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Table of Contents

Bad Decisions Pg. 1

Giving Advice Pg. 1

Mindfulness Pg. 2

Why Journal? Pg. 2

What NOT to do! Pg. 3

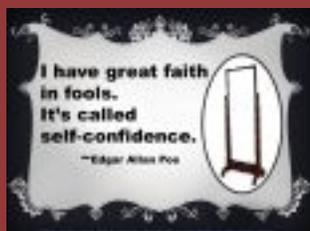
Call Dr. Mimi Pg. 3

Follow Us Online! Pg. 3

Corporate Couch Pg. 4

DISC Preview Pg. 4

Consider This ...



In honor of April Fool's Day!

How to Make a Bad Decision!

Bad decisions seem to be a part of the human experience. We make decisions in an instant to decide our next action or over time to target a problem. While making good decisions often requires careful thought, bad decisions are often the result of a fleeting thought, or perhaps, no thought at all! A good decision is not ordained by the amount of *time* spent making it. A good decision encompasses the past, the present, and future in a way that is viable on social, economic, health, and/or ethical levels.

While a good decision adds, a bad decision subtracts! It subtracts trust, friendship, do-overs, valuable time, and self-confidence. If you're wondering whether you're about to make a bad

decision, ask yourself these seven questions:

- 1.) Do I know the full story?
- 2.) Am I treating the cause instead of the symptom? (An example of fixing a symptom is giving advice to a troubled child while keeping him or her in the same troubled home.)
- 3.) Have I let go of my previous assumptions?
- 4.) Is my mind calm?
- 5.) Are potential consequences reversible?
- 6.) Can I keep others' trust and relationships?

If your answer is "No" to any of these questions, watch out! You may be making a bad decision.

(From "Decisions, Decisions!" by Dr. Mimi Hull)

How to Give Advice

It can be discouraging when people don't take your advice. Was it because you're not credible enough, you were too pushy, or simply they didn't like the advice? Advice is a delicate gift, and as a gift we want it received well.

Here are some tips for giving advice:

Reflect what you hear – We hear things through our own filters. To truly understand someone, we need to check to be sure we received the same message, both in content and feeling, as it was sent. Share your interpretation!

Do they want your opinion, or are they venting? Try: "I have an idea that might be helpful," and proceed cautiously. Ask questions – sometimes people just need to be guided while they talk through their problems to find a solution

Offer insight, not recommendations – a study by Dalal and Bonaccio (2010) found that people thought the best advice they received expanded their knowledge of the problem, instead of telling them how to behave.

If recommending, use first person – "A thought I've had is" instead of, "You ought to."

Remember: "Advice is like snow: the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into the mind."
—Samuel Taylor



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Mindfulness – the Key to Success

Wikipedia defines mindfulness as the intentional, accepting and non-judgmental focus of one's attention on the emotions, thoughts and sensations occurring in the present moment." Mindfulness is proven to improve mental health, physical health and general well-being. Mindfulness can include yoga, deep breathing and meditation and helps control your emotions. Many organizations have seen tremendous gains from mindfulness programs.

Here are some simple steps to get started:

When you see yourself stressing, don't force yourself to calm down, simply accept your stress and know that later you will deal with it.

Do one thing at a time and focus on it with undivided attention. Multitasking and mindfulness are enemies to each other!

Why Leaders Should Journal

We know others observe us, but how do we observe ourselves? The benefits of journaling are multifaceted, especially for leaders. Journaling works its magic twofold: during the present moment of writing, and when you review past entries. By writing about what is important to you, why you value it, what you are working on, and what are possible solutions, you better understand your goals, motivations and strategies.

What to journal. Keep track of your goals, your values, your achievements, your thoughts, and your ideas. Writing goals can positively impact the likelihood that they will be reached. Keep your goals front and center so that you can refer to them when trying to make a decision.

Vehicles for journaling. A journal does not have to be a heavy bound book. Voice memos on smartphone or recorder; spiral notebook; or a computer entry can all be great vehicles for journaling. Think about what works best for you. Some of us are talkers and others are writers.

Examining the present. The first step is to be honest and start writing down your real thoughts. By reviewing your entries,

Really listen to others. It's amazing how much more you will get from the interaction.

Notice sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches and take time to reflect upon them.

Before starting your day, take a few minutes to go over what you want to accomplish. Focus on your breathing and calm yourself into an "I can do it." mentality.

Take breaks. Take a walk and truly notice your surroundings.

Periodically unplug. Remove yourself from the TV, the phone, and other people. Find a quiet space, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. If your mind starts to wander, go back to your original thought.

Do these multiple times. It may not work at first but with time it will be a powerful tool that will get you far.

you will have a better understanding of yourself, which will allow you to think clearly and make smarter decisions. This type of acknowledgement also brings clarity. Recognize your achievements as well as your frustrations.

Reviewing the past. Disclosing more privately than publicly and reviewing your entries in their entirety enables you to start to be your own therapist. Reading prior posts allows you to see the progress you have made and how you overcame difficulties. This increases your confidence. You can also see what habits have been picked up or let go.

Past experiences influence today's motivations and decisions and all this adds up to your being a better leader...and a better person!



How to Alienate Your People or What NOT to Do!

When you get upset, explode! Get angry at the next person who crosses your path. Your unfortunate victim will be so overwhelmed, they probably won't respond and you can pretend that your anger is justified.

Don't address issues. Nobody likes confrontation so if you want to alienate your employees, talk **about** them, not with them. As a result, people can blame each other. This creates chaos and people leave.

Let people know that you don't want to hear any bad news. After all, if you are not addressing important issues with others, why should they bother you? Make your motto: Ignorance is bliss!

Create a wall around yourself. Stay in your own bubble. Keep yourself isolated. OK, you can have one or two insiders but let people know that these are your "pets" and no one else is welcome in your circle! In fact, if you make these pets your spies, it really will keep others from confiding in you!

Underestimate people's intelligence.

Assume your people are not smart enough to understand complex issues. Don't ask for input or seek advice. If you, yourself, are having a hard time, how could anyone else have any ideas? This also helps limit the support you get later.

Don't train your people! Why invest in training your people? They probably don't want to advance. Be especially cautious about providing Leadership Training. After all, they might expect more from you as their leader and you certainly don't want that!

Don't prepare people for change. If change is coming, you don't have time to communicate it and this can create a vacuum where rumors and confusion thrive. This results in lowered morale and lack of enthusiasm and you can say, "I told you they wouldn't like it."

By following these seven simple steps, you will increase the chances of your people feeling alienated. Who knows? They might even resign!

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Have you ever said, "but I told them ..." You probably did, but the message you sent was not the message they received. Call Dr. Mimi to help improve communications!!!

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Her most requested programs are in the areas of Communication, including Team Building, Leadership, Conflict Management and Board Development.

Contact her for a FREE consultation!

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 by
Dr. Mimi Hull

THE
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**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

I've been at my current position for three years, and I do not get along with my co-workers. There are little cliques in the office that do a lot out of work (like drinking and bar-hopping), which I refuse to join. I would like a better relationship with my co-workers. How can I be a team player without compromising my professionalism?

—*Anti-Social*

Dear Anti-Social:

In life, we do not always get along with everyone. However, extra effort must be made to be friendly to the people you work with because you spend about 75 percent of your waking time with this group. Be respectful in all of your interactions. Do not participate in gossip, but make an effort to get to know your colleagues. Ask questions and pay attention to their answers. Practice the art of small talk and listen actively. Always show appreciation and be tolerant. Honor your commitments and offer to assist others whenever possible and appropriate. Admit when you are wrong and be humble when you are right. Ask your co-workers to join you for lunch or breaks and try not to be offended if they decline at first. Keep asking! It sometimes takes people a while to make friends. Continue being approachable and positive with a smile. Eventually, it will pay off!

—*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.

 by
Dr. Mimi Hull

THE
Corporate couch

**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

When the weekend is over, I find myself dreading the start of the workweek. I feel like I am in a rut and not going anywhere. As a result, I am doing my job, but barely. I know this is not healthy, but I am really beginning to not care. How can I change my attitude before it gets me in trouble?

—*Unmotivated*

Dear Unmotivated:

If you are unproductive or your work quality is questionable, chances are you will be stuck in this rut or the company may decide it is time for you to go. Talk with your supervisor regarding adding more challenging duties, or volunteer for special projects when available. Look for ways to improve your current position, or streamline your tasks to be more efficient. Take some time to determine if there is any part of your job or your organization that still motivates and inspires you. Reflect on what originally drew you to your current job. Are there other departments that hold more appeal to you? Ask yourself if your work is just a job, a calling or a career. Consider whether your primary focus is financial reward or career advancement. If you concentrate on doing your best at your current position, you will increase your opportunity for a promotion or even a lateral move to a position that is more to your liking.

—*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.