincts. A fascinating and educational book.” --**Nick West, Head of Conferences and Events, Financial Times, Asia Pacific**

“Thanks very much for taking the time to speak to us the other day. It was a very inspiring talk and I think the key takeaways were really that it is up to us to make time for ourselves and do the things that inspire/motivate us and to reduce the amount of information that we are exposed to.” --**Imogene Sara Taylor, Vice President, Citibank**

“Targeted, interactive, informative, hit the mark and was incredibly useful to be given a method.” --**Nathalie Bouri, Managing Director, BNY Mellon**

“Thank you for your brilliant talk on *The Principle of Relevance*. I have been most impressed with the depth of your talk and your professionalism. You are such a tremendous force for positivity and change in a world served by turbulence, confusion, chaos, and abstruseness.” --**James Voon, Executive Coach, Chair of the Asia Pacific Alliance of Coaches**

“Through learning what she calls “the principle of relevance”, we can train ourselves to expand our brain’s capability to acquire and process multilayered information, and respond only to what is relevant... The author provides tools to help readers achieve the principle of relevance, from outcome checklists (on how to set a well-defined goal) and charts (to locate which piece of information is relevant), to pertinent questions and mind maps (in order to make sense of overwhelming information inflows)” --**The South China Morning Post, 8 May 2010**

“As a former corporate director now in the consultation business, I have been perplexed about the issue of why our managers and employees are becoming more and activities driven rather than results based. This book went to the very heart of my problem.” --**Reader Reviews at Amazon.com**