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fseap SOLUTIONS

Work-Life Balance: Try This

With all there is to do in our lives, it's easy to get on autopilot and lose track of work-life balance. This is normal, but relief comes with the habit of checking yourself. Here's how. Periodically ask yourself: 1) Am I using my time effectively in this task, or could I make changes to be more efficient? 2) Can I delegate this task? (For example, could you hire someone to rake the leaves and use the time for another purpose?) 3) Am I using my time for my life's priorities, or am I filling time with tasks that are less important? 4) Am I consciously planning my time with my family and loved ones or just letting the next event happen, whenever that might occur? Asking these questions causes you to hit a "reset button" to get you more of what you want to achieve in work-life balance.

Be a Pro at Defusing Workplace Tension

Conflicts can be costly in time, energy, and productivity. You can't eliminate them, but you can create workplace communication and team traditions that intervene with them sooner. The key is spotting conflicts in their initial stages of workplace tension. For example, a coworker on your team comes to work late, causing others to pick up the slack. Often, employees cope and adapt, and tolerate such behaviors. Resentments build, and a crisis erupts. Create opportunities to regularly communicate, perhaps at the end of meetings, to offer each other praise and social reinforcement and to discuss any workplace tensions. Doing so will reinforce a positive workplace, grow value within your relationships, capitalize on the power of peer influence, and allow you to feel happier in your job. Tensions may become smaller and fewer over time, but keep the tradition.

Time Management Tip: Optimize Time

Time pockets are unplanned, short periods of unfilled time in a busy day that are opportunities for you to be surprisingly productive and get things done. Take advantage of time pockets with a list of to-dos at the ready. Items that are important but not urgent are ideal—planning a meal, penning a letter, having a spare key made, getting a haircut, putting air in your tires, picking up the next greeting card. Have fun with time pockets, keep a list of completed tasks, and watch your productivity soar.

Have Less Concern about Child Day Care

Entrusting a child to a day care center for the first time produces feelings of apprehension. You want a healthy and secure experience so you can focus on work and not worry all day. Visit the web site of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.healthychildren.org [search: "your child care checklist"] and also visit www.childcareaware.org [search: "child care center checklist"]. These resources will help you evaluate day care issues quickly and ask the right questions. Knowledge is power, and you'll have it with these resources and, along with it, the peace of mind every new parent deserves.

Is Your Body Saying, "Enough!"

Fatigue is a result of prolonged mental or physical exertion; it can affect people's performance and impair their mental alertness. This leads to dangerous errors, accidents, and losses. With long hours, little sleep, and skimpy nutrition, you can easily experience fatigue. But will you be aware enough to know it? Lack of sleep is often a major contributor to fatigue, but feeling tired and sleepy won't necessarily be a symptom of fatigue. Instead, you lack motivation and energy. Your body will give you signals to quit. Pay attention to them. It's time to unplug, rest, and rejuvenate when these symptoms show up: 1) inability to concentrate increases; 2) emotions fluctuate, especially irritability; 3) conversational forgetfulness occurs—people may speak, and moments later, you won't recall what they said; 4) incidences of dizziness, clumsiness, forgetfulness, and misplacing things increase; 5) those who know you may say, "You look sad." (Research has shown "looking sad" is the key observation by others of those who are fatigued.*); 6) increase in acne and skin irritations may appear. When you are fatigued, think "SNL"—increase sleep, improve nutrition, lower your stress. See your doctor, EAP, or counselor if fatigue is frequent so you can get a better clinical assessment/referral as to its cause.

*www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc [search: 3738045]

Worrying on the Clock

According to a recent Colonial Penn Life Insurance study, 20% of workers are spending up to five hours per week on the clock thinking about their stressors and worries. Worrying may be the single most costly personal and business problem in existence, yet finding relief from it can feel so elusive. When you worry, your mind becomes stuck in a cycle of stress as it tries to analyze, fend off, or find a solution for some threat in order to prevent its negative effect. When fears are vague and you don't have all the information, exaggerated worries mount. Rather than suffer in this cycle, contact your EAP or a professional counselor and find the relief your mind is failing to deliver.

Source: www.coloniallife.com/about/newsroom [search: "worry"]

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