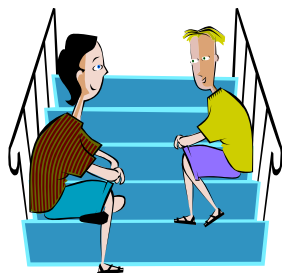


EMPLOYEE COUNSELING PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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Are You An "Askable" Parent?



Every generation of teenagers leaves society with new words added to the language. A recent one to know about is "askable parent." Being askable means that your children consider you approachable, open to communication, and willing to answer their questions (particularly about sex). Most parents want to be "askable," but there is more to it than many realize. Visit the National Parent Information Network online at NPIN.org and their virtual library for thousands of articles on parenting, including "Are You an Askable Parent?" Learn new skills and become more confident about your present abilities. NPIN is a federal tax-supported resource for every parent.

Source: www.NPIN.org

Get Happy, Stay Healthy

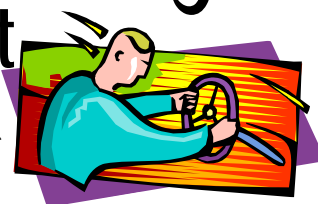
Could it be that people with a positive attitude who are energetic, happy, and relaxed are less likely to suffer from the common cold? Maybe, say medical researchers. According to a report in the July 2003 issue of *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 334 healthy volunteers were interviewed about their moods, then got a squirt of rhinovirus, which causes the common cold. Result: Those with the most positive attitudes experienced fewer cold symptoms.



Source: Health Behavior News Service, July 22, 2003

Aggressive Driving You Can Stop It

Although some drivers are overcome by the anonymity of the automobile and take out their frustrations on anybody who gets in their way, don't associate all aggressive driving with anger and hostility behind the wheel. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, many driver behaviors are considered aggressive, but may not be accompanied by obscene hand gestures or angry emotional maneuvers on the highway. Definition appears to be in the eye of the beholder. Common driver behaviors often perceived as aggressive are lack of attention to driving, tailgating, fast or frequent lane changes, rubbernecking, running red lights, and speeding.



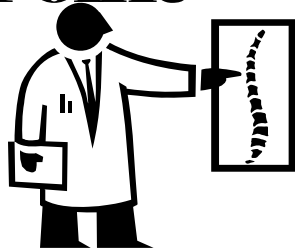
AFFIRMATION ACTION

Affirmations are positive assertions for self-improvement or achieving personal goals. They work by helping you "achieve or become what you think." They are powerful tools, but do you know how to use them effectively? Tips: 1) Give up all negative self-talk that would interfere with the affirmation. 2) Repeat the affirmation to yourself as often as possible during the day. 3) Write the affirmation daily in a journal as many times as possible. 4) Place the affirmation where you can see it frequently. 5) Record the affirmation and listen to it on a tape while you commute. The bottom line: Repeatedly focusing on thoughts and words in support of the affirmation speeds its realization.



Finding the Trigger Point

Sixty years of medical evidence, particularly among pain clinic medical doctors, has found that many common aches and pains and puzzling physical complaints are actually caused by “trigger points” – small contraction knots in the muscles of the body sometimes caused by injury. A new book, *The Trigger Point Therapy Workbook: Your Self-Treatment Guide for Pain Relief* (2002 Harbinger Publications) helps you find these trigger points and apply self-care massage techniques. *What most people don't know:* Most trigger points generate “referred pain” – pain sent to other parts of the body, usually nearby. Direct treatment won't produce a lasting effect at these spots. The workbook helps you zero in on the right target. (Don't confuse trigger points with acupressure or acupuncture, an ancient Chinese medical art.) Got a pain that has been nagging you for years? Talk to your doctor and see if this new book points you in the right direction of pain relief.



You will Go Further with . . .

Completed Staff Work

Looking to make a great impression and achieve an outstanding reputation in your organization? Understand the “Doctrine of Completed Staff Work” (CSW). Popular in business books of yesteryear, but still viable today, CSW is completed action and study of a problem, and a presentation of its solution with alternatives so thorough that all that remains is for management to approve or disapprove it. Resist bringing problems to your manager without well thought-out solutions and you will be remembered for saving management time, energy, and money while being a better problem solver.

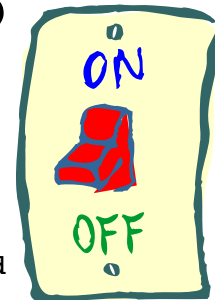


STRESS: A SWITCH for DEPRESSION?

Among people who suffered multiple stressful life events over five years, 43 percent with one version of a gene developed depression, compared to only 17 percent who had another version of the gene, according to research funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

People with a protective version of the gene experienced no more depression than people totally spared from stressful life events – no matter how many stressful life events they endured. *Implications:* Depression, a biologically based illness, may not be uncovered until stressful events are experienced, because a gene's effects may only be expressed, or “switched on,” then. Don't second-guess depression, and remember that the EAP can help.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health, July 17, 2003 News Release



Constructive Criticism You Can Take It (and Run)

How well do you accept constructive criticism from your evaluator (supervisor)? Are you brave enough to ask for it? Here are five reasons to make constructive criticism an important part of good communication with your evaluator:



- 1. Better Annual Reviews:** To maximize positive outcomes on annual reviews, you need to know what your limitations and shortcomings are. Ask for constructive criticism during the year and you will know where to put your efforts.
- 2. Demonstrate Balance:** Asking for constructive criticism demonstrates openness and willingness to face one's limitations and make corrections. This balance is a strength valued by employers.
- 3. No Hidden Secrets:** You will sleep better knowing what your evaluator thinks about your work. Hearing feedback, particularly if it is negative, can be difficult. Still it is better to get this information early and out in front while you have time to make corrections. You can't do this if you avoid feedback.
- 4. Improve Your Worth:** It is easy to take constructive criticism personally and feel hurt by it. With experience, however, a receptive attitude emerges. The changes you make improve your worth to the organization.
- 5. Build Rapport:** Giving constructive criticism is not easy for most evaluators. An employee who is open-minded and receptive to constructive criticism makes it easier for an evaluator. This enables a more trusting and satisfying relationship.