

WORK • LIFE • EXCEL

Work • Life Tips

- ▶ It's been said, "Procrastination is the thief of time." But it's not the task you're avoiding; it's the magnitude, size, or pain linked to the task. Reduce the pain and you'll start moving forward. Divide any task into three to five steps. Make the first step small and no longer than five minutes in duration. Begin. Subsequent steps will probably follow immediately or shortly after. If you procrastinate at step two, apply the formula again beginning with that step.
- ▶ The "goals" section of a job description is often the shortest part. You know the duties, but do you know what the organization expects you to accomplish? Every job description includes powerful but often untapped leverage to help the organization meet its goals—which can also be the secret to your success. But what's the best way to discover it? Ask. Also pay attention to two things: what concerns your boss and what concerns your boss's boss.
- ▶ If only meetings could be quicker and more effective, right? To make this happen, experiment with a round table. A rectangular one makes it easier to pause or detach from group facilitation. A round table pulls people inward and facilitates interaction and forward movement of your agenda. No round table? Try making the maximum distance between participants 24 inches—no spreadin' out.
- ▶ Never throw out old appointment calendars. These gems contain a chronological treasure trove of your work history. They can prompt your memory to assist in beefing up your résumé, to recall valuable work experiences, and even to write that best seller someday.
- ▶ Twenty-first-birthday revelers attempting to down 21 alcoholic drinks is a highly prevalent and dangerous ritual among college students, says the first-ever scientific study on the practice. A shocking 34 percent of men and 24 percent of women report having consumed 21 drinks or more at some point, but the study demonstrates "21 for 21" is pervasive. The message is clear: Reach young people and educate them against the practice, which can lead to death by alcohol poisoning. Source: American Psychological Association, Press Release, May 15, 2008 (apa.org).



Walk for Your Health (and Your Wallet)

Walk for your health's sake and your wallet's too, especially if you are financially responsible for any of your own health care costs, such as co-pays for doctor office visits, medications, etc. Research from the HealthPartners Research Foundation (reported primarily to business organizations, not consumers) demonstrated that adults, especially those older than 50, who remain active and exercise regularly will significantly reduce health care costs to employers. Logically, if employers are saving money, so are you! Source: *Preventative Medicine (Journal)*, Oct. 2003.

Add Value to Your Job Interview

If you have a great résumé and the ability to discuss your skills, experiences, abilities, and what you can bring to a position, add one more element—the ability to discuss your work values. You'll be especially remembered after the job interview. The ability to

communicate enthusiasm, what "moves" you, and how your purpose in life relates to the position can make all the difference in a job interview. It takes some deeper thinking, but a fast way to organize your thoughts (or perhaps get clarity on whether you're in the right career) is to explore the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT)*, produced annually and updated by the federal government. This book contains thousands of job descriptions and related functions, but also much more. Each description includes a discussion of the work values that are satisfied by that job. Do your values match? You can quickly find out, and if they do, you'll know how to better talk about yourself in an interview—about the job and about your passion. Find the DOT at www.occupationalinfo.org.



Hazards Around Your House

Accidental death in the workplace is the key concern of safety professionals. However, did you know that the next most dangerous place for fatal accidents is the home? Unintentional death in the home is second only to automobile crashes! Household members older than 70 and younger than five are at the highest risk. People over 80 years of age are twenty times more risk than the average person. The biggest killer are falls—about 42 percent. June is National Home Safety Month, sponsored by the Home Safety Council. A lot is going on at this time of year—lawn mowing, barbecuing, swimming, gardening, and more—so the number of accidents increases. Source: Home Safety Council.





Project Management for Fun (and Profit)

Do you enjoy organizing, planning, and gathering all the necessary parts of a project together, then watching the fruits of your efforts come to life? If you have planned and organized a wedding or complex family vacation, you have participated in the discipline called "project management." Every business must engage in project management, and some struggle quite a lot with it. Learning this discipline can make you worth your weight in gold and could add significantly to your marketability. Here's how to have some fun with project management and plan or organize something, such as your vacation this summer. Visit a Web site called www.bubbl.us, where you'll find an easy-to-use project management tool. This "mind mapping" software is free to use and will give you a taste of the more sophisticated tools used by project managers. Have fun planning your deserved getaway.

Intervene Early with Coworker Conflicts



When conflict with a coworker begins, act early to intervene. You could save yourself years of anguish and potentially turn the relationship into a beneficial one. Avoid using denial and suppression of your feelings of anger as a coping strategy. As conflict worsens, the risk that you'll act irrationally in response to a provocative moment increases. When this happens, management will often hold each of you equally accountable in the conflict and equally responsible for its resolution. You'll feel frustrated if you see yourself as the victim. Managing conflict is a life skill, so avoid the mad dash for a book on "dealing with difficult people" once it's too late to rediscover harmony with your coworker. To head problems off at the pass, 1) let your coworker know you are sensing conflict at the time it occurs; 2) share your feelings in response to an issue of concern and which "rights" you feel are being ignored; and 3) ask for the change you need. Important: Success comes by getting the change in behavior that works for you, not by making a coworker feel punished or blamed.

Your First Appointment with a Professional Counselor



If you have made a decision to see a professional counselor (psychotherapist) or employee assistance professional, you may be wondering what to say when you get to your first appointment. After completing the necessary paperwork, the professional will help guide the interview. If you think about the following issues before arrival, you'll maximize the time you spend in your first session. (Don't worry—you won't have to share your deepest thoughts, fears, hopes, and dreams with a stranger in the first session.)

Your counselor wants to listen a lot at first because you are the expert on your life. The main concern is determining if he or she has the skills that are a good match for your needs. Knowing what prompted you to come, what difficulties you're facing, what you think caused the problem, and what you think might help

resolve it is very important. Include what you're currently experiencing, what's bothering you, and what things you want to be different in your life. Now you're ready for a great learning experience through professional counseling.

How It's Done—Attitude Adjustment Power



It is said that "Your attitude determines your altitude." This means that you have control over your attitude and can make adjustments to get more of what you want. The tricky part is figuring out what is underlying your current attitude so you can intervene. Start by breaking your attitude down into three parts: thoughts, beliefs, and how you view your current situation. You have significant control over these parts and you may quickly spot what needs to be changed. Decide on new thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions to create your new attitude. Finally, regularly affirm the changes while refusing to go back to the old attitude.