Balance

Volume 11, Issue 1

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Keep a Journal for Personal Change

A personal journal or diary is a time-tested tool for succeeding and marking progress in overcoming personal challenges, improving health habits, and conquering resistance to change. Journals can be used for many reasons, but their power lies in supercharging your ability to succeed by using visual reinforcement, handwriting, and repetition. People who journal can also gain clarity by focusing on a key issue and reduce their vulnerability to being thwarted from reaching their goal by unpredictable events and bumps in the road. If you are curious about journaling, start by journaling at the same time every day for 30 consecutive days. Scheduling can make it more routine and consistent, which is a key to journaling's effectiveness.

Respect at Work: Listening

The highest form of respect is to listen well to others. If you don't listen well, it is probably not because you are distracted or face a language barrier. It's probably because you don't see the most important reason of all: "What's in it for me?" Listening well is seldom just about courtesy. Real motivation comes from believing you may gain something. To improve your ability to listen with empathy, convince yourself that you will gain something—if not from the information then from the experience itself. One thing you will likely gain is improved relationships on the job.

Don't Let Depression Derail Your Goals

2011 may be your year to stop smoking, increase exercise, or eat right to lose weight. These goals remain popular, but if you suffer from depression, consider a fourth goal—getting treatment. Depression can undermine your goals by affecting self-esteem, decreasing enthusiasm,

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lowering energy, disturbing restful sleep, interrupting concentration, and even reducing stamina to ward off and fight disease. Rather than blaming yourself for failing to achieve your goals, get an assessment from a mental health professional, or seek assistance through your EAP.

Employee Engagement

When you feel engaged at work, you are sick less often, experience greater productivity, and have fewer accidents. Your positive behavior can also rub off on coworkers and customers. It's easy to see why being labeled an "engaged employee" is a positive thing. Consider the following steps to boost your feelings of workplace engagement:

- 1) Work to establish meaningful communication with your supervisor;
- 2) Be clear about what is expected of you at work;
- 3) Know what you are passionate about and seek opportunities to engage your passion;
- **4)** Develop relationships with others who care about you as a person;
- 5) Develop relationships with others who encourage your professional development, give you recognition, and praise you for good work; and
- **6)** Seek to acquire relationships with associates who, like you, are committed to doing quality work.





Fire Up Motivation to Exercise

Do you need better reasons (or more reasons) to boost your motivation to exercise? It could make a big difference. Consider the following examples and post your own list where you can see it daily.

Reasons for exercising:

- 1) Reducing stress
- 2) Reducing blood pressure
- Role modeling healthy behaviors for your children
- 4) Feeling better
- 5) Reducing fatigue
- 6) Improving sleep
- **7)** Feeling a sense of achievement
- 8) Releasing endorphins to relax mood

- 9) Managing stress
- 10) Proving to yourself that you can do it
- 11) Reducing cholesterol
- 12) Improving heart health
- Improving stamina and energy
- 14) Increasing life span
- 15) Improving muscle tone
- 16) Getting more sun and vitamin d by exercising outside

- 17) Reducing risk of burnout
- 18) Fighting depression
- **19)** Reducing isolation and increasing interaction with others
- **20)** Achieving a better work-life balance and
- 21) Improving your fight against diabetes or "pre-diabetes" symptoms.

Can you think of more?

Making Positive Feedback Perfect

When you give positive feedback to your coworker, consider the "ABCs". "A" stands for "Affirmation," "B" stands for "Be Specific," and "C" stands for "Contribution." Start with a positive statement that ("A") affirms your coworker's accomplishment(s)— "Great job!" Then, ("B") be specific to let your coworker know you are sincere. Not giving specific feedback leaves your coworker wondering about your sincerity. "Wow, Susan! I loved your presentation. The three examples you gave of how we can better serve our customers were new and refreshing." This type of positive feedback is even more affirming. But you can still go further. Acknowledge Susan's ("C") contribution so she knows she is valued. For example, add, "I could see everyone's eyes light up with new insights. I am glad you were the one we picked as our trainer." By putting yourself in Susan's shoes, you can see how she will feel positive about her presentation, you, her job, and the organization. As the example shows, effective positive feedback can not only be beneficial for the recipient, but for everyone else involved, too.

Responding to Rudeness

Rudeness is prompted by a state of agitation, disappointment, and anger. The individual who displays rudeness is usually in more pain than the recipient of the rude behavior. There may be

short-term relief for the individual who acts rudely, but there is usually a rebound, which can leave them feeling worse. If you work with customers,

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you have likely been confronted by rudeness periodically. Learning to view rudeness from this "person in pain" perspective can help you detach from it personally, permit you to be more empathetic toward your customer, and help you appreciate the influence and value of your customer-service role.





Shift to a Positive Mood

To improve or elevate a blue mood, try collecting your personal "Top 40" music, comic videos, spiritual sayings, and motivational quotes that you have discovered to be effective in inspiring you. Be sure to mix in positive-thinking articles that excite you and stimulate your "possibility" thinking. When you find yourself beginning to sink with negativity, head for the list. After practice, you will discover that merely thinking about this resource will be enough to bounce you back to a better mood. If you detect that mood problems linger, talk to a mental health professional or contact your EAP.

APS Healthcare's Employee Assistance Program. The EAP program through APS Healthcare assists organizations and their workforce in managing the personal challenges that impact employee well-being, performance and effectiveness. APS' life management consultants employ a comprehensive approach that identifies issues impacting the employee and assists them in developing meaningful solutions.

Please call the phone number below for more information about APS Healthcare and the services available to you.



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