

# FrontLineEmployee

WELLNESS, PRODUCTIVITY AND YOU!

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## How to receive CRITICISM WELL

Handling criticism well is a workplace skill you may never quite perfect, but there are ways to build emotional resilience to it.

- 1 Criticism doesn't mean you're wrong, but some truth probably exists. Search for it.
- 2 One complaint does not mean everyone feels the same way.
- 3 Criticism may originate from a reaction to only a small part of your work, not the entire effort. Don't discard what is working well.
- 4 Like the ring of a bell, the sting of criticism dissipates. Don't risk an improper reaction to it by responding immediately. Instead, wait for a few hours—or, even better, overnight—before reacting.
- 5 See criticism as a gift to improve your productivity and increase the value of what you do.

- 6 Label criticism as feedback, and thank those who offer it.

## ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Thanks to research, the practice of having an attitude of gratitude is beginning to take its place alongside meditation, yoga and mindfulness as a health practice with demonstrated value. Magazine articles, books, websites, diaries, greeting cards, and calendars all promote the attitude of gratitude.

More than 20 gratitude-focused research studies have cataloged the health benefits of gratitude, including improved life satisfaction, vitality, hope, optimism, and reduced levels of depression and anxiety. Practicing gratitude is a conscious process that includes the intention of regular thankfulness (i.e., "Today, I am thankful for..." or "My favorite part of today was...") and training one's mind to see the good in any situation. Will it work for you?

Source: [www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com) [search "grateful experiences and expressions"]

## FIND WORK & FAMILY BALANCE WITH "SHARED ACTIVITIES"

If you struggle to find balance between work and family, try "shared activity" as a strategy to help you feel less guilty and score some wins. While working in your office at home or doing chores (with the few precious hours you possess on the weekend), consider engaging your child in a way that combines the activity with one he or she can also do that allows them to be present with you.

It's a myth that your child watching you work is a "negative" or that "finding balance" means it must always be play. Witnessing your work ethic can be powerfully influential. Many parents with demanding work schedules have mastered the art of exposing their children to their work by creatively allowing them to be close observers or even participate in some manner. Work and family balance is about testing and experimentation. Find fascinating strategies at [pinterest.com](http://pinterest.com) by logging in free and searching "work family balance."

## Getting help for ANXIETY

More than 40 million North Americans suffer from chronic forms of nervousness that interfere with their life. These are anxiety disorders, which are highly treatable forms of mental illness that can benefit from counseling, support, medication or alternative therapies. If anxiety is interfering with your life or bothersome in ways that interfere with your relationships, your job and your happiness, don't be a prisoner to the disabling condition.

Anxiety can't be seen like a rash or a mole, but it is just as real, and it's not your fault. Failing to understand anxiety can lead you to suffer longer as you struggle to control its symptoms. This can contribute to additional stress and health problems like depression. Continuum EAP has licensed professionals available to help assess mental health concerns and work with you to develop a plan for personal or family member care.

## GETTING COUPLES' communication unstuck

Communication problems are still the most commonly cited reason for separation and divorce, so don't let the frustration of communication problems linger too long in your relationship before taking steps to intervene. You can start by applying tried-and-true principles of effective communication. Although many communication strategies for reducing conflict and healing relationships exist, the following three are foundational and can help you experience almost immediate results:

- **"I" statements:** Use "I" statements when talking about your feelings and your needs. Doing so instantly removes the blaming dynamic your partner responds to with defensiveness.
- **Listen closely:** Listen without interrupting. This takes conscious effort, and it is a skill that comes with practice. So practice. It will be easier because of the tip above.
- **Paraphrase:** When your partner speaks, listen and validate what was said. The ability to paraphrase demonstrates the most appreciated and satisfying form of validation, but expect it to feel a bit awkward until it becomes a more natural part of your communication style.

If these exercises don't work, then seek help from Continuum EAP before throwing in the towel on your relationship. Counselors know how to apply communication strategies and can guide you through them and give you more to use in the future if needed.



## Let nature REJUVENATE YOU

New research shows there are mental health advantages that come with spending time immersed in natural settings. Frequent technology use puts extraordinary strain on cognitive functions such as attention, problem solving, focusing and multitasking due to shifting between programs with different cognitive demands.

Research indicates that exposure to natural settings seems to improve our ability to perform these tasks because of the restorative benefits offered by a radically different environment. A few days of downtime and communing with nature can give you a 50% boost in creativity and productivity!

Source: <http://www.plos.org> [search "0051474"]