

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources From Your Employee Assistance Program

May 2012  
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May 16, 2012  
Chat Topic:

## Coping with Stress and Change

Every month, you will have the opportunity to chat on-line with a trained counselor. These live chats are held from 12:15-12:45 PM & 6:00-6:30 PM CST.

Come Join Us!

May 2012  
At A Glance

**Mental Health Month**  
May 1—31

Visit [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov) for more information

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**Better Sleep Month**  
May 1—31

Visit [www.bettersleep.org](http://www.bettersleep.org) for more information



## Are You Engaged?



You need to be aware of a significant career management danger. In this tough economy and job market, your professional expectations may be unmet. Whether it is job satisfaction, career development or job search success, things may not be going your way. When this happens, there is a natural tendency to disengage, to unplug. You go through the motions, but part of your mind is elsewhere, unfocused.

You can instantly recognize people who are fully engaged. They are focused, working on what is most important at that time, and committed. And you can recognize those who are not. Which are you?

### Why your head should be in the game

Here is what happens when you aren't fully engaged. Your efforts are scattered. You don't do your best, which hurts you and hurts your employer, colleagues and clients. With one foot out the door and one in, you are dissatisfied which often negatively impacts your personal life. You are certainly not using your talents to their fullest. You are wasting your precious time and may be a productivity risk to your employer. You aren't making a difference. In short, you are sabotaging your career.

Certainly, we all have days when our motors just aren't running at full speed. That's fine. What you should be concerned with, however, is identifying if you are habitually disengaged, and if so, resolve to snap out of it.

### What can you do about it?

#### 1. Diagnose yourself

Take a page from Dr. Phil and accept reality. Is your head really in the game or not? Here are some statements to test yourself:

- I am frequently or always dissatisfied with my work situation and I haven't done anything concrete to resolve it
- I tend to complain, put the blame on others, or I have developed a cynical attitude
- I always have one foot out the door, keeping my options open, but never acting on them
- I jump from job to job, assignment to assignment without really settling, or making a difference
- I haven't made a noticeable difference where I work or the projects I work on

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Deer Oaks EAP Services, your Employee Assistance Program, is always available to you and your dependents. If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks at:

1 (866) 327-2400

[eap@deeroaks.com](mailto:eap@deeroaks.com)

[www.deeroaks.com](http://www.deeroaks.com)

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## *Continued: Are you Engaged?*

- My performance barely meets expectations, or worse
- My mind wanders during my work day and I have trouble focusing and delivering on projects and responsibilities
- I feel bested or outclassed by colleagues or customers when I am discussing work-related things. I don't have a lot to say
- My presentation is weak, sloppy or lacking direction
- I don't have a plan as to what my next steps are from now, going forward

If you answered yes to 1 or more of the above, then follow the remaining steps.

### **2. Try and figure out why**

One way to do that is to review your history. Is this the first time you have been in this situation or is it a recurring pattern? If the later, then the chances are that it is you rather than your environment. If the former, what is it about your current situation and environment that is causing it?

### **3. What choice can you make right now that will make a difference?**

A common reaction is to identify some large change and focus on that as the answer to your lack of engagement. "If I only had this job, or worked for this company, then I would give 110%." Maybe. But what about today? We choose how we react to our environment. What can you do today? Here are some things you can do: Change your attitude. A reality-check can do wonders in changing behavior. Refocus. Go deep. Overreact. Throw yourself into your work or job search. Do your best. Immerse yourself and see what happens. Identify what motivates you and focus on building that. See if you can inject more of those motivations into what you do. In particular, those things which align with the priorities of your employer, or your own business. Find the good in your situation. What can you identify about your job or situation that is positive? Be thankful for what you have. Identify what the key success criteria are for you, for your employer, colleagues and customers. Determine how you can be successful in the current environment and focus on that.

### **4. Medium-term strategies**

- Go internal. Build on what you have started in the short-term. How can you turn this situation around and be a rousing success story?
- Adjust your expectations. Goals can be energizing if we actively pursue them, or a real drag on our energy when we keep them alive without making progress towards their fulfillment. Resolve to pursue those goals that mean something to you and dump the rest.
- Make a change. If you need to make a change, do it. But, do it with determination, passion, and focus.
- Get help. If you recognize a long-standing pattern of behavior and believe that its roots run deeper than career management issues, then seek qualified, professional help.



*By: Ian Christi, retrieved March 26, 2012,  
[www.leadershiparticles.net](http://www.leadershiparticles.net)*

## *EAP Spotlight*

# Childcare Assistance

*With summer around the corner, contact Deer Oaks EAP for assistance with finding childcare in your area. We will research regulated facilities for you and provide you with referrals. We can also assist with helping you find other childcare resources and information.*

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## 10 Tips for Better Sleep



Stress in work, household roles and child care can make falling asleep challenging. Other untoward conflicts such as financial problems, layoffs, and relationship issues can also add to the situation. It may be impossible to get rid of all those factors that get in the way of your sleep, but you surely can make a suitable environment and acquire habits that can help you achieve a more restful night.

1. By training your body to sleep and wake up at the same exact time every day, even during weekends, can help you achieve a healthy sleep-wake cycle. It also can make you wind down to sleep more quickly at night.
2. Do not overeat a couple of hours before you go to bed. If you are suffering from heartburn, you should do away from eating spicy and fatty foods which can make your condition worse and prevent you from sleeping comfortably at night. You also don't want to be frequently awakened by the urge to urinate at night, so limit the amount of liquids you take before you hit the sack.
3. Avoid taking in stimulants prior to getting in bed. Caffeine, which is a common form of stimulant should not be taken at least 8 hours before the time you plan to sleep as it will take many hours before you can eliminate its stimulant effects out from the body.
4. Find time for regular exercise just like aerobics. Getting your body physically fit is believed to help you fall asleep faster and provide you with a sleep that is more restful.
5. Make sure that your bedroom is conducive for sleeping. Adjust the lighting, the temperature, and the level of noise according to what you find is helpful to get you to sleep.
6. Keep your daytime naps to only a maximum of half an hour as these may steal hours from your night time sleep.
7. See to it that you sleep with mattresses and pillows that are comfortable. Find a bed that has enough space for you.
8. Do the same things each night to tell your body it's time to wind down. A relaxing shower, a good book, or even a soothing tune can promote transition from the feeling of wakefulness to sleepiness.
9. Don't agonize over falling asleep. After 15-20 minutes and you still don't find yourself feeling sleepy, get up and do something that can tire you.
10. Taking pills should be your last resort. Also, it is important that you consult a doctor before you consider this option. Your physician is the perfect person to tell you about the dosage and the considerations in taking sleep medication.

Almost anybody can experience sleepless nights. But if it gets more frequent, and not any of the first nine tips for better sleep seem to help, then you should already consider seeing a doctor. Knowing and treating the culprit of your sleep disturbance is a good way to help you get back on the road to a good night's sleep.

Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/6021473>

## Matters of the Heart



### Heart Smart Snacks

*While genetics plays a role in your heart health, making healthy lifestyle choices plays an even bigger role. Here are some snacks that help fight heart disease.*

1. **Apples:** combat oxidative stress that can lead to atherosclerosis and other cardiovascular problems, help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol, a precursor and contributor to heart disease and help support overall vascular health.
2. **Garbanzo Beans/Chick Peas:** packed with soluble fiber—which helps lower cholesterol—in addition to heart-protective antioxidants, potassium, and omega-3 fatty acids.
3. **Almonds:** packed with heart-healthy nutrients, including fiber, vitamin E, potassium, and magnesium. Magnesium contributes to healthy blood pressure, and potassium is essential for helping your heart pump blood.
4. **Blueberries:** can improve cholesterol levels, lower triglycerides, and protect against oxidative damage that could lead to clogged blood vessels, a sign of heart disease.
5. **Dark Chocolate:** helps prevent clogged arteries, thereby reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke. Dark chocolate has also been shown to decrease blood pressure
6. **Grapes:** promote healthy blood pressure, reduce LDL cholesterol, and help your heart pump blood.
7. **Figs:** deliver a high dose of fiber, which is necessary for any healthy diet plan, but it's because they're so high in potassium that they are so heart-healthy
8. **Walnuts:** lower LDL cholesterol, help regulate blood pressure, and protect against excessive clotting and inflammation. *Source: MSN Health*

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## Kick the Plastic Habit



Whether you've already quit, or you're simply considering it, nixing credit cards can be a difficult process.

Perhaps you've developed a strong dependence on credit and feel as though you need it to survive, or maybe you simply feel as though your credit card is a safety net and it will be there to catch you when you fall. Regardless of your level of dependence, getting hooked on credit can be a dangerous habit that's hard to break when it hasn't been used responsibly.

The following are a few tips to help you kick the plastic habit:

- **Shelve your credit cards.** If you still have open credit card accounts, consider carrying cash or your debit card for daily use instead. Leave credit cards at home and only carry one when you plan to use it for a larger purchase or something that you have already reserved for your credit card.
- **Tighten your budget.** Create a real budget and include even the smallest expenses. Maybe filling up at the station or picking up a few things at the grocery store were once expenses that would previously go unnoticed, but with today's high gas and food prices, even smaller-ticket items add up.
- **Cut back on non-essentials.** The easiest way to free up extra cash is to know the difference between needs and wants, and make a conscious effort to do without those things that you don't need such as eating out, vacationing, and shopping for discretionary items such as furniture and electronics. You may even consider getting rid of cable. With programs such as Hulu and Netflix, it's much easier to cut the cable and maintain access to your favorite shows — and you'll save a nice chunk of change!
- **Create a plan to pay down debt.** Sometimes it's easier to break a habit when you have a goal you are trying to accomplish. Make a commitment to pay down a portion of your debt within a certain timeframe, and make sure to get your family involved in working towards a shared goal — you can help keep each other accountable.
- **Build an emergency fund.** One of the biggest credit temptations will come in a time of crisis. This is why it's imperative that you have emergency savings on hand. Many consumers lack an emergency savings fund because they've been focused on putting extra funds toward debt. While this is not a bad thing, remember that feeding your own piggy bank will help you rely less on credit when a financial disaster does strike. If you aren't prepared, you could end up back in the same place you started.

Finally, if your financial obligations become overwhelming, don't be afraid to seek help! MMI has counselors available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help assess your situation and offer the best options for your needs.

*By: Jessica Horton, March 9, 2012*

### 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).