

EMPLOYEE COUNSELING PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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TO SAVE TIME, SAVE YOURSELF

In his classic book, *How to Get Control of Time and Your Life* (Signet Books) Alan

Lakein lists 20 ways he saves time.

Some are practical, like keeping 3x5 cards in his pocket to jot down ideas. Some are more challenging, like not owning a television set. What most people overlook is the extent to which Lakein's list focuses on self-care. "I relax and 'do nothing' rather frequently." "I don't waste time regretting my failures." "I don't waste time feeling guilty about what I don't do." "I try not to think about work on weekends." "I recognize that inevitably some of my time will be spent on activities outside of my control and don't fret about it." Apparently, Lakein has learned the battle for time management is won partly by nurturing oneself and avoiding time-wasting negativity.



Why You Overcommit

How busy are you this week? Do you perceive that you will have more time a month from now? If you are like most people, your answer is "yes." It is for this reason that you overcommit. According to recent research reported in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* (February 2005), most of us perceive time as something we will always have more of in the future, although we may not have much today. Therefore, we overschedule ourselves. When the future arrives, we are swamped.



Source: American Psychological Association

Protect Yourself from DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Domestic violence is a frequent and unreported crime, but every state has passed laws and taken steps to intervene and protect victims. The laws that protect spouses from abuse also apply to people who are not married, but have a familial relationship with one another. Rule #1 is to protect yourself and your children. This may mean leaving home and seeking a safe shelter. The EAP can help you find community and legal resources that can help.

EMPLOYEES ASK ABOUT THE EAP ———

When You Can't Get to the EAP



Q If I am referred to the EAP by my supervisor, can I talk to the EA professional over the phone rather than see the employee assistance professional in person?

A Some issues can be easily managed and quickly resolved by phone. Others are better resolved by meeting with the EA professional in person. Everyone's situation is different, but you won't be refused help if you can only speak to the EA professional by phone. If the EA professional thinks a problem or concern would best be addressed in a face-to-face meeting, he or she will explain why and encourage you to make an office appointment.

Minimize Your Midlife Crisis



It's coming—midlife! Can you avoid the much-discussed “midlife crisis” that comes with it? Although the midlife crisis has been called a “creature of the imagination”, and research disputes its existence and when it occurs, planning for it can make getting “over the hill” a little easier. 1) Accept midlife as a time of transition and tool for personal growth. You are moving from thinking about how many years you have lived, to how many years you *have left to live*. It's normal, but it creates anxiety. 2) Plan ahead to avoid regrets by renegotiating the balance between time devoted to family versus the time you have invested achieving vocational and financial security. 3) Think about your values. Use these values to guide you in acting on tough decisions. Examples include improving a marital relationship or relationships with children before they are grown, or engaging in new leisure or recreational activities. 4) Plan for challenging life events that will come in the future to reduce their stressful impact (e.g., medical issues of aging parents, gradual erosion of personal health, financial security in retirement, etc.). Midlife can stimulate the emergence of desires and impulses that have been unmet or unacceptable until now. Acting to satisfy some of these wants can add meaning to your life, while others may not be consistent with your values despite their appeal. The EAP can help you with tough choices that midlife brings.

Marijuana Savvy



It is helpful to be a knowledgeable parent about marijuana because it is the most commonly abused illegal drug, especially by young people. Plenty of misinformation targets young people to argue for support in legalizing the drug. The American Medical Association still *does not* support the use of marijuana for any medical purpose, and its position has remained unchanged since 1997. It does recommend continued research into the benefits of marijuana, but not by smoking it. Instead, the AMA recommends the development of non-toxic, inhalation devices that can supply the medicinal ingredient in marijuana for those patients who might benefit from it.

Source: American Medical Association, Policy H-95.952

Recapture Your Motivation



It's natural to experience short periods of decreased motivation, even if you love your job. It's nothing to get worried about. The human body was not designed to stay in a continual state of “ready-go” or “up.” A few emotional maneuvers can help you recapture your sense of excitement. **Shift gears:** On down days, try shifting your focus to other work activities you have been postponing. Something as different as filing stacks of papers or even straightening up your office can give you a sense of renewal. **Change scenery:** Take your work to a different location or environment, if possible. Or, walk around the block near your place of work. **Leap-over:** When the workload is heavy and appears to drag on, you may imagine nothing different will ever come along. Try thinking about the next big goal in your career or personal life to give you more juice.

TAKE TIME for YOUR TEAM



If you have been resisting work on a team, is it because you lack conviction that teams are worth the effort? If so, your team may lack a clear focus on performance and shared goals that make teams functional and successful. Some teams slowly lose track of these guideposts. The result is increasing conflict among members that spirals into worsening morale problems. The solution: Regularly invest time in reinvigorating your team. Don't wait for signs of team trouble before deciding to act. Not investing in preventive maintenance of your team can lead to more serious problems later. Investing in your team does not require off-site excursions or retreats. You can boost team morale and team cohesiveness in regular, short meetings that discuss shared vision, goals, role issues, emerging conflicts, and agreed-upon solutions.