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The Corporate Communicator

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Consider This...

> *Yesterday is history...*
> *Tomorrow is a mystery...*
> *Today is truly a gift...*
> *That is why it is called*
the PRESENT!



Keys to a Positive Work Environment

Keep your employees informed – The more information your employees receive, the less they assume; and ... the less chance for miscommunication and useless rumors and gossip.

- *Transparency* – Don't hide things. If the goal is to work as a team, access to information is essential to success.

- *Honesty* – Information that you pass on to your employees must be true. 100% of the time!

Balance criticism with praise –

Correcting an employee's mistakes is necessary and deciding on disciplinary action is appropriate, but also understand that people need to hear the good things they have done as well. People are motivated when they hear at least two praises for every criticism.

Public vs. Private – Praise in public, and more important ... criticize in private.

Don't over-work – Emphasize the importance of getting work done on time, meeting deadlines and being productive. However, don't forget the human factor. Unexpected circumstances occasionally arise and flexibility and caring build loyalty.

Learn to laugh – Laughter is good for you. Remember to smile. Tell an appropriate funny joke here and there. Remember that if you are poking fun at someone, it needs to be yourself. We spend way too much time at work to not enjoy the people we have around us.



Becoming More Resilient

Are you being tyrannized by your emotions? If so, here are three hints to help you escape the tyranny!

Rethink your standards: If your failure to achieve perfection causes continual guilt and frustration, redefine what success means. For example, if you

always feel inundated with work, ask yourself if you're spending more time on tasks than they really require. Don't shoot yourself in the foot by making a task harder than it needs to be.

Re-frame your situation: If weather delays your flight to an important business meeting, instead of stewing about the disruption, take advantage of the extra time to prepare for your presentation, catch up on reading or even sleep.

Reassess the significance of the problem: Will it matter tomorrow? Next week? A year from now? Emotion magnifies the difficulty of a problem in the moment; perspective shrinks it. So make sure you give yourself a steady dose of the latter.

(From Building Resiliency Seminar - Dr. Mimi Hull)

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5 Ways to Deal With Change

Change is inevitable and hard! So what can you do to make it more comfortable and successful?

1. Invest your energy in making quick adjustments to the change. – Don't focus on what life was like before the change or find ways to rebel. Accept that change has occurred. It is better to be a change agent than a change blocker!

2. Determine how the game has changed. Reorder your priorities. – Take a step back and learn why the change

Controlling Your Stress

A certain amount of daily stress is normal. Stress is simply your reaction — either positive or negative — to change. When stress places prolonged pressure on your coping mechanisms, it can become a problem that requires professional help. Continued high stress can wreak havoc, both physiologically and psychologically.

Internally, stress comes from your perception of a situation. For example, if your boss emerges from a long meeting looking upset, and sends you an email requesting a meeting, do you immediately think the worst? If so, you have triggered your body to go into a stress reaction.

You can't always eliminate the stress, but you can change your response and calm your mind.

Keep a list of everything in your day that causes you stress. Pinpoint how every item on the list makes you feel and then ask yourself, "Is my reaction appropriate or over the top?" This step is key, because once you understand where your emotions are coming from, you can find a healthier way to deal with them.

External factors, like toxic work environments, also drive workplace stress.

occurred. This will help you figure out ways to work with the change and have the change work for you.

3. Don't worry about the bad things. – Focus on the bright side. Maintain a positive attitude to help you through tough times and long days.

4. Keep in step with the organization's intended pace of change. – Speed up. Don't drag your feet in this process. Decide to adapt to change and work with it to help avoid conflict later on.

5. Keep a positive attitude and a sense of humor. – Encourage others around you and focus on the positive. Be an advocate for the change. Express the reason why you feel this change will be a positive one for your organization.

A thought: The only human institution which rejects progress is the cemetery.

(From Change Workshop - Dr. Mimi Hull)

Common characteristics of stress-inducing environments include authoritarian or noncommunicative supervisors, socially isolating work, and jobs that require a lot of effort but offer little reward.

Eliminating the source of the problem (i.e., finding another job) may be the most effective solution. **But** until the job market improves, find ways to regain a sense of control over your time and your surroundings.

For example, if you must endure stressful rush-hour traffic to arrive at the office by 8 a.m., start your workday earlier to avoid travelling at the worst time of day. If you work with difficult people, close your office door or take your work to a conference room so your exposure to them is reduced.

You may not be able to control the stimulus ... but you can control the response ... so relax and make it a less stressful one!



Go Ahead and Vent — but Find the Right Listener

Here is the goal: To be able to blow off steam without damaging your reputation.

Understanding how stress works will only get you so far. You need cathartic relief, right? Don't hesitate to seek the empathetic ears of a colleague, but do choose your confidant wisely. The more you say to a person you work with, the more likely something will slip out at work.

You don't want coworkers using your misery to their advantage, so find someone with a sterling reputation whom you know and trust.

As counterintuitive as it sounds, **in some cases your boss may be your best confidant.** Sure, you don't want to make much ado about the minor daily stresses of your job, but if you're struggling with something major that affects your performance, talk to your boss. After all, managers are invested in the success of their employees. A brief explanation (keep the hairy details to a minimum) is not only fair, it's also a way to build trust.

If you're going to go to your boss,

schedule a time to talk instead of dropping by unexpectedly when he/she may be in the middle of grappling with the demands of his/her own job.

Prepare for your conversation. Bring in notes to help you stay on track.

Regardless of who you talk to, **vent once**, then let the issue rest. Constantly rehashing the story will force you to relive your emotions and irritate the listener.

If you have to do a difficult task, the conversations might not make the task any easier, but they will help you cope with your own internal struggles.



COPING AND STRESS PROFILE

The Online Coping and Stress Profile® helps people and organizations:

- discover stress issues and capitalize on coping strengths to manage stress
- learn to minimize or eliminate common daily stressors
- identify areas for coping skills improvement
- develop flexibility in responding to change
- communicate effectively to improve problem-solving
- build mutually supportive relationships!

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C by Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch

**Dear Dr. Mimi,**

I want to show customers our business cares. What are some simple ways to convey this?—*Yearning to Connect*

Dear Yearning,

You can display an attitude of sincerity and interest in a multitude of ways:

Slow things down. When you meet, take a moment to shake your client's hand and make eye contact. Even an extra two seconds sends the message you care and have time for his or her needs.

Converse somewhere other than your desk.

If someone steps into your office, stand up or move around to the front of your desk. Sit down next to them to talk. The extra effort gives your conversations a more personal feel.

Pause and reflect. Do you respond to your clients before they even finish speaking? Your conversations may imply that you want to "get this over with." Instead, wait for two seconds after the other person stops speaking before you respond, always maintaining eye contact.

When clients leave, walk them out. This gesture of respect demonstrates you have time for your clients. It also gives you another opportunity to shake hands and maintain the connection you began.

Follow up. Keep your promises. If you said you would do something, do it! If you learn that you can't, let your client know why.

—*Dr. Mimi*

Dr. Mimi Hull heads Hull & Associates, a team of trainers, speakers and consultants. A licensed psychologist, she has a master's in counseling and personnel services and a doctorate in psychology with specialization in business management from the University of Florida, Gainesville. Her B.A. in psychology is from Syracuse (N.Y.) University. Reach her at www.HullOnline.com or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.