



City of Boston
Employee Assistance Program
FrontLine Employee
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Your Resource for Solutions

Adjusting Your Attitude for More Success

Stanford researchers are making the case that attitude is more important than IQ. Good news: Attitude is easier to change. Start with understanding your “mindset.” Either you have a mindset that is “fixed” or your mindset is “growth-oriented,” says researcher, Carol Dweck, Ph.D. A fixed mindset means you’re not very open to change or willing to adapt to it. You don’t view mistakes as opportunities or stepping-stones to your success. People with a growth mindset do. (Think Thomas Edison—he kept trying hundreds of times before the bulb finally glowed.) Embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, see effort as the path to mastery, and learn from criticism to achieve an open mindset. How well do you identify with these critical elements of a successful mindset?

Source: “Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,” by Carol Dweck, Ph.D.

Teams that Eat Together Thrive Together

Employees sharing a meal is a fairly mundane event, but Cornell researchers see such activities as crucial to enhancing organizational productivity, employee bonding, and team effectiveness. They believe their discovery has implications for any type of organization. Eating as a group is a primal behavior, and researchers believe it naturally creates deeper, more cooperative bonds. How can your team or work group take advantage of this discovery for the benefit of your work organization and your personal job satisfaction?

Source: news.cornell.edu [Search: “groups eat together”]

Do I Need Counseling?

Fear, mystery, and stigma often keep people away from professional counseling, but this hesitancy is normal. One question will help you decide whether to go: Are you fed up with feeling miserable? Contrary to what’s portrayed on TV, most people do not attend counseling for very long. Some may go once, feel empowered, experience a “reality check,” and find the strength they have been searching for to finally take charge and overcome a serious problem. Counseling is challenging because personal change rarely is easy; however, it can still be fun, exciting, full of relief, and life-changing—but above all, not what you expected.

Putting Excitement Back in Your Relationship

If your relationship with a significant other feels too sluggish or routine (a complaint of many couples), research psychologists say the intervention is to plan new activities you both enjoy. Don’t panic—routines occur naturally because we are creatures of habit. One study showed an increase in relationship satisfaction while planning something new, while participating in it, and following the activity. Novel experiences need not be expensive vacations. A new hobby, project, or visiting local attractions, recreation, or picnic spots—nearly anything can do the trick. Shaking up the routine is a life skill. Use it to avoid complacency and stagnation.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10707334>

The Art of Accepting Feedback

All of us eventually receive constructive or negative feedback at work. How do you respond to it? Accepting feedback is one of the toughest soft skills to learn because it is usually surprising and often unplanned, and it confronts something initially outside our awareness. Even if delivered softly with a smile, constructive feedback can leave you feeling vulnerable and off guard. There's power in accepting feedback graciously because of the relief felt by the person giving it to you. This will build your positive reputation, impress managers, and help facilitate valuable relationships at work. On the other hand, reacting negatively to feedback will cause others to judge your character and maturity. Be a pro at accepting negative feedback: (1) Recognize that accepting feedback is not easy; (2) Know that your assigned critic has natural trepidation about his or her role; (3) View feedback as an adventure in the unknown, and see it as powerful career juice that will help you grow; (4) Work consciously to display an attitude and the body language of positivity when receiving feedback; and (5) Always validate the feedback giver and thank him or her for it.

When Does Helping Become Enabling?

It's tough to watch a coworker suffer with a personal problem, and it's natural to want to help. But when does helping turn to enabling? This question helped give rise to employee assistance programs to assist employees with personal problems, and coworker (peer) referral is a popular route by which many clients seek help. But when should you recommend the EAP (or another source of help if your organization does not have an EAP)? The answer is simple: at the very beginning. You can be a friend and recommend the EAP at the same time. One does not preclude the other, and it sets the stage for two things: (1) your friend thinking about the EAP right away and (2) the likelihood he or she will choose that option when you recognize the need to back away. Omitting the mention of the EAP in the early stages of helping a friend will make it harder for you to let go and harder for him or her to choose professional help.

30-Day New Year's Resolution Checkup

Don't give up on your New Year's resolution. Look for roadblocks: (1) Is your goal *specific*? (e.g., I will dedicate 30 minutes daily to writing my book on organic gardening.); (2) Can you *measure* progress? (e.g., "It's been 14 days, and I have written 13 pages."); (3) Is your goal *attainable*? (e.g., There are 365 days per year to fit in 150 days of writing.); (4) Is your goal *realistic*? (e.g., "I have time in the morning each day for the task."); and (5) Is your goal *timely* with a deadline? (e.g., "I will complete my goal in 12 months by writing 12 to 13 pages per month.") If you discovered any missing elements, create them now to renew motivation. Log your progress, and tell a friend who will hold you accountable for progress in order to ramp up your chances for success.

Secrets to Writing Persuasively

Sales copywriters persuade, and good ones are paid big bucks for their craft. You may never write a sales letter for American Express, but you can follow the secrets of sales copy pros. Follow this basic outline to write more persuasively and you will see more success in your attempts to inspire change. State the problem, state the problems (issues, symptoms, etc.) caused by *the problem*, state how the problem has been managed ineffectively until now, and discuss the risk that will continue if the problem remains unresolved. Every persuasive letter has three targets—the problems it solves, the desires it satisfies, and the needs it fulfills. Hit all three. Include the opinion of an expert or two and statistics if you can find them, and spell out the next steps and how soon they should be taken in order to prevent missed opportunity or further loss.