

# THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

Wellness, Productivity & You!

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## Getting Anger Out of the Way

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All of us experience anger, but we may not have learned to deal with it well when growing up. When angry, we may have been told that it was inappropriate, or we came to that conclusion by not having it acknowledged or accepted, especially by parents or caregivers. Unresolved anger, and learned ways of coping with anger, can contribute to problems in relationships. These problems could appear as depression, grief, frustration, and violent reactions to conflict. Is anger getting in the way of a happier relationship with someone you love? The source of problems in your most valued relationships may stem from a need to understand anger better, deal with unresolved anger from the past, and learn better ways of managing anger in the present. The EAP can help.

## Join the Club! But Do Something

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Look beyond simple membership in a professional association to enhance your resume. Employers are impressed by your professional affiliations, but be prepared to say what you have done. Do what most association members don't do—join a committee, volunteer to be the chairperson of something, or become an active leader. Such involvement may mean a lot to your employer. It demonstrates that you are actively influencing the future of your profession. That sends a valuable message—one that others aren't sending.

## P.P.S. Is for Managing Stress

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Fight the negative effects of stress by incorporating three key principles in your stress management program: *preparation, prevention, and support*. *Preparation* includes activities that build resistance before stressful events are experienced (for example, getting enough sleep, eating balanced meals, exercising regularly, and balancing work and play). *Prevention* includes steps such as scheduling time effectively, making effective decisions early and often, practicing assertiveness skills, and maintaining a positive attitude. *Support* may include talking with others, meeting with support groups, or drawing on one's religious or spiritual beliefs.

## Your Unique Selling Proposition

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Any successful business has a "unique selling proposition," or USP. That business is doing something differently or better than the competition, so customers prefer what it has to offer. Do you have a USP as an employee—or perhaps more than one USP? Chances are you know a co-worker who is very conscientious, a wiz at solving problems, a great team player, or perhaps a super speech giver. These employees have a USP. If you have not identified your USP, paying attention to positive feedback about your performance from coworkers and evaluators can give you a clue. Build on these work traits. They may be keys to your advancement.

## Directions for Decision Making

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Human decision making has been going on for thousands of years. However, wise decision making, although teachable, is still learned by most people through the school of hard knocks. Get better outcomes with your decisions using these tried and true tips and techniques:

- (1) Don't use all emotion/feelings or pure logic in every decision. Instead, consider whether a blend of emotion and logic is best for the decision facing you. Blending these "tools" often produces more satisfying outcomes.
- (2) With every decision, consider: Is this my decision to make or someone else's? Can this decision be made gradually, or must it be made immediately? Who is affected by the decision?
- (3) Think of alternatives and imagine all the choices by brainstorming, and asking "Where can I find more information so I know all my alternatives?"
- (4) Ask, "Which alternative best matches my values?" In other words, which choice is consistent with what you believe is important, right, and wrong.
- (5) Imagine what outcome will ensue from each alternative.
- (6) Decide and act. Putting off necessary decisions often produces more difficult choices later.

## Myths can Make You Miss Out on Self-help Groups

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Someday you may have a personal problem best resolved or managed by learning from the experience of others. A 12-step or similar self-help group may be the way to go. These are powerful forms of help, but will myths and misconceptions about 12-step groups hold you back? Here are a few of the most prevailing myths. *Myth #1:* "People in 12-step groups are unsuccessful people." *Fact:* People in 12-step groups are from all walks of life—from every occupational group, every class of society, every affiliation, race, creed, and orientation. *Myth #2:* "Self-help groups are religious or 'cult-like.'" *Fact:* 12-step groups do not promote a religious message. They run only through facilitation by volunteers who share or rotate duties. People who join 12-step groups may or may not have religious beliefs. *Myth #3:* "I will be forced to talk or share my problems with people I don't know." *Fact:* The only requirement is a desire for the type of help offered by the self-help group. Some people go to 12-step meetings and only listen until they are ready to talk. Is there a self-help group for the problem you face? Talk to the EAP to find out.

## Assessing Your Assertiveness

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You made a commitment to be more assertive, but you still feel guilty and hold back on stating what you want, need, or feel in an honest and clear way. Your struggle with assertiveness could mean that beliefs about your rights being second to others have not changed. Don't get frustrated, get more focused. Choose a few situations that frequently occur at work or home where you want to be more assertive. Practice assertive behavior in these situations. Add more situations later as you become accomplished. Keep a journal of your progress.

## Could You Benefit from Counseling?

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Could you benefit from counseling to solve a personal problem? If you have seriously considered the question, the answer may be yes. Whatever the problem, has it reached the point where you feel you cannot manage it on your own? Do you see a gradual harmful effect of the problem on other parts of your life? Is the problem worse now than it was when you first noticed it? Has the problem caused you to lose interest, energy, or motivation for other aspects of your life that should be giving you joy and feelings of excitement? Do you frequently experience emotions or behaviors that you cannot successfully manage—anger, anxiety, rage, violence, thoughts of self-harm? Have your relationships with people you care about been harmed as a result of the problem? Does the problem threaten your financial security or job? Frustration at the inability to solve the problem and certainty that it would go away if only you could discover the answer are often signals that counseling could be for you.