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Help! How Do I Get Off This Sinking Ship?

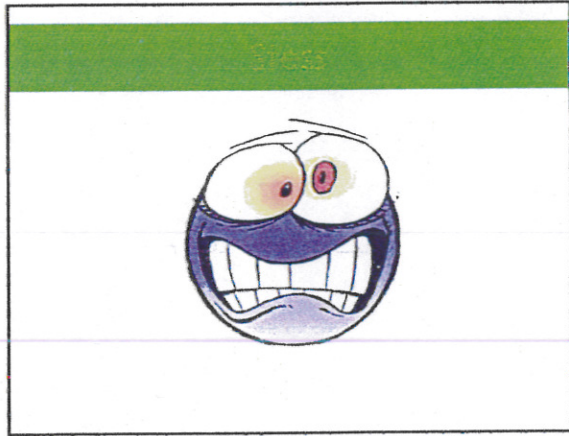
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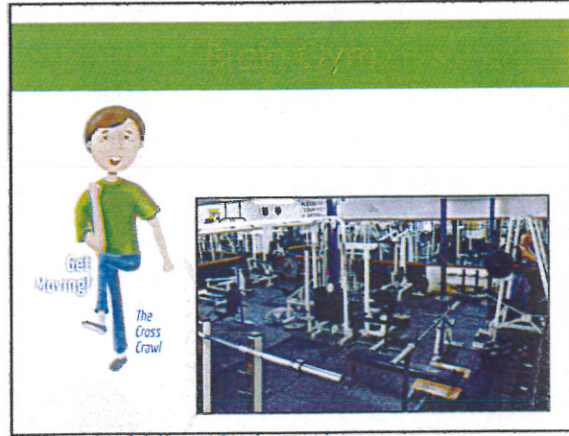






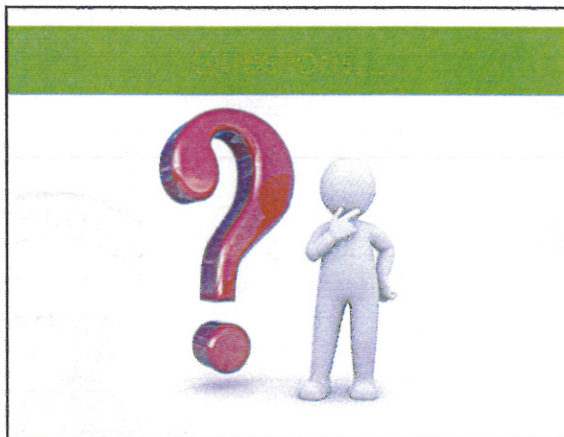




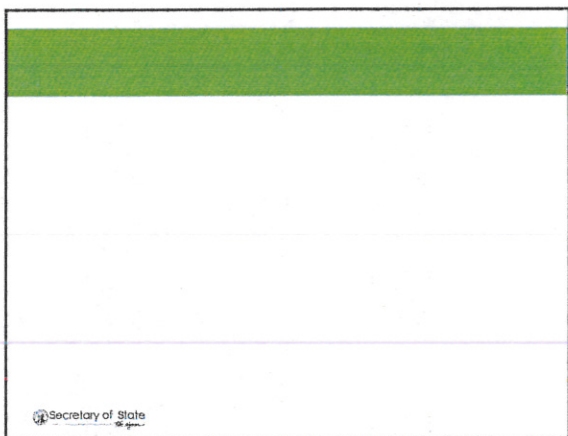


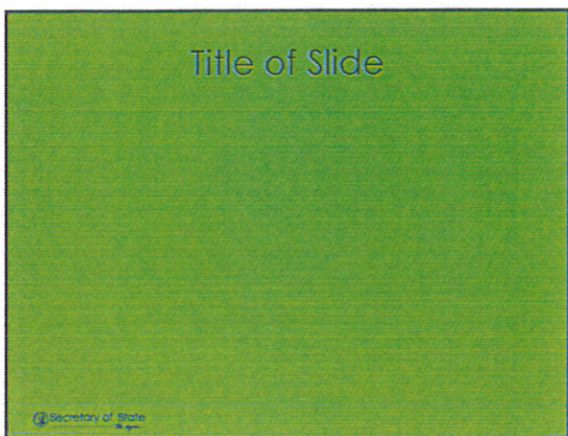




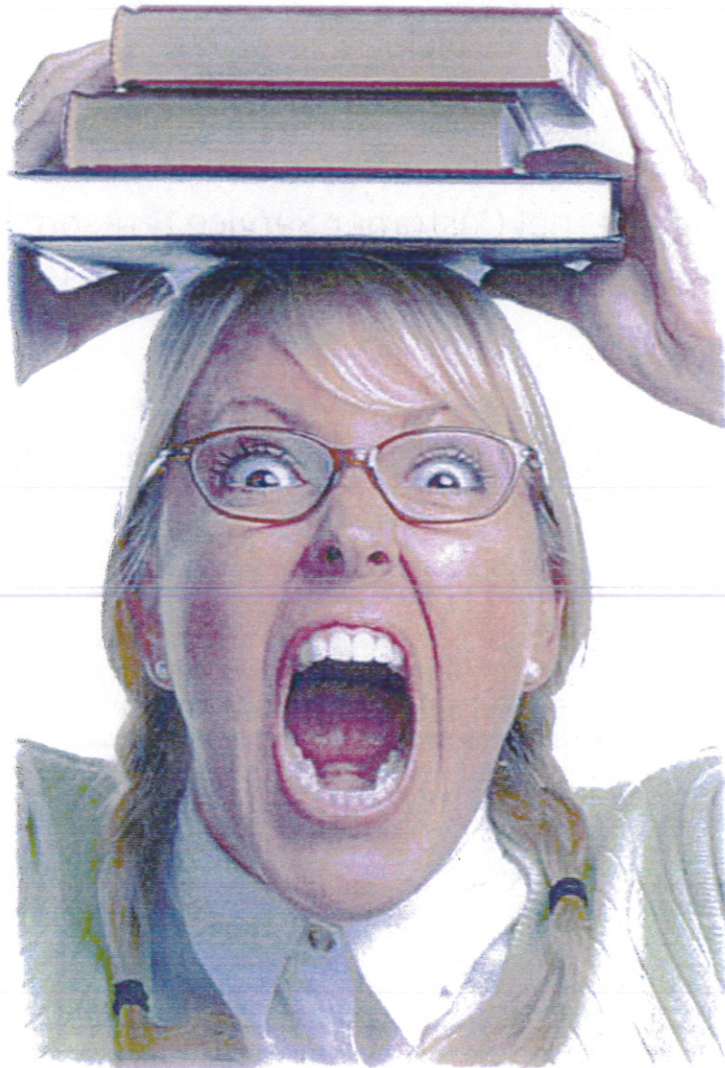








Help! How do I Get Off this Sinking Ship?



*How to deal with stress, compassion fatigue, burn-out and still
provide stellar customer service.*

Training designed by Jennifer Fenton, CE/Training Coordinator, Washington State Library, March 2013

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*Materials prepared by Jennifer Fenton, CE/Training Coordinator, Washington State Library,
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The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale

Understanding the Impact of Long-term Stress

People use the word "stress" to describe a wide variety of situations - from your cell phone ringing while you're talking on another phone - to the feelings associated with intense work overload, or the death of a loved-one.

But perhaps the most useful and widely accepted definition of stress (mainly attributed to Richard S. Lazarus) is this: Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize." In less formal terms, we feel stressed when we feel that "things are out of control".

Our ability to cope with the demands upon us is key to our experience of stress. For example, starting a new job might be a wholly exciting experience if everything else in your life is stable and positive. But if you start a new job when you've just moved into a new house, or your partner is ill, or you're experiencing money problems, you might find it very hard to cope.

How much of this does it take to push you "over the edge"? Not all unusual events are equally hard to deal with. For example, compare the stress of divorce with that of a change in responsibilities at work. Because of this, you need to be able to rate and measure your total stress score appropriately.

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS), more commonly known as the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale, was created to do just that. This tool helps us measure the stress load we carry, and think about what we should do about it.

This article looks at the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale, and explains how you can use it to manage the stress in your life.

The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale

In 1967, psychiatrists Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe decided to study whether or not stress contributes to illness. They surveyed more than 5,000 medical patients and asked them to say whether they had experience any of a series of 43 life events in the previous two years.

Each event, called a Life Change Unit (LCU), had a different "weight" for stress. The more events the patient added up, the higher the score. The higher the score, and the larger the weight of each event, the more likely the patient was to become ill.

The Stress Scale

To score your stress levels, simply check the box in the right hand column next to all the events that have happened to you in the last year.

Life Stress Test

In the past 12 to 24 months, which of the following major life events have taken place in your life?

Make down the points for each event that you have experienced this year.

When you're done looking at the whole list, add up the points for each event.

- _____ 100 Death of Spouse
- _____ 73 Divorce
- _____ 65 Marital Separation or from relationship partner
- _____ 63 Jail Term
- _____ 63 Death of close family member
- _____ 53 Personal injury or illness
- _____ 50 Marriage
- _____ 47 Fired from work
- _____ 45 Marital reconciliation
- _____ 45 Retirement
- _____ 44 Change in family member's health
- _____ 40 Pregnancy
- _____ 39 Sex difficulties
- _____ 39 Addition to family
- _____ 39 Business readjustment
- _____ 38 Change in financial status
- _____ 37 Death of close friend
- _____ 36 Change to a different line of work
- _____ 35 Change in number of marital arguments
- _____ 31 Mortgage or loan over \$30,000
- _____ 30 Foreclosure of mortgage or loan
- _____ 29 Change in work responsibilities
- _____ 29 Trouble with in-laws
- _____ 28 Outstanding personal achievement
- _____ 26 Spouse begins or stops work
- _____ 26 Starting or finishing school
- _____ 25 Change in living conditions
- _____ 24 Revision of personal habits
- _____ 23 Trouble with boss
- _____ 20 Change in work hours, conditions
- _____ 20 Change in residence
- _____ 20 Change in schools
- _____ 19 Change in recreational habits
- _____ 19 Change in church activities

- _____ 18 Change in social activities
- _____ 17 Mortgage or loan under \$20,000
- _____ 16 Change in sleeping habits
- _____ 15 Change in number of family gatherings
- _____ 15 Change in eating habits
- _____ 13 Vacation
- _____ 12 Christmas season
- _____ 11 Minor violations of the law

- _____ Your Total Score

This scale shows the kind of life pressure that you are facing. Depending on your coping skills or the lack thereof, this scale can predict the likelihood that you will fall victim to a stress related illness. The illness could be mild - frequent tension headaches, acid indigestion, loss of sleep to very serious illness like ulcers, cancer, migraines and the like.

LIFE STRESS SCORES

0-149 Low susceptibility to stress-related illness

150-299 Medium susceptibility to stress-related illness.

Learn and practice relaxation and stress management skills and a healthy well life style.

300 and over High susceptibility to stress-related illness

Daily practice of relaxation skills is very important for your wellness. Take care of it now before a serious illness erupts or an affliction becomes worse.

Stress Susceptibility and Personality

Skills for

Source: Success over Stress

Instructions: Use this SkillEval to help you to evaluate your personality, and determine how susceptible you are to stress. This type A behavior profile is adapted from the Glazer stress-control lifestyle questionnaire (in Goldberg, 1978).

Select the number for each question below that best reflects your behavior. The key is to be as honest as possible with your answers-- you want to find out what you are now, and not what you would like to be.

Unhurried attitude to time	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Always on time
Express feelings openly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hold things in
Usually have enough time	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Feel rushed
Do things slowly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Do things quickly
Become impatient if kept waiting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Happy to wait patiently
Have many hobbies and interests	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Interested in home and work
Satisfied with life as it is	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very ambitious
Take tasks one at a time	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Like to juggle many tasks
Let others finish before speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Interrupt others
Never set deadlines for myself	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Always set my own deadlines

A score below 55 indicates a Type B personality. This means that you are generally relaxed and respond well to situations that might induce stress. You are not at a high risk of suffering from stress.

A score of between 55 and 75 shows a balanced type A/B personality which is healthy. Although no one personality trait dominates to any great degree you should be aware that you could develop type A behavior.

A score over 75 shows a Type A personality. This means that you don't cope well with stress and you are susceptible to stress related illnesses such as cardiac problems. You should consider using the stress coping and stress management techniques identified in this course, and possibly consider stress management training.

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Brain Buttons to clear your brain.

Brain Teacher's Edition: p. 25



Why

- Increases the flow of electromagnetic energy.
- Brain Buttons are known in acupressure as Kidney 27 points – believed to cleanse the system of toxins and reduce the emotion of fear.
- Brain Buttons are located directly over the carotid arteries. Stimulating these points possibly increases freshly oxygenated blood flow to the brain for mental alertness. Clears out the cobwebs!
- Placing the hand over navel stimulates the center of gravity (vestibular system) for balance and orientation.

How

- To find these points: start at shoulders and trace collar bone to ends. Place fingers of one hand on ends of bones. Drop down just below the collar bone and move fingers back towards shoulders about 2" (some people feel a slight indentation).
- Gently massage points with one hand. Place the other hand over the navel.
- Option: Switch hands and repeat.



Cross Crawl to activate your whole brain.

Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition: p. 4



Why

- The Cross Crawl crosses the midline of the body to activate the *corpus callosum* – the bridge between the left and right sides of the brain. This integrates the hemispheres for higher level thinking and creativity.
- The Cross Crawl stimulates the *cerebellum*, a key brain area involved in coordinating movement and thinking. Moving in a coordinated way helps the brain organize complex tasks such as problem solving.
- Doing the Cross Crawl slowly activates the *basal ganglia* to fully orchestrate fine and gross motor functions. The basal ganglia play a key role in attention.

How

Alternate movements of the arm and opposite leg simultaneously. It is important to cross the midline of the body. For example: march in place while tapping the opposite knee. Vary the types of cross-lateral movements. Do slowly. Use music to set the pace.

Do Hook-ups to feel calm and positive.

Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition: p. 31



Why

- The position of Hook-ups reduces stress by calming the nervous system and shifting attention away from the brain's survival centers to the reasoning centers in the frontal lobes. It puts the thinking brain back in charge.
- The hand position integrates the sensory and motor areas for more coherence. A large area of the sensory motor cortex is devoted to the hands and fingers.
- Placing the tongue on the roof of mouth stimulates the vestibular system, which in turn activates the Reticular Activating System (attention network) for balance and focus.

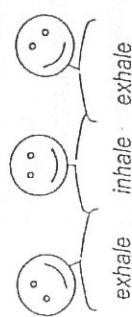
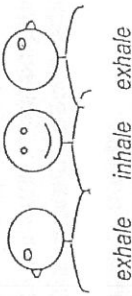
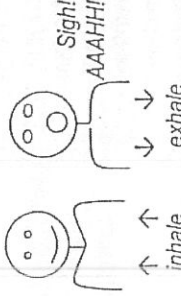
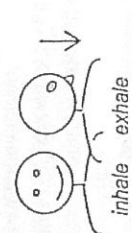

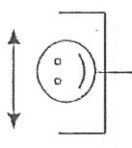
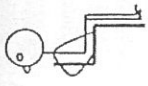
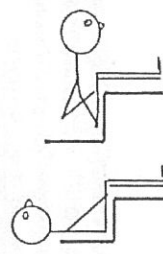

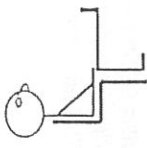

How

Cross one ankle over the other. Stretch arms out in front of you and cross one wrist over the other, palms together, thumbs down. Lace fingers together; roll laced hands up to rest on chest. Place tongue on the roof of mouth. Relax and breathe deeply.

To transition out: Uncross legs and hands; rest tongue. Put finger tips together and relax for a moment. This is a good time to: state an affirmation or an intention for the day. You also may want to imagine something positive – a peaceful scene in nature, doing something you enjoy, a favorite color.

Hook-ups can be done sitting, standing or lying down.

STRETCHING IN YOUR CUBICLE

<p>Breathe slowly and deeply in rhythm with the movement. Do not force or strain. If it hurts, don't do it. Repeat 4x each side.</p>			
<p>Head tilts</p>  <p>exhale inhale exhale</p>	<p>Head Turns</p>  <p>exhale inhale exhale</p>	<p>Shoulder Shrugs</p>  <p>↑ inhale ↓ exhale</p> <p>Sigh! AAAHH!</p>	<p>Turn-tilt</p> <p>Turn head 2/3 of the way. Tilt chin toward collarbone.</p>  <p>inhale exhale</p>
<p>Introvert-extrovert</p> <p>Cross arms in front, lower chin. Inhale, expand chest, slice arms through air, look up slightly.</p>  <p>exhale ↓ inhale ↑</p>	<p>Cactus</p>  <p>Inhale elbows apart. Exhale elbows together in front of chest.</p>	<p>Twist</p> <p>Left hand on right thigh or chair arm. R. hand on side or back of chair</p>  <p>Gently turn ribs, shoulders, then head to right. Inhale back to center. Exhale as you twist.</p>	<p>Forward bend</p> <p>Relax head and neck</p>  <p>Inhale exhale</p>
<p>Circles</p> <p>Forward, then reverse.</p>  <p>Inhale up exhale down</p>	<p>Leg extensions</p>  <p>Point & flex Circle ankles - both directions</p>	<p>mini STRESSBUSTER (30-sec)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you inhale, count very slowly up to four. • As you exhale count slowly back down to one. <p>For example, while inhaling, count 1-2-3-4. While exhaling, count 4-3-2-1. Repeat.</p> <p><i>(Inhale and exhale through nose.)</i></p> 	

☺ A nice reminder not to take yourself too seriously! ☺

TIPS AND RESOURCES

Don't stick your neck out!

Prevent aches and fatigue in your neck muscles by keeping your head above your shoulders instead of jutting your head forward.

Try the following neck strengthener:



- Look straight ahead, not up or down.
- Press your chin with your index finger.
- Glide your head back on your neck making a "double chin."

Hold for 5 sec. Repeat 10 times.

Hand stretches (recommended by AAOS to help reduce risk of carpal tunnel)

- A. Extend and stretch wrists and fingers as if they are in a handstand position. Hold for a count of 5.
- B. Straighten both wrists, relax fingers.
- C. Make tight fists with hands.
- D. Bend both wrists down toward the elbows while keeping fist. Hold for count of 5.
- E. Straighten both wrists, relax fingers.
- F. Let arms hang loosely at the side; shake for a couple of seconds. Repeat A-F 10 times

Also for hands: webs...claws...beaks...paws...

Eye Movements

Imagine a big clock in front of you. Starting at noon, gently move your gaze around the clock. When you get back to noon, move counterclockwise. Blink, blink, blink.

Stressbusters

Find a quiet place. Play relaxing music. Lie on the floor with knees bent and rest your lower legs on a chair or sofa — or up the wall. Use an eye pillow to soothe and nurture the eyes.

- Try visualizing that you are inhaling peace, exhaling tension.
- Breathing in, I calm body and mind. Breathing out, I smile.
- Breathing in, silently say to yourself "I am." Breathing out, say "calm and focused."

Resources

- For information on forward head posture, see *ErgAerobics: Why does working @ my computer hurt so much? - A comprehensive guide to help you prevent and treat Computer Induced Repetitive Stress Injuries (CIRSI)* by Perry Bonomo and Daniel Seidler. www.ergaerobics.com/ergainfo
- L&I WISHA web site - Ergonomics <http://www.ini.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/HazardInfo/Ergonomics/default.asp>
- Desktop Yoga: for office slaves, internet addicts and stressed out students* by Julie Lusk
- Office Yoga: Simple Stretches for Busy People* by Darrin Zeer
- Stretching at your Computer or Desk* by Bob Anderson
- The Repetitive Strain Injury Handbook: An 8-Step Recovery & Prevention Plan* by Robert Simon, M.D.
- Conquering Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* by Sharon Butler
- VIDEO: *ErgEroise* P. Bonomo, PT, et al. 42 exercises to help prevent computer induced repetitive stress injuries
- VIDEO: *User-Friendly Back Yoga for the Prevention of Lower Back Problems 23"* Larry Payne, PhD. Safe, gentle lower back routines.

Reduce Stress with Exercise

Lately, there has been an increased awareness of the benefits of exercise. Several studies show that your workout will not only help improve your strength, endurance, and resistance to illness, but will also decrease stress (Claudine Chamberlain, ABCNews.com, June 2001). A recent study at Duke University indicated exercise may not only alleviate stress but can reduce the symptoms of clinical depression as well (James Blumenthal, Archives of Internal Medicine, Oct. 25, 2000). In this 4-month study, 60% of people who engaged in aerobic activity (a brisk walk) three times a week for 30 minutes recovered from depressive symptoms without the use of antidepressant medication.

Aerobic activity may also burn off anxiety created by our natural "fight or flight" response (David Posen, M.D. Canadian Journal of Continuing Medical Education, April 1995). This primitive response may be set off by incidents during the day such as a traffic jam or a fight with a spouse or co-worker. There is some evidence that exercise may release endorphins which are the body's natural painkillers. These neurochemicals appear to produce feelings of well-being. Lastly, lifting weights can lead to increased self-esteem and feelings of accomplishment which will also help fight against depression (Tkachuk & Martin, Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, June 2000).

Many people are already aware of the physical benefits of exercise but have a hard time maintaining a routine. Here are some helpful tips to improve consistency in your workout schedule.

1. **Start with small steps.**
 - Don't do too much, too fast. This can be overwhelming and possibly lead to an injury. Take a walk around the block and slowly add distance and/or speed. Also, be sure to consult with your physician before beginning an exercise regimen.
2. **Form clear goals.**
 - You will be much more likely to follow through if you have a specific activity planned for a set time and day. Psychology professor James Rosen states that exercising at the same time each day will create "habit strength" which will make the routine easier to maintain (The Walking Magazine, November/December 2000).
3. **Record your progress.**
 - A visual cue on a posted calendar can be a rewarding reminder of your accomplishment and a motivator to continue.
4. **Reward your consistency rather than the difficulty of the exercise.**
 - You will have different levels of energy on different days. You will be more likely to follow through in the long-term if you do some

activity regularly rather than always shooting for a set amount of activity.

5. Do it for you.

- People (especially women) often exercise in an attempt to change their bodies to meet others' expectations. Concentrate on feeling strong and healthy for you rather than on others' wishes.

6. Find a workout partner or support person.

- Ideally, it is best to exercise with a partner. In fact, some believe the social aspect of exercise is an important contributor to stress reduction (James Blumenthal, Archives of Internal Medicine, Oct. 25, 2000). In addition, a partner or group will increase your accountability. Therefore, exercise classes or walking groups are excellent choices. If you prefer to exercise alone, ask a friend to help support your success and put your feet to the fire when you slack off.

7. Hang in there until exercise becomes more rewarding.

- James Rosen also suggests that it may take two weeks to four months for exercise to become a comfortable habit in your life (The Walking Magazine, November/December 2000). You may wish to use external rewards until the exercise becomes a reward in itself.

8. Pick fun activities.

- Kate Hays recommends doing something you enjoy (Working It Out: Using Exercise in Psychotherapy). Getting a routine started is hard enough. If you are doing something you dislike, you will procrastinate or not follow through. Hiking, dancing, swimming, basketball, or walks are all great forms of exercise. Be creative.

http://www.personalgrowthassoc.com/july_feature.htm

Customer Service and Communication Tips

Phrases to Use:

1. What have you considered?
2. What are the options?
3. Which do you prefer?
4. What are the alternatives?
5. How can I help?
6. What do you want me to do?
7. Here are some options.
8. I understand.
9. I understand your concern
10. I apologize for (specific action)
11. I can relate to that.
12. You have a point.
13. You must be angry.
14. May I help you?
15. That's a good question. Let me check and find out.
16. That's a tough one. Let's see what we can do.
17. Here's how I can help you with that.
18. The next time that happens, here's what you can do.
19. It may take me two or three minutes to get that. Are you able to wait while I check?
20. I have some thoughts about...
21. Could we discuss...
22. I have a concern about....
23. Let's take a look at....

Phrases to Avoid:

1. I need (want) you to....
2. You need to....
3. What's your problem?
4. I can't/you can't
5. Would you mind....?
6. I'll try
7. I'm sorry
8. It's just a
9. best/worst
10. but
11. required, necessary
12. should/ought to
13. must
14. policy
15. jargon
16. I don't know.
17. We can't do that.
18. You'll have to....
19. Hang on a second; I'll be right back.

IMPROVING INTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

A PRESENTATION BY

GEOFFREY TRITSCH, VICE PRESIDENT

VANTAGE TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING GROUP

ACUTA 35TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

APRIL 4, 2011

I. What is “internal customer service” and why is it important?

- The link between internal and external customer service is not as tenuous as one might think.

There's a remarkably close and consistent link between how internal customers are treated and how external customers perceive the quality of your organization's services. A commitment to serve internal customers invariably shows itself to external customers. It's almost impossible to provide good external service if your organization is not providing good internal service. – Benjamin Schneider, Univ. of Md.

- If you're not serving the [external] customer, your job is to be serving someone who is. (Jan Carlson, Former CEO, SAS)
- What you do as an internal provider affects what everyone else does, which in turn affects the customers...EMC Corporation (Hopkinton, MA) provides customer service/sales training for all employees
- Common issues for all customers:
 - Assurance - The knowledge and courtesy you show to customers (even if some of them are acting like jerks), and your ability to convey trust, competence, and confidence. Done with:
 - Product knowledge.
 - Organization knowledge
 - Listening skills.
 - Problem-solving skills.
 - Empathy -- The degree of caring and individual attention you show customers.
 - Tangibles -- The physical facilities and equipment, and your own (and others') appearance.
 - Speed -- The ability to help customers promptly.
 - Speed of answer
 - Speed of response
 - Speed of fix
 - Reliability -- The ability to provide what was promised, dependably and accurately
 - Not reliability, but guaranteed reliability
 - We don't say “thank you” for things we expect – dial tone, lights
 - Access to information
 - Immediate and accurate
 - Respect

➤ Getting it RIGHT

- Rules of Customer Service:
 - Make the customers feel heard. Listen. Pay attention.
 - Make the customers understood. Repeat critical information.
 - Make the customers appreciated and respected.
 - Make the customers feel helped.
 - Don't make promises unless you WILL keep them.
 - Be helpful - even if there's no immediate profit in it.
 - Admit it, apologize and move along efficiently if you've made a mistake.
- Consistent, high-quality service boils down to two equally important things: **caring and competence.** (Chip R. Bell and Ron Zemke, Service Wisdom) You can train for both of these things.

➤ Getting it WRONG

- Remove these things from your vocabulary – whether you say them, act them out, or even think them:
 - *"I don't know" (without "let me find out and get back to you".*
 - *"I don't care."*
 - *"I can't be bothered."*
 - *"I don't like you."*
 - *"I know it all." And "You don't know anything."*
 - *"I'm right and you're wrong."*
 - *"Hurry up and wait."*
- The training/action disconnect

➤ In order to change what you do and how you do it, it's important to understand that there are three basic components to customer service (The 3 Ps):

- Product/Services
- Personnel
 - Empowerment
 - Hire people who like people...
 - Nobody feels special working for an organization that carries non-performers.
 - Treat your people as you want them to treat your customers.
 - Don't manage people, manage their efforts.)
- Process
 - Two of the major things that your customers want from you are simplicity and a predictable interface.
 - We need to design systems around customers, not around operations.
 - Combined voice/data help desk. Soon users won't be able to tell the difference and neither will you!
 - Here are a couple of things that have got to stop:
 1. Paying people to hide our shortcomings
 2. Scapegoating
 - Encourage feedback

➤ Tips and techniques

Giving and Receiving Constructive Feedback



Effective Action

1. Convey your positive intent.
2. Describe specifically what you have observed.
3. State the impact of the behavior or action.
4. Ask the other person to respond.
5. Focus the discussion on solutions.

-
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Key Action 1

Convey your positive intent.

Why: Conveying your positive intent will make it easier for the other person to hear your feedback.

How: **Mentally prepare to give feedback.**
Even if you need to give feedback on the spot, you can take a second to focus on the positive outcome you want. Having a clear, constructive purpose will help you convey a sense of objectivity and respect.

Rule of thumb: If you can't think of a constructive purpose for your feedback, don't give the feedback.

Consider the timing.

In addition to making sure that you are clear about your purpose in giving feedback, choose a time when the other person is likely to be receptive to what you have to say. Avoid times when other people are present or when the person is busy, tired, or upset.

Briefly state what you'd like to cover.

Useful phrases are:

- "I have some thoughts about..."
- "Could we discuss..."
- "I have a concern about..."
- "Let's take a look at..."

Point to a common goal.

Pointing to a common goal as part of your statement helps the person understand the positive consequences of listening to and acting on the feedback. It will also reduce the chance that you will come across as placing blame. Common goals may be as simple as meeting deadlines or improving coordination.

The Key Actions

1. Convey your positive intent.
2. Describe specifically what you have observed.
3. State the impact of the behavior or action.
4. Ask the other person to respond.
5. Focus the discussion on solutions.

Now we need to meet the delivery schedule, and we've got to get the client what we need to do.

But I could've done this for you and for my purpose. I'd like to know if there's anything I can do to help you meet your goal of working on the project.

Key Action 2

Describe specifically what you have observed.

Why

For feedback to be effective, the other person needs to believe that what you say is real and valid. This is more likely to happen if your comments are specific and concrete. By simply stating the facts without judgment or interpretation, you establish a common ground on which both you and the other person can build a solution.

How

Be specific.

Use facts and figures whenever possible.

In going over the data, I found that we are 11 records short.

The turnaround time is now up to a day and a half.

Be brief and to the point.

You can be specific—but long-winded. The most effective feedback gets to the heart of the matter quickly:

Some of the tools are in the wrong drawers.

The columns aren't organized the way we agreed.

Focus on the behavior or action, not on the person.

Avoid using *you*, which puts people on the defensive. Instead of saying “You didn’t organize the columns the way we agreed,” say: “The columns aren’t organized the way we agreed.”

Limit your feedback to one behavior or action.

Some people have a tendency to store up feedback and cover many topics at once. This practice is commonly known as “gunnysacking.” The result is usually a defensive response from the person receiving feedback.

Key Action 3

State the impact of the behavior or action.

Why: Focusing on the impact helps establish a mutual stake in a better outcome. It also helps keep the discussion objective.

How: Link the behavior or action to important business needs or challenges. Explain the impact of the behavior or action on such things as:

- Business plans or goals
- Customer satisfaction
- Important reports or measurements
- Organization-wide systems
- Costs or cycle time
- The amount of rework

State only one or two of the most significant consequences.

Select only the most important consequences or your feedback may be viewed as an attack rather than as information offered in a supportive manner.

Maintain an objective tone.

Describing the negative consequences of an action or behavior can cause you to slip into an emotional gear. If this is a potential problem for you, practice ahead of time so you can describe the situation in a straightforward manner.

The 5-Step Process

1. Convey your positive intent.
2. Describe specifically what you have observed.
3. State the impact of the behavior or action.
4. Ask the other person to respond.
5. Focus the discussion on solutions.

Key Action 4

Ask the other person to respond.

Why: Since feedback is about opening doors, you need to find out what the other person thinks. Unless you ask for a response, you run the risk of a one-sided conversation that doesn't lead to problem solving or mutual learning.

How: Invite the other person to respond.
There are several ways to invite a response. One is simply to complete what you are saying and then pause and meet the person's eye to indicate that you are waiting for a response. Another is to ask an open-ended question.

What do you think?

What is your view of the situation?

Tell me, what are your thoughts?

How do you see things?

Listen objectively to the other person's response.

Listening to the other person's response will enable you to determine what to do next. If you have given your feedback objectively, the chances are you will receive an objective response.

If necessary, summarize the other person's key points.

Summarizing the other person's point of view often diffuses a negative situation and keeps the door to communication open. By listening and summarizing, you are not necessarily agreeing with the other person, but you are showing respect for his or her viewpoint.

Key Action 5

Focus the discussion on solutions.

Why: Focusing the discussion away from problems and toward solutions not only leads to problem solving and mutual learning, but also ensures an objective exchange.

How: Determine what to do next.
At this point in the conversation, you will need to make a judgment call based on the person's response in Key Action 4. In some cases, you may have to revisit earlier Key Actions in order to establish the need for action. In others, you can move ahead to problem solving or other follow-up actions.

Possible Response

The person didn't know what was expected.

The person doesn't think there is a problem.

The person says he or she can't do anything differently right now.

The person says he or she can't do anything differently given the situation.

Suggested Actions

Clarify expectations

Repeat Key Action 2 or 3 (or both) to establish the need for a change
Use neutral, objective language.
Remain calm and focused.

Determine if there is a need for training or coaching

If there is a problem you can help with, commit to problem solving
Ask questions about possible new approaches

Don't underestimate the impact of your feedback. It may have hit the mark even though the person doesn't commit to a course of action on the spot

Allow time for the person to calm down
be empathetic

Offer alternatives and support

Key Actions

1. Convey your positive intent.
2. Describe specifically what you have observed
3. State the impact of the behavior or action.
4. Ask the other person to respond
5. Focus the discussion on solutions.

The person becomes emotional

The person agrees and would welcome suggestions

When appropriate, ask directly for the change you want.

In giving feedback, the reality is that you want to see the other person make some kind of change. State your expectations so the person will know what to do next time.

Next time, will you . . . ?

We could move this along more quickly if you . . .

A win-win solution here would be if you would . . .

If you are making suggestions, avoid coming across as an expert.

Anytime you offer alternatives, you are explaining how you yourself might approach the problem. Especially in technical areas, you may not know enough about what goes on behind the scenes to supply the perfect solution.

Leave responsibility for action with the other person.

In giving constructive feedback, you will get the best results if you simply describe what's not working and allow the other person to figure out the details. This approach is essential to building accountability.

Manage your own expectations.

Using the Key Actions, even using them perfectly, will not magically transform the other person into the co-worker of your dreams. But it will help open a door to problem solving and mutual learning.

Techniques for Receiving Constructive Feedback

Receiving constructive feedback almost always involves some discomfort. You will need to make an extra effort to hear the other person out.

The techniques below will help you respond constructively whether you think the feedback is justified or not. You can use these techniques in any order and as often as it makes sense.

Read the list of techniques and place a check mark next to those you use regularly. Circle one technique you want to make a conscious effort to use more in the future.

When you
are receiving
feedback

- A. Focus on the content, not on the person.**
 - ☑ Assume the person giving the feedback is concerned about the work, not motivated by ill will.
 - ☑ Find the nugget of wisdom in the feedback. To do this, focus on the three most common reasons for constructive feedback: the need to acquire skills, to improve quality, or to increase sales or profitability.

- B. Listen calmly and attentively.**
 - ☑ Get the complete picture so you can choose the best response.
 - ☑ Tune in fully; your willingness to listen often will make the speaker feel better and help “turn down the heat” quickly.
 - ☑ Monitor any negative reactions you have to keep them from escalating.

- C. Clarify the feedback.**
 - ☑ Select a few key questions you will ask to gather the information you need and to be sure you understand.
 - ☑ Avoid antagonizing the person with too many questions.

- D. Acknowledge the other person’s concerns.**
 - ☑ Show you understand the other person’s point of view.
 - ☑ Point to common goals and objectives.
 - ☑ Express your willingness to engage in mutual problem solving.

Techniques for Receiving Constructive Feedback (continued)

- E. Avoid defending or overexplaining.
 - ▣ Correct any inaccuracies you hear, but keep your input to a few words.
 - ▣ If necessary, take time out before responding in order to sort out what you want to say.

 - F. Welcome suggestions.
 - ▣ Focus on the future.
 - ▣ Find out at least one thing you can do differently to better meet the needs or requirements.
-

On an
ongoing
basis or
after
receiving
feedback

- G. Ask for feedback regularly.

- H. If in doubt about the merit of feedback, check with others.

- I. Evaluate feedback you receive and decide what changes you can make.

- J. Let people know when you implement changes that stem from the feedback they gave you.