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The Corporate Communicator

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Removing Self Doubt

It's common to have feelings of doubt at work. You may find yourself asking questions such as, "Am I worthy of being here?" and "Is this more than I can handle?" Defusing these feelings will not only help you move forward, but it will give you a better outlook in general. Here are some helpful tips to eliminate self-doubt.

Recognize where your doubts come from. Looking to past experiences can bring great insights. Examining why you have these doubtful thoughts will be a step toward abolishing them.

Don't be a perfectionist. Trying to achieve perfection can trigger self-doubt because it is unachievable. Remember: Perfection can get in the way of the excellent!

Realize mistakes are inevitable.

Recognizing that blunders are continuously possible will help you face and defeat the self-doubt you have about them. Don't let the fear of making a mistake keep you from staying positive about your tasks. Errors not only bring a better understanding of the situation at hand, but they help us grow and develop.

Give yourself credit for your accomplishments ... regularly!

Recognizing your successes will push self-doubt further and further out of your mind. Set a day at the end of the week or month to go over all you have accomplished. You will notice that your accomplishments greatly outnumber your failures.

Management Tips for Great Leaders

Share Information - Be transparent with your employees. Keeping everyone on the same page keeps the ball rolling. Don't avoid sharing some bad news if it affects your people. Targeting your company's weaknesses may turn them into strengths!

Say, "Thanks" - Chances are your employees work hard. Let them know you appreciate their work. Words of encouragement and thanks go a long way.

Delegate, Delegate, Delegate - No matter who you are, you can only do so much! Make sure your 'plate' isn't too full, and ask for help when you need it. Sometimes it may be easier to do it yourself, but think of the learning experience that could take place if you delegate the project to a different

employee.

Set Small Goals - You know that saying, "it's not about the destination, but the journey," well, make the journey meaningful. Focus on small goals and you will achieve your larger ones. Creating a big picture with smaller milestones will help motivate people to work smarter.

Talk with people not about them - Part of being transparent is giving feedback when necessary. Whether it's positive, or negative, let your employees know how they are doing as close to the event as possible.

Lastly, **Stay Inspired** - As a leader, you set the pace. Make sure you're still inspired in the work you do to set a good example. Monkey see, monkey do!

(From "Leadership!" by Dr. Mimi Hull)

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Supporting Workplace Diversity

Workplace diversity and inclusion still need improving. Here are steps you, personally, can take to support diversity.

Vary your information outlets. We tend to follow people on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms who are similar to us. Schedule time to actively pursue media, articles, sources and people who are different from what you typically follow to get a broader perspective.

Look for different viewpoints. We grow when we hear different perspectives. Listen to people who don't share the same vantage point as you to widen your outlook and increase mutual respect. Remember, you don't have to change your perspective. Just listen.

Incorporate inclusion at work. Inclusion takes a conscious effort. Intentionally go to lunch with different groups of people,

especially around the holidays to hear different ways people celebrate, the foods they eat, and the values they cherish.

Start a diversity and inclusion group. Do things as a group that are diversity related like going to an ethnic restaurant, seeing a foreign play or movie, or reading and discussing a book about a different culture.

Be an example/mentor for others. You can lead by example, even if you're not in a leadership position. Your colleagues and boss will notice you're expanding your viewpoints. Supporting diversity can create more career opportunities for you. If your teammates see your success, they may follow your lead. If they are unsure where to start, share tips and educate them on what you've learned.

(From "Cultural Competence," a seminar by Dr. Mimi Hull)

The December Dilemma

It is often considered taboo to talk about religion at work. Yet, by adopting policies and practices that respect all spiritual principles, and by accommodating employees' beliefs, when possible, you can improve morale and increase productivity while reducing the risk of legal problems.

Around the holidays, we have a great opportunity to create an inclusive culture by learning about employees' spiritual preferences. Recognizing the variety of celebrations of Christian and non-Christian holidays is essential to the success of having people feel valued. Consider educating employees on various traditions and holidays while providing clear policies and instructions for managers on how to handle requests for religious accommodations.

Here are some helpful hints on how to handle some typical December Dilemmas.

Scheduling events - Consult a multi-faith calendar when scheduling office events. Remember, Jehovah's Witnesses don't celebrate holidays so when they don't attend, they are not being rude. In addition, different faiths

observe the Sabbath on different days which can influence when to hold various events. Remember, the gift of time is precious. This is a busy time of the year and giving people time can be the best way to solve the December Dilemma!

Office decorations - This can be a great opportunity for people to bring in an object that represents their spiritual preference. Make time for employees to share why their object has significance. The employee can also create a card to put by their object describing its significance for others to read.

Refreshments - If you are planning on food and drink, you may have employees that have kosher, halal, vegetarian and/or allergy considerations. Some employees don't drink alcohol and need not be made to feel like they have to drink to feel included.

Gift exchanges - Some people love them and some hate them! Don't make it mandatory. Another option is to do something charitable like volunteering at a shelter and/or having a toy or toiletry drive to help the less fortunate.

Accepting Compliments

Receiving compliments can be awkward if you don't receive them correctly. Using these 4 tips will help you convert those conversations from awkward to graceful in no time.

Don't downplay your accomplishments. Many people revert to modesty when accepting compliments to avoid sounding overconfident and arrogant. While being modest isn't necessarily a bad thing, saying things like "it was nothing," and "I definitely could have done better," can make the conversation go from meaningful to awkward. Instead of devaluing yourself and your accomplishments, a simple "thank you" or "I appreciate hearing that" is sufficient.

Don't question the giver's motivation. If you discount a compliment because you lack trust in the motivations of the giver, you may miss an important positive message. Most people are genuine about giving compliments so accept them until proven otherwise.

Don't fish for more compliments.

Angling for more praise can be unintentional, but there are many of us who do it. For example, have you ever known that you did well but responded with a "Really?" or "Do you think so?" What you are doing is asking the person giving you the compliment to again reassure you.

Keep body language in mind. If you're receiving a compliment with a skeptical look on your face and your arms crossed while you say "thank you," the person giving the compliment may not feel thanked. It's important to remember that body language and nonverbal cues play just as big of a role as the verbal cues when accepting compliments in a grateful and professional manner. When thanking someone, smile, maintain eye contact, and hold an open posture.

Remember, while it is always great to receive compliments, be sure to give others compliments when deserved!



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CC by
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**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

I recently got a promotion at work. I've been with my company for five years now, and I'm excited to get the chance to move up. Not only do I work really hard, I have a good attitude.

Recently, some co-workers have been acting kind of standoffish toward me. I have even received some negative comments from people I used to work well with. I'm wondering if it's because they didn't get promoted. Please tell me if I'm overanalyzing this situation. How can I fix this?

—*Promoted and Perplexed*

Dear P and P:

Congratulations on the promotion! It's OK to be excited and proud that your hard work is paying off.

Because you have a good attitude, use it to brush off the negative conduct of your co-workers. Don't take their comments so personally. Stay positive. If they mention the promotion, let them know that their time will come, assuming they are working hard and also being positive.

If there are overt reactions that affect your work, consider having a confidential conversation with them restating what they said and how you interpreted it. They may not have meant it in the way that you took it. If it continues after that, don't hesitate to contact your company's human resources department.

—*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.

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**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

Is the customer always right? We have a particular client whom we just can't seem to please. They are the only customers who constantly complain, and it is wearing on my employees. This is a large contract, and I would hate to lose it. However, I have had one employee quit over this client. What should I do?

—*Worn Out*

Dear Worn Out:

Instead of customer service, I prefer the term customer management. It's estimated that as many as 90 percent of customers who perceive themselves as having been wronged never complain, they just take their business elsewhere. So angry, complaining customers care enough to talk to you and have not yet decided to take their business to the competition. Meet with them and tell them that their complaints do not seem valid and that it does not seem that you can satisfy them. You want to keep their business, but if they continue to complain and cause dissension, they will need to take their business elsewhere. Eight out of 10 times they will beg you to keep them! However, know that there are some customers who are simply not worth the effort it takes to deal with them.

—*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.