



# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

*Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program*

November 2012

Page 1

## Six Tips on Dealing With Conflict at Work

by Adam Young

Every organization has a staff with a diverse set of personalities, backgrounds and experiences. Conflict is inevitable in organizational settings when people who are extremely different work together on a daily basis. Whether it is a clash of personalities, a misunderstanding, or disagreement in the work itself, there are constructive ways to approach these situations. Conflict is often seen as a negative occurrence, which is not necessarily true. It can be an opportunity to open the door for communication, to learn something new about another individual, or find a more effective way of working. Here are some tips that may help you in the next confrontation.

### **1. Do not use verbal aggression**

If someone were to physically assault you, your first instinct is to defend yourself. It is no different when being verbally assaulted. If a co-worker accuses or blames you, you instinctively guard yourself from the attack. Retaliation or responding with a verbal attack is common. If you believe you are not at fault, be sure to communicate that without the use of personal attacks or defensiveness. This may be difficult in the moment, especially if you are being accused of something you know is not true, or if you are blatantly insulted. However you are more likely to get the point across if the other person does not feel threatened. Maintain your maturity and professionalism, no matter the outcome, instigation will not help the situation.

### **2. Be open**

Misunderstandings are often the cause of these conflicts. If a message involves a line of communication involving many people, information can be lost, or messages can be misinterpreted. Be open to the fact that there may be something you do not know, or that the other person may have a point although you may be right. Be open to creating a discussion about fixing the problem, instead of pointing the finger. This is when conflict can be useful. By listening, understanding, and if possible, sympathizing with the other person, the argument can become a discussion. This is an opportunity to create a flow of new ideas, which can not only solve the problem at hand, but prevent future disagreements, and strengthen your work relationship.

### **3. Focus on the problem**

It is very easy to point the finger or play the blame game when trouble arises. As easy as it is, it is not useful or productive. The main concern is to find a solution to the problem, not to determine who was wrong. If it pertains to the issue at hand, stating who did what may clarify the problem as a whole. If the problem is related to the work itself, keep the conversation focused on exactly what is wrong, and what can be done to fix it. If conversation leans towards accusations, lead it back to a safe space where both parties are focused on ideas. If the problem is regarding the work relationship, do not focus on the person's faults. Talk about what can be done to effectively work together. If you must tell someone you think they are at fault, do not use insults, and explain how it is affecting the work.

## *Webinar Reminder*

### *Conflict Resolution*

Connect with Deer Oaks and a trained counselor for live confidential chats.

### When:

November 21, 2012

### Session Times (CDT):

- 12:15 PM to 12:45 PM

- 6:00 PM to 6:30 PM



## Six Tips on Dealing With Conflict at Work



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### **4. Stay cool**

In heated situations, we have a tendency to speak first and think after. This results in aggression which aggravates the conflict. Instead, pause before you speak, think about what the person has said to you, and respond appropriately. By giving yourself this time to think, you cool down, and you are less likely to speak with anger. A lot of the time, the other person wants to argue for the sake of arguing. When you stay calm, they will see their tactics are not useful, and will either give up or choose to talk as calmly as you are. You will also be able to come up with a more insightful reply that can lead the argument into a discussion.

### **5. Find a common ground**

If people have a common ground, working together to reach it can be less troublesome. Determine what you really want, and try to determine what the other person is looking for. Use this information to align your desired outcome with theirs. It is easier to open up to someone and share your true thoughts and ideas, if you know that they want what you want.

### **6. Tell a supervisor**

If all else fails, telling a manager or supervisor may be the best option. If this is the course you choose, be sure to explain how you tried to fix the problem before approaching them. They want to know you can work independently and at least made an effort. Be sure to show them how the resolution of this conflict will ultimately help them. They do not need to know who was at fault in the situation, but if the work is being affected, and you can prove this, they are going to step in and help change it. Explain the problem clearly, and the benefits for the manager or the company as a whole if the problem is worked out.

Most of the time, when conflict arises, there is no way to avoid it. The result is based on how we approach it. Once you accept that conflict is unavoidable, it no longer is a problem. Instead, it becomes a chance to change an inefficiency or strengthen a relationship. By keeping communication open, being aware of the present situation, and not concentrating on winning, coming to a resolution that benefits both parties can be achieved.

Article Source:

EzineArticles, <http://ezinearticles.com/?6-Ways-to-Deal-With-Conflict-at-Work&id=2987746>



## Drive-thru eating driving you crazy?

Are you driving through fast-food windows, mindlessly eating while you work, or munching while driving?

You may be out of touch with your eating, and then it's easy to overeat, said Dr. Jenny Conviser, an expert in the treatment of eating disorders.

You can establish mindful eating patterns. She offers this advice:

- **Carve out time for meals.** Don't get a lunch break? Fight for one, even if it's 15 minutes. Research suggests that our brains don't even fully register the things we're eating while doing something else.
- **Eat sitting down.** If you're going to eat at the refrigerator, pull up a chair! If you commit to eating only while sitting down (at a table no less!), You are less likely to mindlessly munch. And eat without distractions, like the TV or computer, so you can fully experience what you are eating.
- **Learn what "hungry" feels like.** Ask yourself if you really are hungry before you eat, or are you eating due to the time of day, habit, or to cope with stress? If you are hungry, allow yourself to eat and plan for healthy snacks during your day. Driving yourself to extreme hunger by skipping meals or not allowing yourself to snack can result in unhealthy binges.
- **Notice each sensation.** Next time you sit down to eat something, take a moment to notice the shape, the color, the size. Bring the food to your nose and inhale the aroma. When you take a bite, notice how the texture feels on your tongue, and chew fully before swallowing. Take a moment before taking another bite. Sure, this takes a few extra minutes, but you get to experience food as it's meant to be—a full sensory experience.
- **Check in with yourself.** Try stopping for a break midway through your meal for a few minutes. Are you still really hungry? If so, keep eating, and check in again after a few more bites. If not, maybe it's time to stop and save the rest for later.

Health-e headlines <sup>TM</sup>



## Surprisingly simple ways to prevent disease

Five new studies support simple steps to prevent illness and improve overall health. The American Journal of Medicine reports the following based on multiple studies in several countries:

- 1) Eating fresh fish regularly may reduce your risk of colorectal cancer.
- 2) Still trying to stop smoking? Try acupuncture and hypnosis. Several studies found smokers had good success.
- 3) Have your teeth cleaned regularly. Scaling removes harmful bacteria. You can reduce your risk for heart attack and stroke.
- 4) Talk to your doctor about weight loss. People who were moderately obese, followed a diet plan from their doctors (not a weight loss clinic), and stuck with it at least 12 weeks, lost over 10% of their body weight.
- 5) Low-dose aspirin, for people who can take it, offers preventive cancer benefits along with heart healthy help.

Health-e headlines <sup>TM</sup>

## An EAP Reminder

*Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.*

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.





## Seasonal Tips

### WHAT TO DO WITH HOLIDAY LEFTOVERS

Make a game plan for leftovers to avoid overeating, say experts from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

You can turn holiday leftovers into new healthy dishes by reusing the following foods:

#### **White turkey meat**

- Whip up your favorite chili recipe, but use turkey instead of ground beef.
- Wrap turkey, spinach leaves, and 2 tablespoons of cranberry sauce in a whole wheat tortilla.

#### **Mashed potatoes**

- Mix in a healthy helping of cooked vegetables for a new twist on this side dish. Try cauliflower, broccoli, green beans, or carrots.

#### **Sweet potatoes**

- Make a protein-packed sandwich spread or veggie dip by pureeing one-half cup sweet potatoes with one-half cup chickpeas. Eat only 1 or 2 tablespoons at a time.

Health-e headlines <sup>TM</sup>

### THE GREATEST GIFT

Forget that fancy wrapped gift box. The chance to spend time with loved ones can be more valuable than the most expensive gift, says Sheri Bridges, professor of marketing at Wake Forest University.

Memories of the occasion will live on long after the contents of a ribbon-wrapped box have been forgotten or discarded.

How to give the gift of memories this holiday? Bridges offers a few ideas.

- *Take a day trip.* Go to the zoo, a favorite restaurant in a nearby city or visit a town with quaint shops. Follow-up by giving the gift of a photo book of the trip, and as the years pass, the pictures become reminders of the feelings and fun of time spent together.
- *Offer tickets* to a football or basketball game, a play or a musical performance — anything that isn't part of the recipient's normal routine.
- *Do chores.* Baking cookies, wrapping gifts, taking down decorations, straightening up the garage, cleaning out closets—any task that seems hard when performed alone can become fun when shared.
- *Relax and recharge.* A massage, pedicure, facial, sauna or steam bath can be a welcome way for someone you care about to spend time pampering themselves rather than others.
- *Time alone, together.* Unless you make a special effort, it can be hard to find time to spend with family and friends. Watching a favorite movie, sipping hot chocolate in front of a fire, playing Scrabble—these are things that require a real time commitment and focus, and say, “I am putting you first now.”



Health-e headlines <sup>TM</sup>



## How To: Help Aging Parents with Money Management

Are you in the sandwich generation? Those in the sandwich generation are caring for their own children while also assisting aging parents. This can be a financial stress on you, so it's important that you figure out a plan that helps both your parents and yourself. As with most important financial and personal situations, it's essential that you and your spouse be in agreement with how to assist your parents with money management.

### ***Analyzing your parents' financial situation***

When helping aging parents with their finances, the first step is to understand exactly what their current financial situation is. This discussion is easier if your parents live close to you, but regardless of their residence, talk to them about their finances in person. Understand what bills your parents currently have and whether they are being paid on time, as well as what their savings and revenues are. If everything is in order and your parents aren't overwhelmed taking care of things on their own, then you probably only need to check on them periodically.

However, if your parents are having financial difficulties, it's in your family's best interest to identify the problem and work toward a solution. Determine if the problem is with cash flow, or with the work required to actually pay the bills. These are two very different problems, with very different solutions.

### ***When the problem is lacking the financial means***

If your parents do not have the financial means to cover their bills, you'll have to consider some options, such as selling their home or taking out a reverse mortgage. There is also some financial assistance for seniors available. The National Council on Aging has set up a web site that offers information on benefits available to seniors. Look into all options before choosing the one that's best for your family.

### ***When the problem is the work required to pay the bills***

Your parents may have the financial means to cover their bills, but could have difficulty with the amount of organization and work required to pay their bills and manage their investments appropriately. In that case, you or another family member may want to consider taking over bill payments. You could set up automatic bill pay for most of the bills, and manually pay the others. For financial advice, consider hiring a personal financial planner.

Regardless of the current situation and solution, you or another family member need to continually assess your parents' financial standing, as it could change even in a short period of time. Keeping the lines of communication open is the best way to ensure you help manage their situation, and avoid any financial penalties from late payments.



### **About Money Management International**

*Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit [www.MoneyManagement.org](http://www.MoneyManagement.org).*