



Timely Information for Personal Success

Learning to Say NO is Vital to Your Health

By Travis Bradberry

The typical workday is long enough as it is, and technology is making it even longer. When you do finally get home from a full day at the office, your mobile phone rings off the hook, and emails drop into your inbox from people who expect immediate responses.

A Northern Illinois University study found that the expectation that people need to respond to emails during off-work hours produces a prolonged stress response, which researchers call “telepressure.” Telepressure ensures that you are never able to relax and truly disengage from work. This prolonged state of stress is terrible for your health. Besides increasing your risk of heart disease, depression, and obesity, stress decreases your cognitive performance.

We need to establish boundaries between our personal and professional lives. When we don’t, our work, health, and personal lives suffer. The following are some suggestions in a number of areas:

❖ **Your health.** It’s difficult to know when to set boundaries around your health at work because the decline is so gradual. Allowing stress to build up, losing sleep, and sitting all day without exercising all add up. Before you know it, you’re rubbing your aching back with one hand and your zombie-like eyes with the other, and you’re looking down at your newly-acquired belly. The key here is to not let things sneak up on you, and the way you do that is by keeping a consistent routine. Think about what you need to do to keep yourself

healthy (taking walks during lunch, not working weekends, taking your vacations as scheduled, etc.), make a plan, and stick to it no matter what. If you don’t, you’re allowing your work to overstep its bounds.

❖ **Your family.** It’s easy to let your family suffer for your work. Many of us do this because we see our jobs as a means of maintaining our families. We have thoughts like, “I need to make more money so that my kids can go to college debt-free.” Though these thoughts are well-intentioned, they can burden your family with the biggest debt of all—a lack of quality time with you. When you’re on your deathbed, you won’t remember how much money you

continued on Page 2





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Healthy Recipe: Harvest Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 pkgs mixed salad greens (about 8 cups)
- 2 cups cut-up fresh veggies (carrots, cucumbers)
- One 10-3/4 ounce can tomato soup
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey or sugar
- 1 package Italian salad dressing mix

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 188
- Carbohydrates: 21 g.
- Protein: 4 g.
- Sodium: 595 mg.
- Saturated fat: 1 g.
- Fiber: 2 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Place salad greens and vegetables into large bowl.
- 2 Beat the soup, oil, vinegar, honey (or sugar), and salad dressing mix in a bowl with a fork or whisk. Pour the mixture over the greens and veggies and toss to coat.
- 3 Arrange salad on a serving platter. Serve with the remaining soup mixture.

LifestyleTIPS[®]
 2016[©] Impact Publications, Inc.
 PO Box 322, Waupaca, WI 54981
 Phone: 715-258-2448
 Fax: 715-258-9048
 Website: www.impact-publications.com
 Email: info@impacttrainingcenter.net

Publisher: Scott Kolpien
 Health Consultant: Aaron Allie
 Managing Editor: Mike Jacquart

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Questions and Answers

Why Gossiping is Bad

Q: *I've heard that gossiping in the workplace is bad, but while I agree it might not "seem right," I'm not sure why it's said to hurt the workplace either. Can you explain?*

A: Some claim that gossip in the workplace can be beneficial in getting unspoken information out in the open for leaders to see, or it allows people to release pent-up negative energy before it explodes. I don't agree. *Anyone* in the workplace should treat gossip among co-workers as a reduction in productivity at best, and at worst, an indication of unhappy employees. Managers need to improve the situation before it gets out of hand, causing lost clients as well as lost productivity.

The only way to really clean up gossiping is to reveal both the gossip and listener to each other, and to clearly delineate facts from fiction. People who refuse to change need to be removed from the team before they destroy it. Businesses are undermined wherever gossip is present. It only gets worse if you pretend you don't hear it.

Source: Marty Zwillig, CEO and co-founder of Startup Professionals, Inc.

Say NO...

continued from Page 1

made for your spouse and kids. You'll remember the memories you created with them.

❖ **Your identity.** While your work is an important *part* of your identity, it's dangerous to allow your work to become your *whole* identity. You know you've allowed this to go too far when you reflect on what's important to you and work is all that (or most of what) comes to mind. Having an identity outside of work is about more than just having fun. It also helps you relieve stress, grow as a person, and avoid burnout.

Summary

Success and fulfillment often depend upon your ability to set good boundaries. Once you can do this, everything else just falls into place. ■

Dr. Travis Bradberry is the award-winning co-author of "Emotional Intelligence 2.0" and the co-founder of TalentSmart, a leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training.

