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The Corporate Communicator

Www.HullOnline.com July-August, 2013

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Consider This ...

**"Progress involves risk.
You can't steal second base
and keep your foot on first."**

-Fredrick Wilcox



Lose Control!

"The best leaders are those that people hardly know exist." - Lao Tzu

Don't confuse, inspire, motivate and influence with control!

The role of a leader brings great responsibilities and increases the supposition of a need to control because, admit it or not, there is a bit of a control freak in all of us.

Overusing control can lead to failure and loss of respect. Often controlling behavior hinders the development of the very staff members you hired to support you and develop. *So how can you feel secure and also develop others???*

- Set expectations, priorities, checkpoints and timelines, but don't do the work itself.

- Be transparent. Share your plans, ideas and even worries about the project. This makes you approachable and gives your staff a chance to come up with their own (perhaps even better!) ideas.
- Monitor progress and only offer advice when asked.
- Let your employees know that it is okay to ask even "stupid" questions.
- Show trust by gradually assigning new tasks. Be careful to avoid overload by working with them to fit the task into their schedule.
- Allow your employees to do the task differently than you would have. Remember, it is the result that matters.

Stay Focused!

Distractions can kill your productivity! Anything from a smart phone to office chatter can make us lose focus and waste time. What can you do?

- Limit distractions. Turn off your phone(s) or work away from your desk to limit visitors.
- Keep your environment organized and tidy to limit your loss of focus by finding things on your desk to distract you and having what you need to get something done.
- Set clear daily goals. Construct a list of time scheduled priorities. Think how great it will feel when you cross something off your list.
- Create your "to-do" list as the **last thing** that you do when you leave work so it is there when you arrive in the morning.

- Set a specific amount of time to work on one project, rather than working until it is finished. You will actually get more done!
- Pay attention to your needs. Do you notice that hunger or boredom tends to precede distraction? Understanding your triggers can prevent your losing focus.
- Schedule short breaks to look forward to. This allows you come back from a short walk or music break much stronger and more focused.
- And last, but not least, when people ask if you are busy, say, "Yes." (And then let them know when a better time to talk would be.) People will not know they are killing your productivity unless you tell them.

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Reduce Your Summer Stress

You had a long day of work, struggled through an hour of traffic to get home, and the kids are going crazy! Now all you have to do is relax so that you can do it all over again tomorrow. Easier said than done, right? Here are a few instant stress relief techniques that will ease your mind after a long day.

1. Keep Moving: Did you know that simply 5-10 minutes a day of a repetitive act can reduce stress significantly? Try meditating, walking, or even painting to get your mind focused on your actions and not on all the deadlines running through your head.

Get Motivated!

We all have slumps and we need to know how to pick ourselves up when that happens. Here are some helpful hints to get and stay motivated.

- **Be positive!** You can choose to be negative, but why? Instead of saying I can't or won't, try saying I can and I will! Stop trying and start doing!
- **Enjoy today!** Schedule some time to do what you want to do. Fit it in even if it means getting up earlier or staying up a bit later.
- **Get out of your comfort zone!** Try something different, knowing you might make mistakes. They won't be fatal and you will probably learn something!
- **Commit publicly.** None of us likes to look bad in front of others. We will make the extra effort to do something we've told others we would get done, so share your dreams and aspirations.
- **Laugh both at and with yourself.** A sense of humor will get you far. Paraphrasing Mark Twain, if you don't laugh at yourself, you miss out on a lot of good humor!

2. Be "Here-and-Now." If you are mindful of what is happening in the present, you can prevent anxiety in the future! Focus your mind on one task or thought at a time.

3. Ease the Soul: Research shows that listening to 30 minutes of classical music may produce calming effects equivalent to taking 10 mg of Valium. Find a quiet place, listen to music, and relax.

4. Give Hugs: Social interactions with family, friends, and even cuddling with your pets can help you think better and open your mind to new thoughts and ideas. So when you get home to your family, show some love!

5. Two for Tea: Along with health and beauty benefits, a cup of green or black tea after work can reduce your stress levels. So grab a blanket, cuddle up on the couch, and sip some tea!
(Stress Mgt - Dr. Mimi Hull)

- **Get support.** Choose to be with people who make you feel good, encourage you and see your strengths. Building a support system will make you even stronger.
- **Finish what you start.** This will give you a sense of accomplishment and motivate you to do even more.
- **Reward yourself.** What would you love to have or do? Set that as a reward and work toward it. If it is something that will cost you money, regularly contribute to your own cause. Save the pennies and the dollars will come!
- **Treat yourself well.** Nourish your body, mind and spirit. Remember the best gift you can give others is you, so take care of yourself!



Doing a Presentation ... Watch Your Body Language!

A communication reality is that you cannot not communicate. Even if you are not talking, your body language communicates your feelings, emotions and attitudes. If you become aware and practice different body signs and signals, you will have more credibility and deliver better presentations.

Posture: Establish confidence and trust by projecting a cooperative posture. Avoid slumping, standing behind a podium or covering your torso with arms. Show an openness by standing straight and keeping your arms open and using them to stress a point.

Legs: Crossed legs show negativity. Also avoid ankle locks; this signifies "holding back."

Hands: Keep your hands visible. An open palm is a sign of honesty and trustworthiness, which also increases credibility. You might be surprised to learn that if you are prone to talking fast and using your hands, when you clasp your hands together, it will typically slow your

speech which builds credibility.

Eyes: Eye contact, which is encouraged in Western countries and Europe, helps control interactions. Look straight into the eyes of the members of your audience to get and keep their attention. Also, gaze at others and note their expressions to learn what they are thinking and if you need to adjust your presentation. Pupils actually dilate when a person is interested. Maintaining good eye contact establishes a connection with your audience.

Be mindful that body language and gestures differ among cultures. It is important to research your audience and know what gestures and signs are appropriate for the audience and USE them!



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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!!!

Dr. Mimi Hull is a fully licensed psychologist who has helped many organizations improve communication, leadership and team building. She can help you, your organization, your board and/or your staff.

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 corporate couch



Dear Dr. Mimi:

My job is important. I feel secure and it pays me well, but I am bored! Help!

—*Bored*

Dear Bored:

It is nearly impossible to like a job if you are bored. In other words, good jobs may be high or low paid, but all good jobs are mentally stimulating or, in other words, creative. While you may not want or even be able to change your job, you can do things that will make it less boring and more interesting.

- Make changes! Look for problems or situations at work that need solving and think about and come up with creative solutions.
- Change your routine. Try doing things in a different order.
- Change your relationships. See if you can take lunch at a different time and with different people.
- Change your pace. Try playing "Beat the Clock" and see how much you can get done in a newly allotted time.
- Learn something new. Ask someone to train you on what they do. And do some cross-training on what you do.
- Last but not least, make your personal time fun and creative. If nothing else, it will give you something to look forward to when you get off work.

—*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:

I am a poor listener. Now my employees are complaining, and as much as I would like to tell them they are wrong, they are not! My mind wanders and I forget what was said, or even worse, I interrupt people and start telling my story. It is a bad habit, and one I really need to fix. Do you have any helpful hints?

—*Signed, Huh???*

Dear Huh:

You are not alone. Most people have had training on other forms of communication but not listening. By recognizing you have a problem, your chance of improving is increasing!

If I had to give you one thing to do, it would be to pay attention. We live in a world of distractions. Work to reduce them. Do not try to multitask when someone is talking. It just doesn't work. Give the speaker your full attention, which at first will be painful to do.

Learn your listening style. Do you know what you listen for and what you tune out? If not, consider taking our Personal Listening Profile. Simply discovering your listening style will give you tremendous insights into your listening strengths and challenges.

Watch body language. There are a couple of effective tools to remember about body language. If the body language and the words are incongruent, the body language is probably more accurate. Be sure to catch the speaker's eye and then break the contact with a polite nod of your head. This shows that you are interested and paying attention.

Play the listening mind game. Try accumulating as much information as possible without revealing anything about yourself. This game will teach you to avoid thinking about your own stories and opinions while the speaker is talking. The greatest gift you can give another is your undivided attention.

—*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.