

Improve the Relationship with Your Boss



Try these “best tips” with your boss to see if they increase the excitement you have about your job: (1) encourage your boss to share knowledge and experience with you; (2) treat your boss like you would your best customer; (3) ask for feedback rather than waiting for it; (4) initiate contact to keep your boss updated on projects you are working on; (5) have no doubts about what your boss expects of you; (6) encourage your boss to delegate responsibility to you; (7) when bringing problems to your boss, include the solution; and 8) inform your boss about problems early so he or she doesn’t make a surprising discovery another way.

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Should You See a Therapist?

If sadness, grief, fear, and conflict are common human experiences, when is it time to see a psychotherapist? Consider these four broad sets of circumstances: (1) Fear or powerful emotions that follow traumatic events and relentless worry or intrusive thoughts are creating distress and disrupting otherwise pleasurable activities and experiences. *Why go:* Constant emotional anguish can contribute to headaches, weight loss, digestive problems, and strain on valued relationships. This can compound the primary issue(s) of concern, thereby causing more harm. (2) Those who care about you start expressing concern about your health and suggest counseling. *Why go:* Others often see changes in our behavior and demeanor before we recognize them ourselves. However, these individuals may not verbalize concerns immediately and might wait until more acute or repeated symptoms occur. (3) Conflicts with those you love are too frequent and outnumber the positive experiences you once enjoyed. *Why go:* Frequent conflict builds resentment, which can contribute to a belief that differences are not reconcilable. Conflicts may become more difficult to resolve or resist resolution. (4) You’re using alcohol or drugs to cope with stress. This one is a bit tricky because the starting point is not psychotherapy but an assessment by an addiction medical expert or other professional to rule out addictive disease. *Why go:* Life problems are difficult to resolve when worsened by substance use, which might indicate a primary disease process, not secondary to distressing problems.

Overcoming Everyday Anxiety

Anxiety happens when we perceive a threat. Fear of running out of gas will cause you to feel anxiety. A notice about downsizing will create anxiety. Everyday anxiety is manageable with three steps: (1) identify the cause when you feel anxious; (2) develop a plan for removing the cause; and (3) the most forgotten step of all—form a contingency plan to cope with the threat if it actually materializes. Implementing this life skill approach to anxiety will usually reduce suffering. Apply it when anxiety strikes, even at night to stop tossing and turning in your sleep. Note that anxiety disorders also exist. Too much anxiety can be debilitating, so if fear, panic, and a feeling of being overwhelmed are gripping you, then talk to the EAP or your health provider.

Deciding to Stop Enabling

Have you decided to stop enabling someone you love who has a serious health or chronic personal problem (for example, an addiction)? Enabling, despite its harm, is nothing to feel ashamed about because it is a natural response to protecting someone you love from the serious consequences of his or her behavior. The key is making the change—switching to healthier and purpose-driven detachment that facilitates your recovery from enabling and may influence change in your loved one. Get support for your decision. It’s a big one that will test your resolve. Counseling and support groups can make it dramatically easier. So, talk to your EAP to discover a self-help group that matches your needs. No other mentoring or teaching format has been shown to produce more rapid and certain change.