

the crystal

SEPTEMBER 2019

CADETS TO RICHES
FEATURING Leo James Tablo

Ne+U
REINVENTED

MARITIME
UPDATES

CRYSTAL
CORNER
#FroilanVallanoStory

**“What you THINK,
you BECOME”**

A famous statement made
by Buddha and a powerful one.

**MENTAL
FITNESS**

ISSUE 08



We have grown up to believe that work is what you do and where you go to “just” earn a living. But what if I tell you that it’s a lie? What if I tell you that work is a place where you can be Healthier in Mind, Body and Spirit? What if work is a place where you go to have fun, enjoy life and be happy? What if work is where you learn to be kinder, be more patient, be a better version of you? What if work gives you purpose in life?

What if work can be healing? Mentally healing.

In this issue of our The Crystal Newsletter, you will find out how we are deliberate and intentional in creating a workplace where Mental Fitness is a prime objective in keeping our People Safe, Healthy and Fulfilled.

From the People who are Fun-Loving and who Love what we do, enjoy reading!

Believe.
Love in me,

Emily
Crystal, Chief Impactor

MARINA UPDATES



GOOD NEWS

Training Standards for Basic IGF Code
will be available on:



   DOTrMARINAPH  <http://marina.gov.ph>




GOOD NEWS

Practical assessment for Electro-Technical
Officer (ETO) will start on:



Theoretical examination for ETO will
be conducted starting:



   DOTrMARINAPH  <http://marina.gov.ph>

<https://stcw.marina.gov.ph/>

MARINA UPDATES

ALL MARITIME TRAINING INSTITUTIONS (MTIs) AND ASSESSMENT CENTERS (ACs)

This serves as a FINAL NOTICE to all MTIs and ACs regarding the compliance with the directives contained in STCW Advisory No. 2019-03 on the implementation of the MISMO System.

In view of this, the following are reiterated:

- a. Submission of official e-mail address to the Accreditation Division (AD) or Examination and Assessment Division (EAD) as applicable, for registration and activation of MISMO accounts;**
- b. Signing of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with MARINA containing the obligations of both Parties with regard to the operations related to the MISMO System;**
- c. Submission of Enrollment Reports, Training Completion and Records of Assessment, Daily Records of Assessment and other training/assessment related reports to the respective MISMO account.**

Effective 01 September 2019, only training/assessment related certificates and documents from MTIs and ACs with MISMO accounts AND Memorandum of Agreement with MARINA shall be accepted and recognized for the issuance of corresponding STCW Certificates.

MARINA UPDATES

POLICIES, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MARINE TRANSPORTATION AND BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MARINE ENGINEERING PROGRAMS


In accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994"; RA No. 10635 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) which established the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) as the Single Maritime Administration of the Republic of the Philippines; the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW Convention, 1978, as amended); Executive Order (EO) No. 63 and its IRR which further strengthened the authority of MARINA as Single Maritime Administration and, by virtue of CHED Commission en bane (CEB) Resolution No. 271-2019 dated April 30, 2019, the following policies, standards and guidelines (PSG) for the Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT) and Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering (B-SMarE) programs are hereby adopted and promulgated.

ARTICLE I INTRODUCTION

Section 1. Rationale and Background

This PSG was developed in pursuit of the educational reforms that include the enhanced basic education curriculum through K to 12, the New General Education Curriculum, and the ongoing quality assurance system for the development, recognition and award of qualification to the BSMT and

MARINA UPDATES



BSMarE graduates based on the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) Level 6 and International Standards. Furthermore, this revised PSG serves the purpose of further ensuring the compliance of BSMT and BSMarE programs with the pertinent requirements of the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended, making them more responsive to the needs of the industry and thereby maintaining the global competitiveness of BSMT and BSMarE graduates and in particular, the Filipino seafarers serving as officers in charge of a watch for international shipping.

In addition, based on the Guidelines for the Implementation of CMO No. 46, s. 2012, this PSG implements the shift to learning competency-based standards/outcomes-based education. It adopts the competencies expected of BSMT and BSMarE graduates as provided under the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended, regardless of the type of higher education institution (HEI) they graduated from.

MARINA UPDATES

ALL SEAFARERS, MARITIME TRAINING INSTITUTIONS (MTIs), MARITIME HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Notice is hereby given that while the MARINA is currently reviewing STCW Circular 2018-05, the implementation of the six (6) month rule under Sections 7 and 9 of the said Circular is hereby suspended until the full implementation of the one (1) evaluation system of the MARINA Integrated Seafarers Management Online (MISMO) System.

All trainings completed within the last five (5) years will be accepted for processing of Certificates of Proficiency (COP). However, the COP to be issued shall have a validity of five (5) years from the date of the completion of the corresponding training.

This Advisory shall take effect immediately.

For information and guidance.

MARINA UPDATES

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be informed that the processing and releasing of COC/COE, COP including the MARINA ID have been transferred from Parkview Plaza (Masa-gana Telamart) Taft Avenue cor. Kalaw St. Ermita Manila to the MARINA Extension Office located at 5th Floor SM City Manila from 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Further, the expedite processing and releasing of COC/COE, COP filed by Manning Agencies through their MARINA Accredited Liaison Officers will be at the 3rd Floor MARINA Main Office, Port Area Manila.


NEPLUS ULTRA TRAINING CENTER

Deliver Happyness through WOW Edutainment



By: Teacher Jen Queto

NePlus Ultra Training Center was born at the Shipping Center Building in Intramuros, Manila in 2011 to cater to the training needs of our Crystal seafarers. Because of Crystal's love for learning coupled with its fervent mission to deliver HAPPYness through WOW service, NePlus Ultra Training Center or simply, Ne+U was reborn in 2018. Ne Plus Ultra (Ne+U) challenges the game of the maritime training industry pushing the bar higher on the standard of training excellence. It has become the company's Core Purpose to



NE PLUS ULTRA TRAINING CENTER CORP.
delivering HAPPYNESS through WOW EDUTAINMENT

The word "Ne" represents Neurons – the wirings of the brain which core function is to process and communicate information to its other parts. "Plus" is equalled to addition, enhance, change and new. "Ultra" means the maximum or highest level that something could attain. Hence Ne+U means, Transformation through the rewiring of new neurons of maximum quality.

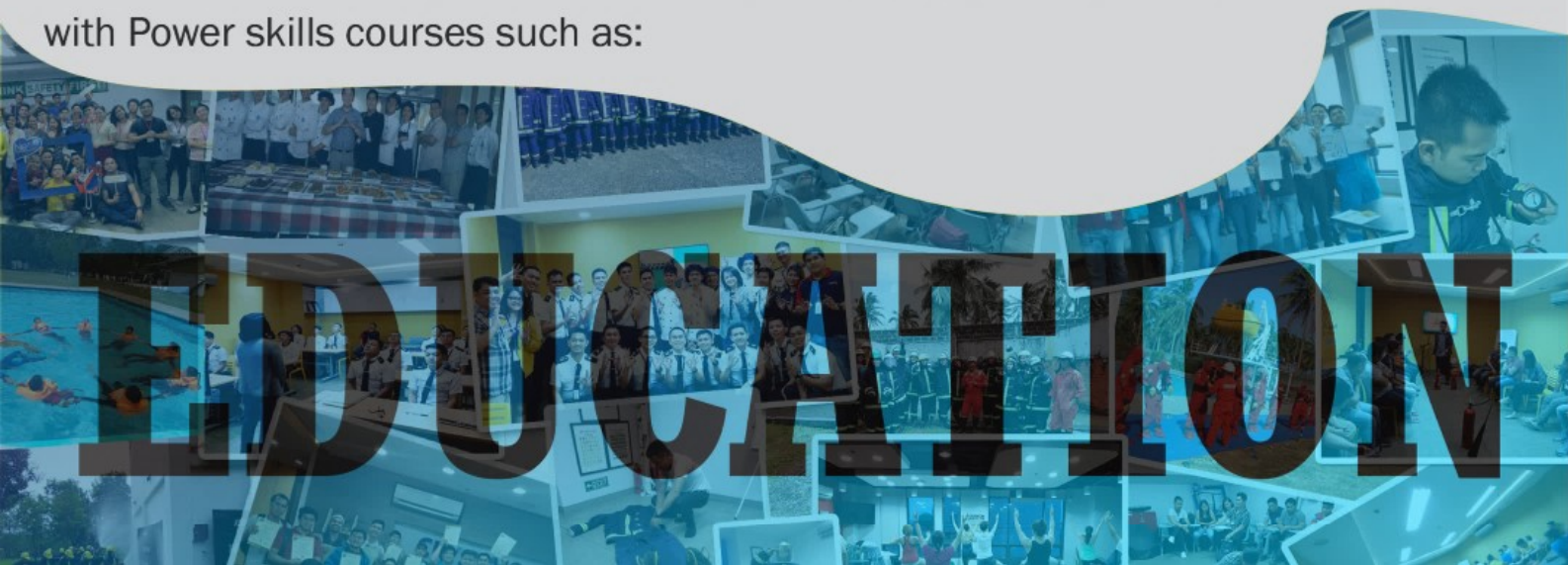
Deliver Happyness and Bridge Educational Gap and Educational Inequality through Self-transformational WoW Edutainment, piercing within the Mind, Body, Heart and Spirit.

NE PLUS ULTRA (NE+U) TRAINING CENTER CORPORATION is a venue designed to provide a holistic approach to learning and development for our Filipino seafarers. We focus our services not just on enhancing the aptitude requirement of the tasks onboard of our seafarers, but more especially on unlocking their power skills; skills that form part of their well-being with the aim of achieving their fullest potential as a Filipino mariner. The new Ne+U focuses on education + entertainment = Edutainment. We infuse our trainings with interaction and hands-on participation, group dynamics, individual activities, games, and music and movement to make sure our trainings are fun, entertaining and engaging.

Our love for learning and concern for our seafarers' welfare inspired us to come up with Power skills courses such as:

- Money Matters 1.0 and 2.0 that help and encourage them to save, invest, and grow their assets
- Connection 1.0 and 2.0 that teach them about the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication among their families, co-workers, principals, clients, etc.
- Leadership and Teamwork that shows the importance an officer, manager and team leaders' roles play in building a cohesive team within an organization.
- Eat, Move, Sleep that teaches how eating healthy, moving regularly and sleeping soundly improves our body, mind, and spirit
- Ready Set Goal that teaches about goal-setting
- Stressed ka ba? that focuses on Wellness and Mindfulness

The aim of Ne+U is to continually #Reinvent our approach towards learning through innovative concepts and creating a culture of having a free-spirit and happy learning experience with us.





Ma. Camela Mislang Dingson or “Mela” as she is fondly called, is a 23-year old braveheart from Navotas City. She is the second of the fourth children of a couple doing hard labor to provide for the needs of the family. Her father works as a garbage collector while her mother is a Barangay Health Worker in San Roque Navotas City. Dreaming of becoming a certified Management Accountant, Mela persevered to finish her Bachelor’s degree in Management Accounting at the City of Malabon University (CMU) by working as a Service crew member in a fast food chain, a Computer attendant and a Sales Utility clerk at a local toy shop. More than a lady with big dreams,

she is a loving daughter and a sweet sister to her siblings. She augments the family income by helping her siblings with their daily school allowance. She aims to be a Senior Bookkeeper someday and have a small business for her family in the near future so that her father could retire from work. Fresh from her College graduation, Mela was welcomed by Crystal as part of its manpower force in April of 2019 as Accounts Associate under the strong arm of the ‘Wealthbuilders’ unit. She is tagged as Crystal’s “Accountimistic”. Mela is big proof that one can rise out of his or her social condition with sheer determination and hard work.

MENTAL FITNESS

BY: Checket C. Basada

Life at sea is known for its harsh conditions – both physically (where crew must brave storms and malfunctioning equipment) and mentally (where they must battle isolation and other issues that could affect mental health). The World Health Organization (WHO) points out that depression is the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide, and seems to be on the rise. Its figures show that the number of people living with depression increased by over 18% between 2005 and 2015 and that more than 300 million people currently live with depression globally. It is indisputable that some of these people will opt for seafaring as a career path, making this an extremely important issue for us as an industry (Blake, 2017).

Did you know that:

- 4% of the global population suffer from depression
- more than 25% of seafarers suffer from depression
- only 21% had spoken to a colleague aboard ship



In general, it is commonly accepted that most suicides and suicide attempts occur among individuals who suffer from undiagnosed and untreated depression, with the World Health Organization (WHO) estimating that more than 300 million people are affected by depression worldwide.

As far as the seafaring industry is concerned, Sailors' Society, which runs a Wellness at Sea programme and a global Crisis Response Network, conducted a survey into seafarers' mental health with Yale University.

Addressing SEAFARER MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

DOs & DON'Ts FOR SHIPPING OPERATORS

Mental health concerns all crew



DO NOT focus only on seafarers suffering mental health problems



Focus on improving mental health of all onboard

Treat Seafarers with respect



DO NOT focus solely on mental illnesses



Focus on eliminating harassment & bullying as well

Invest in improving mental health



DO NOT just have a policy in place



Actively show commitment and encourage social & team-building events

Eliminate misconceptions regarding mental health



DO NOT perceive people with poor mental health as being objects of ridicule or weak minded



Overcome any culture of silence or stigma over mental health

Provide free access to a wide range of external sources



DO NOT consider that a trained colleague on board is enough



Consult certified doctors, seafarer welfare organizations, port chaplains and maritime trade unions

SAFETY4SEA



The results highlighted that more than a quarter (26) per cent of seafarers show signs of depression. Seafarers said that isolation from their families and length of their contracts can have a big impact on their mental health.

Sandra said, "The facts are stark, more than a quarter of seafarers suffer from depression and many won't ask for help. It is up to ship owners and the maritime industry to put seafarers first. "Seafarers carry more than 90 per cent of global trade; we owe it to them to look after their mental health as they carry out this vital and incredibly difficult job."

A previous study from the International Maritime Health journal showed that 5.9 per cent of deaths at sea are attributable to suicide – and this increases dramatically if suspicious cases of probable suicides – seafarers who went missing at sea – are taken into account. Less than one per cent of deaths in the United Kingdom in 2017 were recorded as suicide.

Sandra added, "One suicide is one too many. The fact that six times as many deaths at sea are attributable to suicide highlights how urgent an issue mental health at sea is. (Sailors' Society, 2019).

Douglas Stevenson (2009) states "Neither traditional maritime law or the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, specifically addresses mental health care, but court decisions in the past fifty years make it very clear that a seafarers' right to free medical care includes a right to free mental health care. A greater obstacle to seafarers seeking mental health care is the stigma of receiving the care. Seafarers may fear being labeled as a person with a mental illness and all of its associated stereotype. Seeking mental care can also have consequences for a seafarers' social acceptance and self-esteem."

Over 25 percent of the world's seafarers show signs of depression, according to the International Maritime Charity Sailor's Society. Stress, harassment, bullying, fatigue, loneliness, and isolation from family can easily impact their mental health, which makes seafaring the second-most at risk profession worldwide when it comes to suicide (The Philippine Star, 2018).

Captain Yves Vandeborn, director of loss prevention at The Standard Club, says improving the mental health of seafarers is critical but cannot be done in isolation. It needs to be part of a holistic approach to ensuring their overall wellbeing, which includes a diverse range of physical, emotional and organizational factors (Vandeborn, 2018). The Maritime Executive have rightly put a spotlight on the mental health of seafarers. Industry statistics seem to confirm that mental illness is a growing concern at sea, and this is now being reflected in P&I club claims data.

At The Standard Club, for example, they have seen an increase in mental-health-related claims since 2015 – although these still account for less than 1.5 percent of all illness claims the club sees.

The evidence that suicide among seafarers is a serious problem is incontrovertible. Suicides among seafarers have been widely reported as shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Several cite seafarers that disappear without a trace and which are thought to be suicides. Roberts & Marlow (2005) reported deaths of disappearing seafarers as follows: "178 seafarers in this study were due to disappearances at sea or were found drowned. From examining official inquiry files, suicide was the most plausible cause in about half of these 178 cases." Disappearing seafarers are also discussed in Low (2006).

Table 1

Percentage of all deaths by suicide

Reference		Nationality	Total Deaths	Suicides	% Suicide
Roberts & Williams	2007	UK	369	16	4.3 ³
Szymanska et al.	2006	Polish	324	33	10.2
Roberts & Marlow	2006	UK	60	6	10.0
Roberts	2006	UK	65	2	3.1
Roberts & Marlow	2005	UK	835	55	6.6 ⁴
Roberts	2003	FOC ⁵	624	36	5.8
Li & Zhang	2002	UK	5,839	348	5.6
Cooper	2000	Various	926	91	9.8
Nielsen	1999	Various	123	4	3.3
Hansen	1996	Danish	94	12	12.8
Jaremin et al.	1996	Polish	109	4	3.7
Larsson & Lindquist	1992	Swedish	223	18	8.1

³ 22 seafarers disappeared at sea

⁴ 178 seafarers disappeared at sea

⁵ Flag of Convenience

Table 2

Percentage of non-traumatic deaths by suicide

Reference		Nationality	Deaths	Suicides	% Suicide
Roberts & Williams	2007	UK	166	16	9.6
Roberts & Marlow	2006	UK	41	6	14.6
Roberts	2006	UK	31	2	6.5
Roberts	2003	FOC ⁵	68	7	10.3
Li & Zhang	2002	UK	2,861	348	12.2
Cooper	2000	Various	521	91	17.5
Nielsen	1999	Various	42	4	9.5
Hansen	1996	Danish	53	12	22.6
Jaremin et al.	1996	Polish	44	4	9.1
Larsson & Lindquist	1992	Swedish	117	18	15.4

⁵ Flag of Convenience.

Suicide by seafarers is much higher than suicides in general populations. In Australia for example, suicides were two per-cent of the country's total deaths in 1998 (Wesley Mission 2000) and 1.5% of all deaths in 2008 (ABS 2008).

A recent crew welfare roundtable held by Safety at Sea and UK P&I, revealed that suicide rates among seafarers appear to be on the increase. The UK P&I insurance claim data suggested that 2016 accounted for a quarter of the number of suicide-related cases it has dealt with in the last decade. While the data is not definitive evidence it is an indicator of a problem getting worse.

Other studies show similarly worrying data. A recently published study by the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) found there has been an increase in psychiatric disorders amongst seafarers over the last five years. In 2011, responses to the SIRC questionnaire completed by 1026 seafarers indicated that 28% of respondents had some form of 'psychiatric disorder'. In 2016, the questionnaire, completed by 1513 seafarers, revealed respondents suffering from a 'psychiatric disorder' had risen "substantially" to 37%.

According to Ray Barker, head of operations at the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), Over the last four years, ISWAN has noticed an increase in the number of seafarers calling our helpline suffering from a variety of mental health issues. There is also a consensus that the number of seafarer suicides has increased. Whatever the exact numbers are, a suicidal seafarer is not good for anyone on board a ship – or anywhere near it. Apart from the suffering of the individual involved, there are potentially huge risks that their unexpected actions, reactions or even inaction could have on other people, property and the environment.

As Barker warns, this trend should be of grave concern to all those in the maritime industry. Tackling this problem and reversing this trend should be at the top of the agenda for those with the power to affect change in the lives of seafarers.

Creating an open discourse about seafarer health is needed, just as it is onshore, so that awareness can improve and better mental health provisions and work policies to support and protect crew can be put in place. These could range from having designated officers with training in mental health to improvements in recreation and leisure facilities on board. SIRC's Helen Sampson suggested that greater access to shore leave and more attention to "the elimination of environmental and work-related impediments to sleep" would all contribute to better seafarer mental health.

Cadets to Riches

Leo James Tablo

Mr. Leo James Tablo is a native of Matanao, Davao del Sur. He graduated from DMMA College of Southern Philippines in the year 2013.

Before he became part of the Crystal crew, he was a cadet in an international vessel trading worldwide. Luckily after one year, he passed the OIC-NW licensure exam. He heard about Crystal Shipping from his friend who introduced him to the company. He applied as an ordinary seaman and got hired by Mr. Allyson Azarcon, Crystal Lead Crewing.

While waiting for his vessel assignment, he was offered a temporary office job. It was a short but sweet stay at Crystal but he remembers his experience with Sir Ally and the rest of the staff with great fondness.

Being with Crystal has been one of Leo's greatest blessings. The many opportunities to enhance his knowledge, skills and abilities to become a lot better than who he was then has been immense.

Following the 2 months of sailing with Crystal as its apprentice, Leo learned the values of diligence and fierce determination to succeed. Now, he is a proud Second mate Officer.

How WOWderful is it for Crystal to witness the success of Leo! He said and we quote:

"To all the aspiring cadets of Crystal: Be patient and humble. Believe in yourself and catch your dreams. I know it's hard today and harder tomorrow, but it will all be worth it someday. Just keep the faith.



cto: Leo James

Change your **LIFESTYLE** fight **DEPRESSION**

written by: Kiel Beltran

The massive effect of homesickness among Filipino seafarers has been a rattling battle especially for new mariners. This is particularly true to those onboard the ships sailing on foreign ports, worse to ships that are not equipped with communication facilities as internet. The struggle is stronger and the agonies remain uncertain not until they get access to talk and keep in touch with loved ones.

But how likely that mere close and constant communication with significant others could bridge the persistent



issue on homesickness and depression? Furthermore, how can we avoid mental breakdown onboard if serious loneliness gets in the way?

www.healthline.com suggests it's important to remember that depression is a very common and highly treatable case. There are a number of easy interventions to combat depression onboard the ships and in some cases, lifestyle changes alone can relieve anxiety among seafarers.

Here are some tips in changing your lifestyle to fight depression onboard the ships:

Healthy Eating. Food is an important part of an ideal lifestyle especially if you are a seafarer where healthy options are limited and difficult to access with. Like any other vehicle, putting the right fuel is the key to get the





performance at work. In the same manner, there are food suggestions that are proven to help in managing emotions and could improve mood like dark chocolates and cereals which helps to reduce stress and anxiety. While oyster that is essential for energy production and brain health has zinc levels which have been found deficient on depression sufferers.

Proper Exercise. According to studies, exercising 30 minutes a day three to five days a week can help alleviate depression without the use of medication as it can reduce stress, improve mood, boost esteem and provide restful sleep. Stretching, jogging, weight lifting, and other physical activities are some examples that you can consider during your spare time onboard the vessel.

Effective Meditation. Ancient culture uses meditation to achieve spiritual enlightenment but modern practices now utilize this technique for stress relief and relaxation. Meditation can help relieve anxiety that sometimes accompanies depression. There are available mobile apps or online references on how to maximize the benefits of meditation. Find a place in the ship where you can have a quiet and peaceful time with your mind.

Good Sleep. Fatigue from lack of sleep can add to the symptoms that causes depression. Proper and enough sleep is important part of a depression treatment plan. Develop a calming bedtime routine and a consistent sleeping schedule can help a mariner wind down to improve the amount and quality of sleep.

Healthy Relationships. According to some seafarers, building rapport with their fellow shipmates is a robust way to help themselves escape from homesickness.

Depression can be alienating and the right network of friends and colleagues at work can help you overcome your issues. Nowadays, many Filipino seafarers have access to different communication lines through the use of internet to see and talk to their loved ones. You can also spend time with positive and supportive people onboard to help you from overthinking. Have a conversation with your fellow Filipino seafarer because just like what every OFW say, *"Kabayan is always a Kabayan"*



Stress management. Stress builds upon itself so it's essential to combat stress with calming and soothing activities particularly to Filipino seafarers who have limited access to stress-busting options. Stress management is different for everyone and you are the best person to decide which healthy activities can help you. Some ideas to consider are:

- Watching your favorite movie
- Reading a good book
- Practicing a hobby
- Listening to music
- Writing a journal

Depression is basically a state of mind and can be treated with a simple change of perspective alongside with lifestyle overhaul. It is cliché to say that life is too short to be depressed but you'll never know, considering and looking at this issue a little deeper could perhaps save you or your fellow seafarers onboard from loneliness and depression.



WHAT you THINK, you BECOME

This is a famous statement
MADE BY BUDDHA
And a very powerful one.

I will share with you a daily mantra that I've been using for quite some time now. The moment I wake up, I will sit still on my bed, with eyes closed, I will utter affirmation to myself such as,

“Today, I will be great”
“Today, I will be happy”
“Today, I will be good-looking
[no reaction required :)]”
... and so on and so forth

Then I'll be ready to face the day ahead, energized and motivated. The conditioning that I am doing somehow gives me that sense of direction to my day and seems to

be doing something in my brain and soul. The same concept of believe-achieve has been a constant feature on different media platforms highlighting mental illness, self-help references, etc.

Typically, with Filipino culture entertainment, one of the most highlighted and trending topics are those showcasing rags-to-riches stories, achieving dreams despite challenges, and stories of unimaginable success because of will power and positive thinking.

This “psychological trick” has been proven effective according to some research and studies in the past. Ever heard of the two basic mindsets? The fixed mindset vs growth mindset?

I Can't ~~Do~~ It

Carol Dweck
- **Stanford psychologist**

A “**fixed mindset**” assumes that our character, intelligence, and creative ability are static givens which we can't change in any meaningful way, and success is the affirmation of that inherent intelligence, an assessment of how those givens measure up against an equally fixed standard; striving for success and avoiding failure at all costs become a way of maintaining the sense of being smart or skilled.

A “**growth mindset**,” on the other hand, thrives on challenge and sees failure not as evidence of unintelligence but as a heartening springboard for growth and for stretching our existing abilities.

Out of these two mindsets, which we manifest from a very early age, springs a great deal of our behavior, our relationship with success and failure in both professional and personal contexts, and ultimately our capacity for happiness.

In short, people who have fixed mindset believe that there is no way they can change their status, even the things that they can and cannot do. They stick to what they know and refuse to be challenged. On the other hand, those with growth mindset believe they can work to grow themselves and discover new potentials to achieve milestones.

They say, “**I like to try new things**”, “**I am inspired by the success of others**”, and “**I can learn to do anything I want.**” For them, challenges help them grow. They consider feedback as constructive.

Life is given to have its shares of failures, disappointments and mistakes, but it's good to put into mind that it also comes along with celebration, blessings and opportunities. Focus on the good and then enjoy the promise of a positive life. Highlight and dwell on what went wrong with your life and live a life full of regrets.

As the old saying goes, “It is not your fault that you are born poor, but it's your choice if you die as one.”

You? When will you shift from fixed mindset to growth mindset?

**AUGUST
TWENTY SIX
2009**

Third Engineer Froilan Vallano only had an hour of sleep but he walked briskly towards the workshop where he would pass through to the ship's engine room. He pondered on the hours of duty he's had since 12 midnight and the fire fighting training that followed shortly after. As one of the ship's Fire Team Leader, Froilan was glad to have a refresher training that day, all the while, ignoring the sheer exhaustion and the seemingly floating sensation he's having for lack of sleep

CRYSTAL CORNER

SHIPBOARD SAFETY: A SEAFARERS LESSON
FOR A LIFETIME

BY: YASHIKA F. TORIB



**"It has
always been
my dream to
become a
Chief
Engineer"**

He felt the familiar shudder as the ship slowly, moved away from the port of Slam, Norway, their cruise liner is now heading for Bergen. As Froilan reached the passage to the engine room, he noticed the first of many unusual things that day – the watertight door that is supposedly open at the time is already closed.

He turned to his left and casually pressed the green button to open the steel door. A rattle of metals unlocking, a hiss, and the door opened to accommodate access to the engine room. Seeing that the doors have already slid a meter from each other, Froilan slipped his body through and quickly pressed the red button for close. The mechanism, designed to respond to close swiftly to keep seawater from spilling over from one room to another, slammed shut.

FROILAN,

too exhausted to move just as fast, felt how the steel doors sandwiched him in half. He fumbled for the handheld radio that was unfortunately and unusually not in his waist belt. With a sudden burst of clarity, the young engineer reached for the green button and held his breath, aware that a mere expansion of his chest would cause more damage to his already cracking ribs.

"I heard a crack, the another, and another, and another until the steel doors finally opened and I fell on a heap. There was no one around and I had no means to contact my mates," Froilan recalled in a fainting and wavering voice.

Thoughts of his dream of becoming a chief engineer passed through his mind, then a vision of his wife and three young children. It was the latter that fueled Froilan to push himself up from the floor and struggles to climb the ladder up the control room, his vision blurring almost to black.

"Breathing by then was already so painful so I had to take it in small huffs," he said in a quite voice. The crewmembers and medical team of the cruise liner immediately attended to their injured mate with the captain ordering for the ship to return to port and arrange for a medical evacuation. As the ship headed back to Slam and Froilan trembled with pain and fear, his fellow Filipino seafarers encourage him to hold on.

"Kaya mo yan 'they said to me repeatedly.'" The walls holding back the memory finally crumbled and the dam gave way to torrents. Froilan broke into tears and fell silent as he wept over the horrific accident.

"I was at the hospital for nine days with continuous pain killers. The nurses begged for me to sleep. But I couldn't. I fought sleep. I was so scared that if I sleep I will never wake again, that I will never see my wife, my kids. I was there on my own, I had to plead for a fellow Filipino nurse to stay with me just so I won't be alone." He struggled to share in words that are barely audible with sobs and tears.

It took Froilan a few more minutes to compose himself and continue, this time remembering that despite all the financial assistance and appropriate compensations given by the company and the principal, the uncertainty of keeping his job now looms over him.

"It took me a year to fully recover and another year to find a company that will hire me again." Come 2013, Froilan settled to work ashore as a Technical Recruitment Officer of Crystal Shipping Inc. where he constantly shared he learned the hard way. He also volunteered with the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary, the PCG'S civilian-volunteer

tarm, to impart his knowledge on maritime safety and maritime search and rescue.



ctto: Froilan Vallano

"Whenever I conduct the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar, I always tell our crew the importance of safety while onboard, sharing to them my experience even if the memories always leave me in tears.

'Investigations following the accident revealed that the water tight door was unsafe and I had a lapse of judgement by forgetting to bring my handheld radio. But at the end of the day, rest hours are still a critical part of safety onboard ships. While the International Maritime Organization (IMO) laid and implemented rules on work and rest hours of seafarer, it is apparent that these are not normally applicable on the operational nature of ships because we have to work beyond the designated duty hours to make sure that everything is in perfect order, to be able to this, we have to alter our Daily Shift Log Form, otherwise the captain and ship will answerable to ITF. Edited Log Forms not only means unpaid overtime for us but also exhaustion that will lead to accidents.' he explained.



ctto: Froilan Vallano

10 years following the accident, Froilan continues to work on his dream of becoming a chief engineer and is now preparing for his next shipboard duty. He has also passed the licensure exam for the position last 2017 with hopes of finally getting promoted when he, again, starts working at sea.

'It has always been my dream to become a chief engineer, but it will remain a dream if I do not work for it. And so regardless of the accident and failed efforts in the past, I am pursuing this dream with the inspiration of providing a comfortable for my family,' he concluded.

FROILAN has gone a long way and the Crystals are more than Proud!!

MINDGYM WORKOUT SCHEDULES

OCTOBER

03 Money Matters 1.0 (AM)
Ship General Safety (PM)

Money Matters 2.0 (AM) **04**
Port State Vetting (PM)

10 Connection 1.0 (AM)
Marpol Refresher (PM)

Connection 2.0 (AM) **11**
Hazardous Material (PM)

17 Cleaning 101
(1pm - 4pm)

Ready, Set, Goal (AM) **18**
ISM (PM)

24 Eat, Move, Sleep (AM)
Enclosed Space Entry (PM)

Pre-Departure
Orientation Seminar **25**

NOVEMBER

07 Connection 1.0 (AM)
SOPEP (PM)

Connection 2.0 (AM) **08**
Enclosed Space Entry (PM)

14 Money Matters 1.0 (AM)
Hazardous Materials (PM)

Money Matters 2.0 (AM) **15**
Port State Vetting (PM)

21 Eat, Move, Sleep (AM)
Health and Safety (PM)

Ready, Set, Goal (AM) **22**
Anti-Piracy (PM)

28 Cleaning 101
(1pm - 4pm)

Pre-Departure
Orientation Seminar **29**

Trainings that are
FUN, **ENTERTAINING**
and **ENGAGING**

