

Excellence = MC²
Your Employee Assistance Program
1-800-899-3926

HEALTHY

EXCHANGE

ANOTHER BENEFIT OF YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

VOL. 2, NO. 1

For Your Information

◆ BETTER PARENTING

At bedtime, express to your child your unconditional love, no matter what happened during the day. Hearing the words, "I love you no matter what," is vitally important.

◆ STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS

- Divide big tasks into smaller, more manageable ones.
- Accept that you can't control every situation and learn to be flexible.
- Avoid the trap of demanding too much of yourself. Get help if tasks are too big for you.

◆ MARITAL DANGER SIGNS

The following are warning signs indicating a marriage in trouble:

- Feelings of chronic resentment toward your spouse.
- Lack of laughter between the two of you.
- Desire to spend free time with someone other than your spouse.
- Conversations between the two of you are laced with bitterness and sarcasm.



You can revive your marriage by making it a priority. If you need help, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counseling, referrals or information.

AVOID THESE

"Communication Killers"

By Jeff Keller

In both our personal and business lives, there are times when we connect with other people and make them happy to communicate with us. In these instances, there is a free flow of information where both parties leave the communication with positive feelings. Then, of course, there are times when obstacles get in the way of effective communication, and we leave with a mediocre or negative impression about what just took place.

To a large extent, your success as a communicator is a result of certain strategies that you may be employing, either consciously or without much thought. There's a lot at stake when you



"It is far better to make your point without setting up winners and losers."

communicate. If you want positive personal relationships or a successful marriage, the effectiveness of your communication will likely determine the type of person you attract as well as the fulfillment you get from your marriage.

In business, the effective communicators are the ones who will be respected and promoted to leadership positions. In sales, good communicators are more persuasive, establish rapport and sell more than those with underdeveloped communication skills. To be effective, it's imperative to follow sound communication strategies.

However, even the most skilled among us sometimes communicate in ways that turn people off. Here, then, are some communication "killers" to watch out for. By avoiding these traps, we can build rapport, leave a positive impression on others, and make communicating with us a valuable experience.

1. **Making the other person "wrong."** Too many people view communication as an argument, where the objective is to prove that they are "right" and that the other person is wrong. The other person

will always resent your attempt to establish that he or she is wrong.

Think about it: how do YOU like it when someone tries to prove that you are wrong?

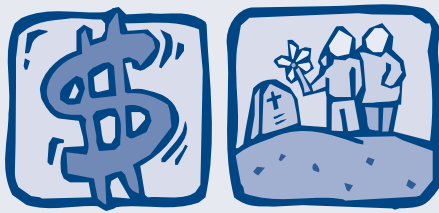
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Coping With Anxiety



MONEY, DEATH OF A FAMILY MEMBER TOP LIST OF AMERICA'S BIGGEST WORRIES

Worries about finances and the death of loved ones are the leading causes of anxiety for Americans, according to a survey conducted by the Anxiety Disorders Association of America. Thirty-six percent of people are "very" or "extremely" worried about their financial status; 31 percent are anxious about a loved one dying.



Anxiety is a normal response to situations of uncertainty, especially if there is a possibility of a bad outcome. However, for many, severe and unprovoked anxiety adversely

affects their daily lives. If excessive or chronic anxiety is negatively affecting your personal, family or work life, the guidelines below can help you.

HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR COPING WITH ANXIETY

- ✓ Recognize and admit that you are feeling anxious.
- ✓ Become aware of your body's symptoms. Don't let them scare you; let them "talk" to you.
- ✓ Try to pinpoint what it is you are anxious about. What happened yesterday? What were you thinking about before you went to bed? If you can't pinpoint the source, don't worry about it and try to move on.
- ✓ If you do know what it is that is bothering you, what can you do to eliminate or minimize the situation in some way so that it isn't so stressful?
- ✓ More important, how can you react differently so you won't be so affected by this situation?
- ✓ Give yourself permission to feel anxious about whatever it is that is bothering you. *"Of course I feel anxious about this problem. Anyone would."*
- ✓ Listen to the dialogue within yourself. Are you filling yourself full of negative thoughts about a certain situation? What could you say to yourself that would feel more comforting and soothing.
- ✓ Are you overwhelming yourself with "shoulds" and high expectations? If so, which ones could you eliminate?
- ✓ Are you blaming someone else for your anxieties, unhappiness, poor health, lack of success or other issues? How can you take responsibility for yourself and make some positive changes?

YOUR EAP IS HERE TO HELP

If you would like additional help, please call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counseling and/or referrals. Remember, your EAP is available to help you or your dependents with most any personal, family or work-related concern. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today?

COMMUNICATION KILLERS

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I'll bet that you resent it when a co-worker or family member plays this game with you. Many times we assert that we are right in matters of opinion, where there really is no right or wrong. Even if you are quoting a statistic and you know the other person is mistaken, you gain little by insisting that he or she is wrong.

Granted, there are some instances where it is important to point out another person's error — such as when someone insists the meeting is on Monday and you know it is on Tuesday. However, this is the exception and it's far better to make your point without setting up winners and losers.

2. **Talking too much about yourself.** Just about everyone falls into this trap. You get in a discussion with someone and you dominate the conversation by talking

"When you listen to someone else, that individual feels validated and important."

about yourself, while allowing the other party very little opportunity to speak. When you talk only about yourself without letting the other party participate, you give the message that you don't care about the other person.

This creates resentment and that person will not look forward to communicating with you in the future. On the other hand, when you listen to someone else, that individual feels validated and important. In your upcoming conversations, make a note of the percentage of time you are speaking, as opposed to listening.

Remember this illustration: we are born with two ears and one mouth, and should strive to use them in that proportion. When you listen twice as much as you speak, the other person will have a positive impression of you and will often feel that you are an interesting conversationalist, even though you did very little talking.

3. **Interrupting.** This is one of the most common communication blunders. We start out listening to someone but then we begin

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COMMUNICATION KILLERS

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to think of what we're going to say next and we tune them out. When we have our thoughts ready to launch, we break into the discussion and start talking. This is insulting

"Discipline yourself to let others finish their thoughts before you chime in with yours."

to the other party as you did not let that person complete his or her comments. Discipline yourself to let others finish their thoughts before you chime in with yours.

4. Changing the subject abruptly in a group discussion. This is a variation on interrupting. You're talking about your recent vacation with a group of friends when someone cuts you off and says something like, "Did you see the baseball game last night?" How does that make you feel?

In most cases, the person cutting you off wants to steer the discussion back to a topic where he or she can re-assume command of the discussion and dominate once again. Sometimes, the person who cut you off just has a limited attention span and needs to keep changing subjects. Regardless of the motive, it's rude.

5. Talking too much about the negative. People are bombarded with negative news from the media. Terrorism, violent crime and natural disasters are just a few of the topics that receive many hours of daily coverage. Then there's the negative "drama" in your personal life — your disappointing relationships, unfulfilling career, or bouts with illness.



While it's only natural to share your life experiences with others, especially friends and co-workers, you don't need to tell them everything that's wrong. What makes you think they want to hear about your dysfunctional family or the fact that you're not appreciated at work? People have enough troubles of their own without hearing your tales of woe! Keep

Self-Test For Addictive Disorders

Everyone has addictive urges and sometimes gives in to them. An addictive disorder exists, however, when you cannot control your habit or behavior despite the fact that it is undermining your health, your relationships, your work, your finances, or your self-respect.

Common addictive disorders include: compulsive overeating, alcohol or drug dependency, compulsive gambling, smoking, compulsive spending, internet addiction, or sexual addiction.



SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ADDICTION

If one of these behaviors has gotten out of control for you (or a family member), review the symptom checklist below to recognize if your behavior has become an addictive disorder. A "yes" answer to one or more statements below may indicate a problem:

1. The person thinks about the activity a lot when they're not doing it.
2. The person seems unable to control the amount of time spent doing the activity.
3. The person keeps increasing the amount of time that is spent doing the activity.
4. The person denies having a problem, when many things are obviously going wrong.
5. The person hides the activity from family and friends.
6. When unable to do the activity, the person becomes irritable, moody, tearful or angry.
7. The person would rather do the activity than spend time with family or friends.
8. The person forgets or ignores family events such as birthdays and visits from friends because of his or her involvement with the activity.
9. The person has extreme mood swings that are completely unpredictable.
10. The person blames other people for his/her troubles and does not take responsibility for his/her own actions.
11. The person has headaches, stomach disorders, and other unexplained and ongoing physical symptoms.
12. The person begins to neglect his/her appearance and to do hurtful or illegal things.

YOUR EAP IS HERE TO HELP

Whether you have reached the "addiction" stage or not, recognizing and admitting that your habit is negatively impacting your life is the first step toward overcoming it. You can build the strength to overcome your addiction, develop alternatives to it, and learn to live a healthy and full life. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help you get started by providing you with CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals and/or information.

your conversations uplifting and others will look forward to speaking with you.

6. Treating your technology device as more important than the person you're speaking to. Here's a problem that's growing way out of control. More and more people feel the need to be "connected" with the world 24/7. These individuals are slaves to their cell phones and Blackberries. It doesn't matter whether you're in the middle of a conversation or meeting with them. If their phone rings or their device

shows a message coming in, they immediately divert their attention away from you.

The message they're giving is that the incoming communication is more important than anything you have to offer. Unless you are expecting an emergency message (which is rarely the case), turn off the phones and hand-held devices when meeting with others. You'll have plenty of time to examine those messages later.

You might argue that there are many successful people who commit these communi-

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COMMUNICATION KILLERS

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cation blunders. I'd agree with you on that point. However, those people are making enemies needlessly by their rudeness. They would enjoy even more respect and success if they revised their communication strategies. In the ensuing days, weeks and months, keep this list of communication reminders in your wallet, purse, or on your desk.

These are not simple habits to break and you'll need to be vigilant. Become a more effective communicator and watch as other people respect you more — and help you to get what you want.

Jeff Keller is president of Attitude is Everything and publisher of "Here's To Your Success," a free monthly motivational newsletter. For more information go to: www.attitudeiseverything.com

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Have you checked out your EAP Website? You'll find articles and quizzes on a variety of topics designed to help you be healthier! In addition, you'll find tips on how to make the most of your Employee Assistance benefits. Visit the website today.

www.theemployeeassistanceprogram.com

Tips For Balancing Work And Family



Finding the right balance between work and family is a difficult and on-going challenge for all working parents. How can you find time for work and running a household, and still give your children the care and attention they need? Here are some ideas that might help:

1. **Prioritize your commitments.** There is not enough time to spend doing things that aren't important to you. Identify your various roles and attach a level of priority to each. Make sure you are putting your time and energy only into things that are truly most important to you.
2. **Strive to find balance.** Work out a plan with your spouse and kids that works for your family. Talk about the difficulties of meeting work and family responsibilities and let other family members try to help find solutions for the time crunch. Make sure your family knows that their needs take a high priority despite the demands of your job.
3. **Share responsibilities.** Split parenting and household tasks appropriately among family members. Be sure that everyone in your family understands that household chores are a responsibility for all family members to tackle. Consider

paying for some services to be done. Also, don't be afraid to reach out and ask for help from extended family, friends or other parents in similar situations to yours.

4. **Make the most of family time.** Spend some time alone each day with your spouse and each child. Even if it is only for a few minutes, talk, read, or participate in an activity together. Also, plan special family events. Ignore your weekend agenda of household duties once in a while and enjoy family time together.

5. **Avoid making comparisons.** The tendency is to feel like everyone else has it all together, but work/family counselors say most people share the same stresses, concerns and occasional feelings of inadequacy when it comes to balancing work and family. Keep your expectations realistic. If your kids and work are your most important priorities, lower your standards on household responsibilities. Learn to let a few things slide.

Employee Assistance Program

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- **Personal / Work Stress**
- **Marital / Family Concerns**
- **Alcohol / Drug Concerns**
- **Frustration / Anger / Sadness**

**CALL FOR FREE
CONFIDENTIAL
HELP**

All of us experience personal, family or work related problems now and then. Sometimes, even ordinary problems can become overwhelming. It is at these times, your **EAP** can provide free confidential assistance. Employees or family members can call to receive telephone consultation and/or to schedule an appointment with an **EAP** specialist.

Read Healthy Exchange online: theemployeeassistanceprogram.com
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