

WORK • LIFE • EXCEL

Work • Life Tips

▶ Get rid of “ums” in public speaking by practicing two techniques that almost guarantee you’ll douse most of them. Rehearse your presentation out loud six times in front of a mirror. However, during the last two of the six rehearsals, imagine your notes in your mind’s eye and imagine that you are actually reading your notes from this mental imagery as you speak. When it’s show-time, look at your audience and deliver the presentation while keeping your material in mental view. Anticipate a standing ovation.

▶ If you avoid gossip at work, do you also nip it in the bud when you find yourself in the presence of it? Maybe you need some help. Here it is: Remember the adage “Those who gossip to you will gossip about you to others.” And the most effective, tactful one-liner for gossip-stopping that every employee should know? “Let’s not go there.”

▶ **Stress Tip:** Perfectionism is dedication to the details rather than the goal. Many projects, tasks, and products don’t require perfection, so ask yourself whether good is good enough. If so, go forward and make changes later with the feedback you’ll receive. Chances are you will produce a superior result faster with this approach. Put feedback before perfection to enjoy work, reduce stress, and have better outcomes more frequently.

▶ The World Health Organization has developed a new risk assessment tool to determine a patient’s risk of a bone fracture during the next ten years. It’s being hailed as a medical breakthrough. The online calculator for medical doctors is based on research and a math formula (or algorithm). It’s called the FRAX (WHO Fracture Risk Assessment Tool). Search FRAX to learn more. Source: Medical News; *Journal of the American Medical Association*; April 2008.

▶ If you are networking, shaking hands, and passing out business cards and must be remembered at that special networking event or fund-raiser, try this time-tested trick to get your card noticed in the stack: Write something on the card in your own handwriting, such as “Great meeting you” or “Call me about ____.” Include your cell number. Later, this time-tested tactic will make your card pop out and get noticed by your contact.



Forearmed Against Gang Recruitment

If you live in a gang-ridden area, preventing your children from ever joining a gang is probably one of your key concerns. The inoculation technique that gang members use in recruitment and how you can counter it are seldom discussed. The inoculation technique of gang recruitment is a “presell” message

warning prospective gang members that parents or parent figures will tell them not to join a gang and will give many reasons to persuade them not to join. This prepares prospective gang members to resist gang-avoidance education. The counterapproach to this technique is to educate children about this psychological recruitment technique and to do some inoculation of your own. Let children know that gang recruitment includes this approach to inoculate them against parental warnings. Later, if or when children are approached by gang members, they will be more resistant to this seduction. Forewarned is forearmed.

BOUNCING Back With Resiliency

How well do you respond at work to anger, rage, frustration, or disappointment? Would you give yourself high marks for the speed at which you bounce back from these difficult experiences? This phenomenon is called resiliency. Resiliency doesn’t mean that you ignore your feelings, and it doesn’t mean that you’re in denial. Resiliency means that you have developed the ability to temporarily put aside these emotional events so you can apply yourself to the problem or crisis being experienced right now. Resiliency develops with practice, and it’s a clue to your leadership potential, because responsibility and accountability produce many opportunities for different types of disappointment. If you’re resilient, chances are you are a high achiever in your personal and work life. Develop and practice resiliency, and you’ll discover a life skill practiced by achievers in almost any profession.



Put Green Where It’s Seen

Don’t just think green—do green! Unless workplace rules or conditions make it impractical, consider bringing plants into your workplace. Plants release oxygen, and their foliage absorbs pollutants. Plants also have psychological benefits—so much so that many hospitals involve patients with growing and taking care of plants as a way to help improve psychological health. We are happier with plants. So if you’re looking for less stress and you have a streak of light at work, fill the space with a plant or two, and see if you don’t reap the benefits.



Soft Skills with Hard Returns

Are you an expert on your organization's product or services but still missing something that could help make you outstanding? It may not be technical know-how. Instead, you may be missing something else—an assortment of skills that research shows makes a difference

in the bottom line and in almost all employee success—soft skills. Soft skills, which are often the dynamic lifeblood of an organization, include a wide range of competencies: everything from your approachability (how easy it is to meet, know, and talk with you) to the proper way to shake hands, listen, solve problems, and more. Soft skills are predominantly people skills, and they are so important that they can make the difference in the success of your career. Although there are many types of soft skills, almost all fall into six categories: interpersonal skills, team effectiveness, social interaction, business etiquette, negotiation, and personal work habits (time, organization, self-motivation, etc.) Soft skills allow you to interact with others so your technical skills can do the most good for the most people. Soft skills empower you, help you interact, show you opportunities, motivate you to reciprocate with others, and help you interpret and communicate effectively. You may have tremendous technical knowledge, but often it is the ability to demonstrate and use the soft skills in the workplace that results in the recognition, advancement, and opportunities that you seek. If you want more of these things, find out more about soft skills development from your library, human resources department, training and organizational development team, or employee assistance service.



Next Time, You'll Be ASSERTIVE

Don't kick yourself for not being assertive. You'll get another chance soon enough. The next time, however, you'll be ready for it. Here's how: Make a decision about how you should demonstrate assertiveness *before* a situation occurs. Next, commit yourself to a better response. And then visualize yourself carrying out your response—sort of a "mental rehearsal."

When something happens, take a few minutes to examine your feelings about how you responded. Your feelings give clues to your success. But do you feel guilty for being effective?

If so, you may need a bit of coaching and support to get comfortable with assertiveness. Talk with a close friend, a professional counselor, or an employee assistance professional to get that person's perspective. If you didn't respond the way you hoped, decide what alternative response or responses you will make the next time. Keep going and repeat the process. This "staircase technique" to achieving goals works with other life's challenges as well.

National Employee Health and Fitness Day

The third Wednesday in May is National Employee Health and Fitness Day, sponsored by the National Association for Health Fitness. To get off the couch and get moving fast, find out how much inactivity is costing your business organization, work unit, office—even your whole community.

The East Carolina University Department of Health Education and Promotion has developed an Economic Cost of Inactivity Calculator. The easy-to-use tool, which is available online, provides an estimate of the financial cost of physically inactive people to a particular community, city, state, or business. It also provides companion resources and information to help plan for healthier workplaces and communities that are more supportive of physical activity. Find the calculator at <http://www.ecu.edu/picostcalc>.



When Teamwork Is Not Your Thing

If you like working alone and you're not excited about the idea of working on a team, remember that shuttle astronauts, who obviously must function as a team, didn't begin their careers that way. Competing for the top jobs they now hold took individualism. But they made it, and so can you. Your strong individualistic style may include honed skills that could make you shine on a team. They may include self-discipline, creative thinking, personal accountability, self-motivation, initiative, and the ability to organize. Many team members struggle with these skills, and modeling them may help others. Are you interested in being a leader? This could help you gain back a bit of the control that you must give up to be on a team!