

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources From Your Employee Assistance Program

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January 2011 Chat Topic: Cultivating Initiative

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.

Our Deer Oaks counselor now has the capability to conduct the live chat session in audio and all participants can respond via text.

Come Join Us!

January 2011 At A Glance

National Blood Donor Month January 1st—31st

Visit
www.aabb.org
for more information

World Braille Day January 4th

Visit
www.worldblindunion.org
for more information

The Deer Oaks Website is Section 508A Compliant!

An accessible HTML version of this newsletter is available for download from the Deer Oaks website.

The HTML version can be read by screen readers such as JAWS.



Ten Tips For Setting (And Keeping) Life Changing Resolutions



It's time for that annual ritual of making (and breaking) our New Year's resolutions. There is something about the idea of being able to start over that motivates us to pause (at least briefly) and reflect on our lives as they are, as well as how we would like them to be. Yet how many times have you thought back to last year's goals and found that many or most of them were abandoned or just forgotten after a few months into the year?

Many of us have difficulty following through on our resolutions due to factors such as choosing unrealistic goals, not making them challenging enough and/or lacking the necessary motivation to stick with them.

1. Start with a life vision

If you don't know what you want your future to look like, how can you decide what areas of your life need to be worked on? Spend some quiet time TODAY reflecting on (and writing down) what is good, bad or incomplete. Then try to "see" your life if all of these areas were addressed and had become satisfactory to you.

2. Get organized

Clear away clutter. Go through paperwork, files, old bills and receipts, closets, drawers and storage containers. Decide what you need and will use and either throw out or give away all the rest. Put aside some time each week for this purpose. Focus on one area (or box) at a time until you are finished. Having available file drawer space, trash bags, file folders and pens handy will speed things along. Try not to handle any thing more than once. Make a decision and act on it immediately.

After you have cleaned out you can think about your existing systems for management and storage and see if these need reworking or just some fine-tuning. Make sure you use ONE calendar to record everything. Otherwise you will either overbook, miss appointments and events or just waste a lot of time trying to constantly go back, re-do and sort out your schedule.

3. Expand your horizons and make a commitment to learning something new.

Challenging yourself will infuse you with greater energy and sense of purpose. It will help build your self-esteem to realize you are capable of more than you had previously believed. This new learning can also give you additional resources to assist you in your career, personal or love life.

4. Set challenging but realistic resolutions

Choose goals that stretch your ability muscles, yet are realistic and therefore less vulnerable to failure. Don't respond to that negative inner voice that says; "oh, I'm not capable of that." Instead, focus on what you truly desire for your life and relationships and let this be your guide.

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

www.deeroaks.com

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5. Write down your resolutions

Write them down and stick them on your bathroom mirror, your fridge, your car dashboard, your desk or wherever you know will be a good place for you to see them. You can also show them to a good friend, family member, your coach or anyone who could provide support and encouragement.

6. Create action steps for each resolution; write these down and keep an accounting of your progress for each

A resolution without planned action is doomed to failure. Break each goal down into small action steps or objectives. Putting a date for completion will help ensure you follow through. Come up with an accountability system that will work for you. Make sure you check off each accomplishment as you go and be flexible and willing to make adjustments in your action steps in order to achieve your desired end results.

7. Take care of yourself; eat well, exercise regularly and learn to control and eliminate unhealthy stress

I know this is an obvious one, so why is it often ignored or overlooked when we are attempting to make important life changes? How many times have you said, "I don't have the time" to eat right, exercise, sleep, etc.? Not caring for yourself will guarantee failure. So, why not make this your first and most important resolution for 2011?

8. Work to eliminate bad habits

Including this as a New Year's resolution would put you on the road to good follow-through. Bad habits will sabotage your efforts and use up your limited resources of time, energy and focus. For each bad habit you decide to eliminate, have a good habit in mind to replace it with.

9. Set appropriate and healthy limits in all areas of your life

Knowing your limits and enforcing them with yourself and others is a prerequisite to a healthy life and relationships. Learn to say "no" and "enough" and be firm in your resolve that this is a good thing to do. Otherwise, you will also be undermining your resolution to take care of yourself.

10. Work to be the kind of person you want to be with

Bringing out the best qualities in yourself will help to ensure that you attract people of good quality into your life. You wouldn't want to compromise on the standards you have set for a potential mate. Therefore, it's important to understand that this also holds true for other people in search of relationships.

Toni Coleman, LCSW. <http://www.enotalone.com/article/2904.html>



Matters of the Heart

Make a resolution to stop smoking in 2011. Your heart will thank you.

There is a link between cardiovascular disease and smoking: Smoking is a major cause of atherosclerosis — a buildup of fatty substances in the arteries. Atherosclerosis occurs when the normal lining of the arteries deteriorates, the walls of the arteries thicken and deposits of fat and plaque block the flow of blood through the arteries. In coronary artery disease, the arteries that supply blood to the heart become severely narrowed, decreasing the supply of oxygen-rich blood to the heart, especially during times of increased activity. Extra strain on the heart may result in chest pain (angina pectoris) and other symptoms. When one or more of the coronary arteries are completely blocked, a heart attack (injury to the heart muscle) may occur.

In peripheral artery disease, atherosclerosis affects the arteries that carry blood to the arms and legs. As a result, the patient may experience painful cramping of the leg muscles when walking (a condition called intermittent claudication). Peripheral artery disease also increases the risk of stroke.

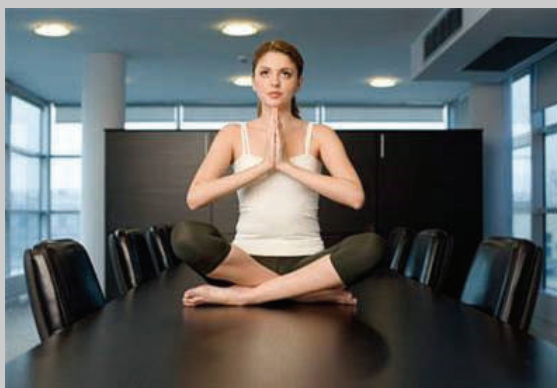
http://my.clevelandclinic.org/heart/prevention/smoking/smoking_hrtsds.aspx

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Tips for Less Stress at Work



- 1. Learn to delegate.** Often people make excuses for failing to delegate, arguing that it would be too hard to explain the task to someone else, or that the job would not be done properly.
- 2. Don't let the environment rule you.** Concentrate on important tasks, and do not be sidetracked by non-essential phone calls and visitors.
- 3. Create order in your environment.** Untidiness can sometimes create a feeling of time urgency.
- 4. Take lunch breaks.** Don't eat while continuing to work. Sit down and relax while having lunch. Aim to have a half-hour break. If possible, leave the office and go for a walk.
- 5. Pace yourself.** Space out your tasks with short breaks. These will help you to think more clearly and enable you to assess your progress. Try to take morning and afternoon breaks to relax.
- 6. Learn to prioritize.** Try to do the essential things first, leaves other items for later.
- 7. Plan in advance and do not procrastinate.** Don't allow yourself to be sidetracked or interrupted. Allocate time to prepare for a specific activity and adopt a realistic deadline.
- 8. Review your responsibilities.** See if you have adopted a 'have to' approach. You may not really have to perform some duties, but may be doing them from habit.
- 9. Master the art of saying NO.** Which commitments do you really need to accept? Can some be refused or delegated? Learn it is not necessary to take on everything that comes your way.

http://www.eap.com.au/FileManager/Apr08_NewsLetters/stress.htm

Triglycerides Frequently Asked Questions

What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides are a type of fat derived from the food we eat. Any calories we take in that aren't used right away for energy are converted into triglycerides. Triglycerides move through the blood and are stored in fat cells. Our hormones regulate when triglycerides are released from fat cells to be used as energy between meals.

Why should I care about my triglyceride level?

A high blood triglyceride level--called hypertriglyceridemia--increases your risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. It's linked to an increased risk for diabetes. High triglycerides are also a risk factor for chronic pancreatitis--inflammation of the pancreas.

<http://health-tools.health.msn.com/triglycerides/triglycerides-overview>

What causes high triglycerides?

Excess triglycerides occur most often due to inactivity and being overweight. But they can also be triggered by high alcohol consumption, diabetes, or an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism). Hypertriglyceridemia can also be a side effect of some medications, including birth control, corticosteroids, beta blockers, and others. High triglycerides also can stem from a genetic condition.

What lifestyle changes can I make to lower my triglycerides or keep them under control?

If you're overweight, reduce your calorie intake to achieve a normal weight. Exercise at least 30 minutes each day. Eat a diet low in saturated and trans fats. Drink alcohol only in moderation--one drink a day for women and two for men at most. And try to reduce your carbohydrate intake to no more than 60 percent of total calories. A diet high in carbohydrates raises triglyceride levels.

Medical Reviewer: Louise Spadaro, MD Copyright: © 2000-2010 The StayWell Company, 780 Township Line

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How to wean your child off an allowance

By Tanisha Warner
Money Management International

Children grow-up so quickly. Before you know it, the day will come when you must allow your child to assert his financial independence and take him off an allowance. A common age to do this is 16, when many kids get their first paying job. However, age is only one factor to consider. It's important to remember children mature at different ages. So the question of when to take your child off an allowance should be based on his readiness to effectively earn and manage his own finances.



When your child is ready, consider the following tips from the financial experts at Money Management International on how to effectively take your child off an allowance.

Provide tools and resources for financial success. Teach your child the fundamentals of budgeting and show him how to manage household finances. Allow your child to control some funds so he can learn how to set priorities and understand the difference between wants and needs. As your child gets older, allow him to pay for some of his own expenses, such as buying school clothes.

Hold a family meeting. Make sure all family members are aware of what's going on and explain the reason for the change. It's important that both parents are on the same page about how, when, and why to take your child off an allowance. Also, give your child an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

Offer a severance package. Before taking your child off an allowance, make sure he is financial prepared for the road ahead. Make sure he has plenty of notice and clearly understands when the allowance will end. You might also consider giving your child two to three months' worth of allowance to help get him started.

Expect your child to face challenges. Resist the urge to step in and help your child when he faces minor financial challenges. These are growing pains that most kids face and it produces valuable rewards when he learns to handle mistakes on his own.

Taking your child off an allowance can be intimidating as he will have to learn to live without financial support from you. With the right guidance and financial confidence, your child can learn to earn and manage money on his own. Visit MoneyBunny.com for more parenting resources on teaching your kids good money management skills.

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.