

CAREER HEALTH

Career Success

By Peggy Morrow

You are responsible for your own career success and development today. No longer can you depend on working for one company throughout your entire career. The average worker will be employed by at least four different companies throughout his work life and each of these may demand different skills and knowledge. That means keeping yourself constantly trained and updated in a number of areas necessary for success. How do you measure up to these in critical areas?

Problem solving. The use of good judgment, effective conflict resolution and plain problem solving will be much needed and marketable skills for the future. Not that they aren't already. But the need will just accelerate. You don't have to go to a training class to learn these skills, although it wouldn't hurt.

Observe how your supervisor handles specific situations and ask questions. Practice what you learn in real-life situations. Instead of just concentrating solely on your immediate duties, start asking "why?" Practice identifying some of the roadblocks that impede the workflow in your department. Try to come up with an innovative solution, no matter how small the problem.

Every time you encounter a problem, don't look for someone or something to blame. Instead ask, "What caused this problem and what can we do to prevent it from ever happening again?"

Technical skills. The technological tools of the future are going to continue to keep changing and require a constant learning curve. You will be expected to be able to deal with each new development with a minimum of effort. Devices such as cell phones, electronic organizers and palm

computers are already part of our lives; and software we haven't even dreamed of yet will be developed, along with new machines.

Ethics. Ethical behavior is more in the doing than in the telling about it. You learn this skill by observation over time. Take note of the way people you admire use their expertise in diplomacy, courtesy, and honesty in various situations. If possible, seek a mentor outside or inside of your company, or both.

Ability to weather constant change. The office of the future requires flexibility and demands being open to the new innovations and ideas that will be introduced. It is a critical skill in keeping yourself employed. No company wants people who say, "But why do we have to change? Everything is running fine right now!" If an organization is to thrive and prosper in the coming years they must keep moving at a rapid pace or soon go out of business.

Persuasiveness. In order to be successful in our ever-changing world, you must be able to persuade people to your way of thinking. Consider taking courses in communication and negotiation skills at your local community college or, if it is available, take advantage of your in-house training. Again, observe people who you think are already doing a good job with these skills and learn from them.

How would you rate yourself on these skills? If you think you could use some improvement, get busy and find ways to improve them in order to ensure your success in the years ahead.

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Staying on Track

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proud of your accomplishments and this will help you to stick with your program.

The most important tip to remember: You are responsible for your own life and how you lead it. There is a gap between your perceived obstacle and your reaction (to exercise or not). Within that gap is your power to choose. When you choose not to exercise, you are giving power to your excuse. Do or do not--it's your choice.

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"When all else fails, fresh tactics!"

-John Travolta



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VALUES - BASED QUALITY OF LIFE™ Newsletter

Because Making Smart Choices About Your Money Impacts The Quality of Your Life

Over the years, we have found that there are elements of your life that are more important than money. These elements - Physical Health, Relationship Health, Inner Health and Career Health - cannot be delegated.

We hope that you find these articles to be of value in improving the quality of your life.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Staying on Track

By Deborah L. Mullen, C.S.C.S.

You may have good intentions of sticking to your exercise plan, but obstacles will come up that may detour you. Remember, excuses only get in the way if you allow them to. Follow these suggestions to get going and stay on track: Write down your reasons for starting your physical activity plan on a 3x5 index card. Put this card where you will see it often. Write down your three most disruptive obstacles to activity and propose three realistic solutions.

• "Not enough time" is the most often used excuse. Increase your time management skills so that you can fit in your weekly exercise sessions.

• Schedule your weekly exercise sessions in a daily planner or calendar. Consider these as appointments with yourself. Give yourself the same respect you give others in keeping appointments. Your only reason

for not exercising should be if you're sick or injured. Remember--no more excuses!

• Enlist a friend or relative to share physical activity with you or to act as a helper. Support is one of the most important factors in exercise adherence.

• It can take up to 8 weeks to see some of the benefits you desire from your program. In the meantime, focus on short-term goals, like performing your weekly training sessions as planned, which will increase your self-confidence.

• Use a log sheet to track your progress. Consistency is the key, not how long or how hard you exercise. Do ten minutes when you don't feel like a longer workout. Write it in your log. The most important thing is that you did something. You'll be

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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

Ways to Minimize Distraction

By Tony Alessandra

There are lots of potential distractions. If you can't avoid them, minimize them. You do that by focusing totally on the speaker and paying attention. Here are four specific techniques that will help you concentrate while listening:

1. Take a deep breath. This will prevent you from interrupting, and will provide your brain with invigorating oxygen. Try it now, and as you're doing it, try to speak. It doesn't work very well, does it?

2. Consciously decide to listen. No matter who's speaking, pay attention and listen for information that's particularly interesting or useful. You never know what you might learn. As show-biz wit Wilson Mizner once said, "A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something."

3. Mentally paraphrase what the speaker is saying. This will prevent you from daydreaming about irrelevant and superfluous topics. You'll concentrate on the speaker instead of yourself.

4. Maintain eye contact. Where your eyes focus, your ears follow. You're most likely to listen to what you are looking at.

So, if you can't eliminate a distraction, use one or more of these techniques—breathe deeply, decide to listen, paraphrase, or maintain eye contact. They'll help you handle the distractions.

There are five basic reasons we fail to

listen well. First, listening takes effort. As I said, it's more than just keeping quiet. It means really concentrating on the other person. An active listener registers increased blood pressure, a higher pulse rate, and more perspiration. Because it takes so much effort, a lot of people just don't listen.

"Sometimes you have to do what you don't like to get to where you want to be."

-Tori Amos

Second, there's now enormous competition for our attention from radio, TV, movies, computers, books and magazines, and much more. With all these incoming stimuli, we've learned to screen out information we deem irrelevant. Unfortunately, we also screen out things that are important.

Here's a third reason why we don't listen well: We think we already know what someone is going to say. We assume that we have a full understanding right from the start, so we jump in and interrupt. We don't take the time required to hear people out.

The fourth reason has to do with the speed gap - the difference between

how fast we talk and how fast we listen. The average person speaks at about 135 to 175 words a minute, but comprehends at 400 to 500 words a minute. For the person who's not listening well, that's plenty of time to jump to conclusions, daydream, plan a reply, or mentally argue with the speaker. At least that's how poor listeners spend the time.

And the fifth reason we don't listen well is because we don't know how. We do more listening than speaking, reading, or writing. But I bet you've never had a course in listening, have you?

I think listening is the most neglected and least understood of all the aspects of communication. And, largely, this weak link springs from bad habits. In short, we haven't been trained to listen.

An untrained listener is likely to understand and retain only 50 percent of a conversation moments after it's finished. This retention rate drops to an even less impressive 25 percent just 48 hours later. So an untrained listener's recall of a conversation that took place more than a couple of days ago will always be incomplete and usually inaccurate. No wonder people seldom agree about what's been discussed!

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INNER HEALTH

The Daily Ritual of Champions: A Philosophy of Life

By Ron Kurtus

To achieve your purpose and get the most out of your life, perform the following steps as a daily ritual:

1. Count your blessings and be thankful for what you have
2. Live your life as a Champion
3. Enjoy the adventure of life and help others enjoy theirs

This lesson will explain those steps. There is a mini-quiz near the end of the lesson.

1. Be thankful

No matter what problems you have or how bad things may seem, there is always something to be thankful about. Don't dwell on the negative. Think of the good things you have, and the problems and challenges will soon diminish or even disappear.

Examples

People who have lost all their belongings in a natural disaster often will say, "At least we have our lives and none of us was seriously hurt." That is something for them to be thankful of, despite their material losses.

Then there is the story about the man who was unhappy because he didn't have any shoes. When he saw a handicapped person with no feet, he realized how lucky he was.

You know whom to thank

Be thankful; and you will know whom to thank every day, according to your beliefs.

2. Live as a Champion

This doesn't mean you must be the world champion. Instead, you are a person who acts and feels like one who can achieve anything. You may also champion a worthy cause to help other people.

In order to be a champion in anything you do, you must fulfill the five basic areas in life. We call them the 5 Powers of a Champion.

"I always try to balance the light with the heavy - a few tears of human spirit in with the sequins and the fringe."

-Bette Midler

· Be healthy

Take care of yourself. Strive to be physically, mentally and spiritually healthy. You feel good when you're healthy.

· Be knowledgeable

Always seek to learn, so that you'll be skilled in what you want to do. You feel sure when you're knowledgeable.

· Be excellent

Strive to achieve your goals; do a good job and have confidence and self-esteem. You walk tall, when you know you are worthy.

· Be valuable

Seek to be important and valuable to others. This is the crux of good relationships, as well as business. Value in relationships includes listening and caring about the other person. A good friend is a valuable commodity.

People reciprocate your actions by providing something valuable to you.

· Be honorable

Try to always be honest, courageous and reliable. Try to be a person of good character. Others will respect you for your integrity.

3. Enjoy life and help others enjoy theirs

Seek to enjoy the adventure of life. Celebrate your achievements. Use your setbacks as challenges to overcome. If you are in a competition, congratulate the winner.

A major part of enjoying your life is to help others enjoy their lives. Help people succeed. That is what it is all about. That is your purpose.

Help to improve society and improve the world.

Summary

Follow this way of thinking every day to make yourself a Champion.

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