

WORK • LIFE • EXCEL

Work • Life Tips

▶ Interruptions at work not only cause you to make mistakes, but also reduce the quality of your work if you happen to be a writer, say researchers at George Mason University's Department of Human Factors and Applied Cognition. A lot of us write for our jobs. A recent study showed the importance of eliminating interruptions while trying to produce important work that requires creativity, such as writing. The research was seen as a serious indictment for distractions, especially unplanned ones such as Facebook pings, incoming email, ringing phones, and other unpredictable distractions in your work environment. <http://humanfactors.gmu.edu/articles/7043>.

▶ The FDA is warning about powdered pure caffeine being marketed to consumers and recommends avoiding this product, which has led to at least one teenage death. Of particular concern is the fact that bags of caffeine powder are being sold on the Internet. A single teaspoon of pure caffeine equates to about 25 cups of coffee, and even very small amounts of the powder can cause accidental overdose or death. Parents should be aware that these products may be attractive to young people. Overdose is signified by rapid, erratic heartbeat, seizures, and death. Source: www.fda.gov [Search: caffeine powder].

▶ Over 29 million Americans have diabetes, and eight million don't know it. Just under half of these Americans are over age 65. And 80 million Americans have pre-diabetes and are at risk of incurring diabetes. Diabetes leads to chronic, debilitating health problems. If you're at risk, learn more and start with a simple tip to help you lose weight: Drink a glass of water before each meal. It could help save your life by reducing your risk for diabetes, because it's been proven in many studies that drinking water before each meal can help with weight loss. Source: National Institutes of Health, National Diabetes Education Program.

Positive Thinking and Productivity

The power of positive thinking leads to increasing your productivity, not just feeling hopeful and upbeat. Positive thinking fires up a can-do attitude, reduces stress, attracts others (resources) to you, and causes you to be task-focused, proactive, and have more energy. All contribute to improved productivity. Whatever your workload, positive thinking can often remove the drudgery from it. A positive mental attitude rubs off on others, making it more likely they'll interact with you and others in the same way. This positive contagion is well understood by employers, which means that many employers will first hire you for a positive attitude and teach you the job skills later. A positive mental attitude is not something that magically appears; you must acquire a positive attitude and then maintain it. Explore how to create a positive mental attitude and maintain it and watch the results and impact on your life over the next 30 days.



Secrets to Gaining Influence at Work

You have an impressive résumé and tons of experience—why aren't you being sought at work for your expertise? The answer is initiative. Initiative takers are seen as leaders, and your résumé is secondary to how you are perceived by your actions in the workplace. Initiative takers naturally expand their own influence and value by being willing to take on new things. When they do this appropriately without elbowing or appearing overzealous, managers and peers seek them for their opinions and solutions. Speed your ascent to becoming the perceived “resident expert” by taking more initiative.



Subtler Signs of Teen Drug Use

Rolling papers, Visine®, and the smell of pot on clothes—they're signs of probable marijuana use, but subtler signs and symptoms also exist. These include increased willingness to do errands in the evening (as a reason to meet friends and smoke pot) and unqualified requests for more money/allowance, sudden allegiance to friends you don't know, and discarded seeds in pants pockets or a trash can. The following behavioral symptoms may also point to depression, but also potential marijuana use: Sudden rejection of family activities once valued and enjoyed, having low energy, demonstrating apathy about poor grades in school, and experiencing loss of ambition, goals, or interests, accompanied by isolation in the bedroom. Source: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/>.



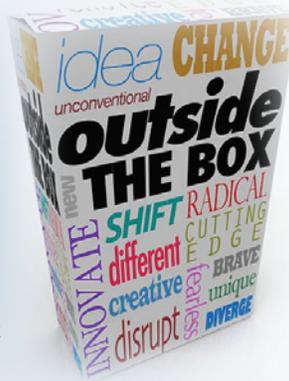
Depression in College: What Parents Should Know

Most young people heading off to college are eager to experience all that it offers, but some will also experience clinical depression, a treatable mental illness that affects over 10 million adults with about 9% being between the ages of 18 and 25. Spotting the disease early can make for more successful treatment. If you're a parent, be aware of any family history of depression that increases the risk, but you should also guard against misconceptions about depression, such as symptoms of loneliness, stress, being disorganized, disappointment with classes, or the breakup of a former high school romance. All are stresses and cause sadness, but are not root contributors to major depression, which is a disease. To intervene sooner, be aware of any period of two weeks or longer during which there is

either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in school, and undesirable changes in sleep patterns, eating, energy level, concentration, and self-image. Mental health counseling is available on college campuses, and depression is a key complaint. Don't allow stigma to delay a referral to effective, professional help. Source: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov> [search: "college depression"].

How to Be an "Outside the Box" Problem Solver

A solution to a seemingly impossible problem at work may appear by thinking "outside the box." This is a learned skill anyone can master, not a mysterious attribute of brilliant minds and cutting-edge companies. To be an outside-the-box problem solver, master these three principles. Principle #1: Free the Brain. This means stop thinking about the problem and get some breathing room by participating in a completely unrelated activity—fishing, jogging, showering, or walking on the beach. This detachment frees your brain from the stress being created to find a solution. Principle #2: Eliminate Roadblocks. You won't find solutions with inhibitions, your ego, close-mindedness, fears, and negativity getting in your way. Let loose, and give yourself permission to "get sloppy" and "get messy"—allow discovery to take place without restrictions and prohibitions. Principle #3: Be a "Resource and Inputs" Hound. Reading books, studying solutions to similar problems, thinking backward, drawing the problem on paper, and brainstorming with others—all these tactics supply you with informational "inputs" that can speed the way to your solution.



Coping with Loss in Divorce



If you are facing divorce, you'll experience a variety of emotions and stresses, but one of the most underestimated feelings is loss. Even amicable divorces can be affected by loss—loss of a shared vision of the future, financial security, experiences and routines, and possessions. Time with children and identity as a couple are also subject to loss. Loss is not just giving up something tangible like a house; it also encompasses things that are part of you and your daily experience. You may not give much attention to things like a routine, an expectation, or a pleasant view out a window, but all are at risk of loss. With a divorce, a lot of losses can hit you at once. With awareness, you can master challenges in your life, but remember that big changes often require investing time and attention to recovery, and divorce is one of these changes. Get support or see a loss counselor, especially if you experience anger, anxiety, and fear as a result of these losses.



August Is National Immunization

We all need vaccinations or immunizations to help protect us from serious diseases. Immunizations are not just for children. There are many for adults and special ones for adolescents. Dozens of changes have been made in the last couple of decades in the recommended vaccines that people should get, so it can all be a bit confusing. Do you know what vaccines you need or which ones you're missing? The following link will lead you to immunization schedules for children, teens, and adults. Talk with your health professional if you have questions to make sure that everyone in your family gets the shots they need. Immunization Schedule and information link: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/>.