

TEAMWORK

A publication of



Total Employee Assistance & Management, Inc.

A T.E.A.M. NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Relationships

Practice, Practice, Practice

In relationships there are some common themes that couples should focus on in order to have a fulfilling relationship. Unfortunately, we often start with very good intentions to follow those themes, but lapse and begin to do things that strain the relationship. We forget that in order to be excellent at anything we have to practice, practice, and practice the program. When we fail to practice we wind up back in old patterns of behavior or not paying attention to the relationship. We need to remember that all great athletes spend much more time practicing than actually playing their sport. There is currently an advertisement with Tiger Woods emphasizing that very thing: "there are no rainy days." So what do we need to practice to have excellent and fulfilling relationships?

- 1) Good communication skills
- 2) Good listening skills
- 3) The ability to compromise
- 4) Appreciation of our significant other
- 5) Saying thank you
- 6) Rituals that confirm we are a couple (goodnight kiss, etc)
- 7) Recognizing each other's good qualities
- 8) Spending quality time with each other

These are only some of the areas to work on. The concept is to keep practicing and keep trying to get better. If you want additional information about having a great relationship, please contact a TEAM therapist at 1-800-448-8526. □

Family

Parenting

For all of the joys parenting offers to moms and dads, there are also numerous challenges parents come up against along the way. One of the most common struggles of modern day parents, both married and single, is how to balance couple/individual needs and children's needs. Family psychologist John Rosemond advises, "Pay more attention to your marriage than you pay to your children" and for single parents, "Pay more attention to *yourself* than you do to the kids."

At first glance, this seems like a rather selfish approach, but taking care of children in healthy ways requires a parent who is also healthy in all aspects of their personality. It is critical, then, that moms and dads take care of themselves in order to be able to take care of the children.

It is natural that when children enter the family that relationship roles shift from a parent-focus to a child-focus. As children grow, there is more discussion around those issues and less focus on how to continue to

nurture the relationship. Marriages then experience a gradual breakdown over the years and sometimes it is very difficult to reconnect when the children are grown.

The following are a few ways that married and single parents can maintain a parent-centered focus in their family and raise happy children:

- ♦ Establish a rule that when mom and dad are talking, children are not to interrupt that conversation
- ♦ Maintain "parent time" without the children on a weekly basis and occasionally plan weekend trips together
- ♦ Maintain children's bedtime schedules that allow for downtime for parents
- ♦ Use time when children are in bed to focus on the relationship and not a time to clean house or catch up with office work.

John Rosemond further states, "Put your marriage first, and it's more likely to last. Put yourself first, and *you're* more likely to last." To learn how to achieve this balance or for any family or parenting issues, call T.E.A.M. at 800-448-8526. □

Health

Alcohol consumption is a common practice among Americans. However, chronic or even occasional misuse of alcohol can result in serious consequences for drinkers. In other words, an individual's drinking habits have a direct impact on their physical health. Heavy, chronic drinking can result in serious damage to vital organs such as the liver, heart and brain. Such severe damage could be irreversible and result in serious illness or early death. Alcohol has also been linked to many cancers, including mouth, larynx, liver, colon and breast.

In addition to the physical problems associated with drinking, alcohol causes changes in behavior that can prove to be detrimental. Even lower doses can cloud the judgment and coordination required to drive a car or operate heavy machinery safely. Low to moderate doses of alcohol increase the incidence of aggressive acts as well as dangerous risk-taking behavior. Moderate to high doses of alcohol can affect a person's ability to learn and retain information. Very high doses can cause respiratory depression and death.

Repeated use of alcohol can lead to alcoholism and/or alcohol abuse. Alcoholism is an illness marked by consumption of alcoholic beverages at a level that interferes with physical or mental health, as well as social, family, or occupational responsibilities. Alcoholism is divided into 2 categories: dependence and abuse.

People with **alcohol dependence**,

the most severe alcohol disorder, usually experience tolerance and withdrawal. Tolerance is a need for increased amounts of alcohol to achieve intoxication. Withdrawal symptoms occur when drinking stops, or is decreased and can include nausea and anxiety. **Alcohol abusers** are "problem drinkers". They may have legal problems, such as drinking and driving, or binge drinking. People who are alcohol dependent or alcohol abusers keep drinking despite physical or psychological problems.

Some warning signs of alcoholism include:

- *Drinking secretly or alone
- *Craving: A strong need, or urge to drink
- *Making/finding excuses to drink
- *Loss of Control: Not being able to stop drinking once you start
- *Becoming angry when confronted about drinking
- *Failure to care for physical appearance and/or poor eating habits
- *Inability to remember portions of events that occur while drinking

If you or a loved one is experiencing any of these symptoms, call TEAM at 1-800-448-TEAM and schedule an appointment with one of our therapists. □

Emotions

Emotions, Who Needs Them?

Have people called you "too emotional" or "not emotional enough"? Do you sometimes feel that you have so many emotions that you do not know exactly what you are feeling? Are you often angry, or too often sad? Do you wish that you could always be happy, successful, and accepted? Do you often feel that some people just seem to be able to handle anything, while you struggle? And finally, the biggest question of all, "Will I ever be able to change?" *continued* ♪

Welcome to the Team

Total Employee Assistance and Management, Inc. continues to grow. We would like to welcome the following organizations that have recently become part of our team.

Church of Christ Care Center
DTE Energy Services
Kleen Way Resource Recovery
Magna Powertrain
Premium Glass
Trend Tool

Welcome aboard! We look forward to working with you. Thank you for joining T.E.A.M.

Perhaps the difficulty is not that you have emotions, but that you have too many negative emotions and not enough positive ones. The three steps below will get you started in becoming more positive:

A good first step is to look at what in your life that you would not change. While it is very easy for you to list all your flaws and shortcomings, being able to focus on things that you would not change, is hard work. But being grateful and appreciative of what you do have will put the difficult feelings and situations into perspective.

Notice each day, what messages you give yourself. How you think determines how you feel. If you are thinking negative/pessimistic thoughts, you will have negative and pessimistic feelings. Conversely, if you are thinking positive/optimistic thoughts, you then you will have more positive and optimistic feelings. Happy/successful people make just as many mistakes as those that are unhappy/not successful. The difference is that the negative people tend to take it out on themselves, being very critical of themselves. Positive people frame all problems into "opportunities for growth".

Finally, one of the best ways to learn a new behavior is to find someone whom presents as having those skills and use them as a role model. Who in your life is a more positive person? Ask yourself "if they were faced with this problem, what would they likely say and do?" Then do that yourself.

In reality we all need emotions. You can only truly experience joy and happiness after you have felt sadness and frustration. You need to feel one to know what it is truly like to feel the other. The trick is to not let your emotions take over. By changing your thoughts you can more readily deal with any situation. If changing thoughts or behaviors still feels like an overwhelming task, TEAM Employee Assistance has trained therapists that would welcome helping you in this process. Simply call 1-800-448-8526 to schedule an appointment. □

Life Issues

How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Dreading

Have you been putting off talking with someone because you know the conversation won't be easy? Are your palms sweaty and your stomach in knots just thinking about it? If it's any consolation, you're not alone. In fact, a lot

It's Been Studied!

In our efforts towards weight control and weight loss, many of us rely on drinking coffee or other caffeinated beverages to feel full. In addition to feeling less hungry, we may also become accustomed to the boost of energy associated with caffeine that may help us get through the day. While these benefits may appear appealing, a closer look reveals that drinking caffeine may not help us accomplish the desired goals.

The Mayo Clinic defines caffeine as a diuretic which causes the body to temporarily retain less water, giving the illusion of weight loss. This change in water retention is not permanent and will not



Your T.E.A.M. EAP benefit is a counseling, coaching and referral service provided by your employer to you and the members of your family. This is a free benefit, and it is strictly confidential!

Neither your employer nor your coworkers will have any knowledge of your use of the EAP.

We have offices conveniently located to serve you. No matter how big or small the reason is for calling us, give us a call and let us help. We assist people every day with a wide variety of personal problems, including marital difficulties, financial or legal concerns, emotional problems, family difficulties, grief, loss, death and personal or work crisis.

If you have a problem with which you need help, please give us a call.

We are only a phone call or mouse click away!

1-800-448-TEAM
www.team-eap.com

~QUARTERLY QUOTE~

If your success is not on your own terms,
if it looks good to the world but
does not feel good in your heart,
it is not success at all.

- Anna Quindlen

of people share your fear and avoid the discussions they know they need to have.

While there is no anesthesia for the pain of a difficult conversation, the good news is that the more difficult conversations you have, the more confident you feel in handling them. Most people agree that after a difficult conversation, they feel better, and they are happy the issue is no longer "hanging over their head."

If you are nonassertive, you are either passive or aggressive. Passive individuals are not committed to their own rights and are more likely to allow others to infringe on their rights than to stand up and speak out. On the other hand, aggressive persons are very likely to defend their own rights and work to achieve their own goals but are also likely to disregard the rights of others. Aggressive people insist that their feelings and needs take precedence over other people's. They also tend to blame others for problems instead of offering solutions.

So how can you become more assertive? The following examples may help you think of ways to have that difficult talk with someone.

Situation: You have a boss or coworker who yells and/or insults you.

Response: Don't try to have a discussion mid-yell, when you are too flustered or angry. Say something like: "I'd really like to talk about this. Can I come to your office in a half hour to talk about the problem?" Then later, begin by saying "I know you're under a lot of pressure right now, and I know I can help. But when I'm yelled at or insulted, my mind goes blank and I shut down, and I just don't do as good a job."

Situation: A friend, spouse, coworker of yours keeps interrupting you (or insert any disrespectful behavior here).

Response: "When you interrupt me, I feel disrespected. I'd really prefer it if you would slow down and let me finish what I'm saying."

What about those people who get defensive when you try to confront them? One of the best ways to "disarm" someone who seems to be on the attack is to ask them questions or get more information to try to understand them better. This is difficult because it requires you to keep your anger in check, but it is very powerful. For example:

- I'm not sure I understand what you are saying.
- I'm confused about...
- Would you tell me more about how you see it?
- I think we're approaching this from different perspectives. Can you tell me more?
- If I understand you correctly...
- Is that what you meant?
- I heard you say ____, did I understand you right?

If you would like some help preparing for a difficult conversation, call us at 1-800-448-TEAM. □

result in lasting weight reduction. The most effective method for weight control or loss is ultimately exercise and a healthy diet.

While we may enjoy the stimulating affect of coffee and caffeinated beverage, too much consumption or drinking caffeine later in the day may significantly affect sleep quality. Caffeine can impact the body's ability to relax enough to sleep or to achieve a deep level of sleep during the night, leaving you feeling fatigued and not well rested. These feelings of fatigue and tiredness may lead you to grab that cup of coffee or caffeinated beverage first thing in the morning, starting the process all over again! □