MYgroup
McLAUGHLIN YOUNG

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MY employee newsletter

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Hugging in the Workplace

Nearly every magazine from Forbes to Inc. has examined hugging in the workplace. It's highly controversial with no universal opinions. Plenty of do's and don'ts, and dozens of online legal opinions exist about who, what, when, where, and how long to hug or not hug. In 2017, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit stated that hugging can contribute to a hostile workplace if it is unwelcome and pervasive. Although it's not a prohibited behavior, it appears that you probably should avoid a reputation for expressing affection in this way—and most experts agree that you should avoid hugging those you supervise. If you are the hugging type, be aware that some people do not like to be touched. And if your organization has rules or policies regarding hugging (some, like many educational schools, do), follow them.

A Little Taste of Alcohol

Tasting and sipping alcohol in childhood with adult permission is associated with more frequent drinking and an additional "drink per drinking episode" later on in teen years. Although addiction professionals have long discouraged the practice of introducing children to alcohol ("the European model"), they now have research backing them. Similar studies have shown earlier drinking leads to a higher likelihood of alcohol problems later. Know your family history (genetics), because it's a strong predictor of substance addiction later in life.

Research: http://www.buffalo.edu (Search: "letting kids sip")

Counseling for Procrastination

Many people who struggle with procrastination find it mind-boggling to try to self-correct this habit. Despite having access to a world of tips on how to overcome their tendency to put things off, deadlines still challenge them. Don't keep fighting with your inability to get started on tasks and to stick with them. Procrastination is a symptom, usually of another issue undermining your ability to "just do it." Depression, fear of success, fear of failure, or even addiction and other health issues can undermine the ability to self-motivate—leaving the "victim" immobilized until the fear of a deadline forces them to act. If this sounds like you, begin today to track your procrastination, make notes, and take your personal experiences to a mental health counselor or your EAP—you can slay this saboteur of productivity.

Prove You Are Adaptable

Few employers can promise that change will not disrupt the job you are seeking. They need you to be adaptable, but they may not ask. Instead, they will look for evidence in your work habits that prove you don't fear change. These include having backup plans, coping well with sudden redirection, always having different approaches to problems, and evidence of your ability to make lemonade out of lemons. Be prepared to talk about a big problem or sudden crisis you faced, and how you weren't rattled, instead overcoming or achieving new heights from it. You'll make the right impression.

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Is Social Media Changing You?

Are you aware of social media's effect on you? Does it interrupt your activities, consume too much of your time, adversely affect your mood, keep you inside on sunny days, cause you to be late, distract your driving, or put the kibosh on your to-do list? Facebook and other social media platforms make their money based on usage and seek to have you spend more time online. Some studies have shown a little shot of dopamine—a hormone that creates a sense of pleasure—is released when we engage on social media, get a response back, or gain any satisfaction from the clicks, likes, and entertainment we experience. This leads to escalating use, and it's a powerful distraction when we are attempting to be productive. When our brains seek relief from stress or boredom, we reflexively turn to social media for a "pick me up." Many studies link social media use with depression and alienation from others. Gain more time in your life by reducing your social media use with the help of one of the many free apps that measure, control, and discourage use. They will tell you everything you want to know, including your accumulated hours from your days and weeks of social media engagement. Imagine what you will do with free time back in your life.

https://www.ama.org [Search: social media dopamine]

Why So Defensive?

Workplace communication sometimes includes receiving negative feedback or being confronted with a problem related to our work. Automatic reactions of defensiveness then follow. Remaining unruffled—staying composed and receptive even while feeling reactive—is a learned skill. Feeling defensive is natural when we feel a threat, but it has drawbacks in the workplace. Typically, it is a no-win response that keeps us from hearing others, interferes with solving problems, and sours relationships with those we depend on. Ultimately, defensiveness gives away your control and ability to shape the outcome you want from a difficult interaction. To reduce defensiveness at work, challenge yourself to pause before you react. For example, count to 10 in order to spend some time regaining control, which will help you avoid lashing out. For speedier results, use a mini-diary to track how well you stayed composed, what went well, and what you will do better next time.

How Are Your New Year's Resolutions Progressing?

Have you gotten off track or allowed your New Year's resolutions to slip to the wayside? Here are some ways to stoke your enthusiasm and get back on track: 1) Forget the guilt; instead, jump back in to working toward your goals. 2) Do a check: Was the goal too big or was it unrealistic? If so, pare the size or degree of required effort. For example, instead of exercising every day, make it your goal to exercise three or four days per week. 3) Journal about your progress. These written reflections are proven devices to help you maintain momentum. 4) Record your voice on a small, inexpensive pocket recorder enthusiastically and excitedly acting as though you have accomplished your goal. Play this recording regularly, and use it to motivate yourself to remain in a state of anticipatory excitement about achieving it. 5) Get going!

Relationships with Problem Drinkers

If you love someone who is a problem drinker, you may slowly acquire problematic ways of managing communications, social interactions, behaviors, and uncertainties you experience. These are normal responses to addiction-affected relationships. As the disease advances and you find yourself having to manage these things more often and experiencing emotional stress, your health may be adversely affected. Physical symptoms like stomach problems, depression, and sleep problems are only a few that you might experience. Talk to a counselor or your EAP. Learn the steps to wellness and intervention. You may feel your situation is unique. It is, but the dynamics of how to intervene with addiction in relationships are nearly universal. Call it "settled science" thanks to many who have sought help before you.