

# One Day at a Time

July 2011 Monthly Bulletin



## *When Habits Aren't Helpful*

### **Are you ready to break a habit?**

How do people develop habits? As we grow up, we face many challenges. We discover and then tend to repeat behaviors that help us cope and manage. These repeated behaviors can become habits. **More...**



## *Worklife Balance*

### **The power of positive thinking**

The power of positive thinking can be tapped by developing positive attitudes. One way to develop such attitudes is by creating positive affirmations or statements about yourself, a situation or your behavior. **More...**



## *Mind Matters*

### **The art of saying "no"**

Learning to say "no" is a survival skill in today's hectic world. Saying "no" helps you set boundaries, reduce stress and moderate your life. **More...**



## *A Line in the Sand*

### **When does a good thing become too much of a good thing?**

There are many things we enjoy in life. When does the enjoyment of pleasures become a problem? Consider the following questions. **More...**



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### *When Habits Aren't Helpful*

# Are you ready to break a habit?

How do people develop habits? As we grow up, we face many challenges. We discover and then tend to repeat behaviors that help us cope and manage. These repeated behaviors can become habits.

Many habits are helpful. But some habits are problematic or destructive to yourself or others. While it can be difficult, it's possible to break even lifelong habits. Because habits are learned, they can also be unlearned!

### You control you!

If you have a habit you'd like to break, the following tips can help you take charge and create the change you desire:

- **Make sure you want the change.** It's not enough for someone else to want you to break a habit. Change can take hard work and commitment on your part, so it's important it's something you truly want to do.
- **Take responsibility for your habits.** If you tend to blame others, you reduce your power to direct your own life. Take responsibility and take charge!
- **Avoid labels.** Try not to label a habit as good or bad. Instead, simply ask yourself if the habit works for you or not. And do you want to continue it — or stop?

- **Picture yourself free of your habit.** Visualize yourself without the habit and enjoy the view. Visualization is a powerful tool and can be a big step toward making the change a reality.
- **Enlist a friend for support.** Breaking a habit is hard work. It can be helpful to have someone you can call for support when the going gets rough.
- **Set realistic, specific goals.** For example, if you want to change or break a habit that impacts your weight, you might set goals like exercising three times a week or adding two servings of fruits or veggies to your diet each day. Setting specific — and manageable — goals can help you track your progress and reinforce your successes.
- **Reward yourself.** Celebrate your success and renew your motivation by rewarding yourself along the way.

Ready to break a habit? **Go for it!**

### Getting Help

For help with personal or workplace issues, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These confidential services are available 24/7 to employees, their eligible household members and adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not.



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### Worklife Balance

# The power of positive thinking

The power of positive thinking can be tapped by developing positive attitudes. One way to develop such attitudes is by creating positive affirmations or statements about yourself, a situation or your behavior.

When you consistently change your self-talk from negative to positive, you create a shift in your perceptions: you become more positive! Here are several strategies for learning to be more upbeat and optimistic:

- **Use positive statements.** Avoid the words "not" and "can't." Instead, be positive and say: "I am okay" and "I can do this."
- **Use the present tense.** State your self-talk in the present tense — here and now statements. Say: "Right now, I am satisfied or have everything I need," instead of "Soon I'll have everything I need."

- **Identify the outcome you want and state it as if it is already a reality.** Rephrase your statements to see your goal as a fact. Instead of, "I hope to be a good person," say "I am becoming a good person." Say this with feeling!
- **Focus on behaviors you can control.** Create positive self-talk that deals with you and your goals. Waiting for others to change gives away your power since it's just not possible to control the behavior or actions of others.

Remember, you have more control than anyone else over how you think about your life, the situations you handle and yourself. Take advantage of that power by thinking and speaking in a positive way.

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## The art of saying “no”

Learning to say “no” is a survival skill in today’s hectic world. Saying “no” helps you set boundaries, reduce stress and moderate your life. It can make the difference between feeling tied up in knots trying to meet every demand and please everyone around you — or taking good care of you.

### When and how?

Two of the challenges of saying “no” include when and how to say it.

Here are some times when saying “no” can serve you well:

- **You’re already over-booked.** There’s truly no wiggle room in your schedule to take on another commitment.
- **You’re already super-stressed.** If you don’t say “no,” you will create undue pressure on yourself and others in your life, too.
- **You’re only considering “yes” because of guilt.** A guilt-ridden “yes” often leads you to feeling angry and resentful.
- **Your gut says “no.”** If you don’t feel good or right about a favor or request, go with your gut.

### How do you say “no?”

- **Be honest and brief.** If you give elaborate explanations, it may sound and feel awkward. Keep it short and sweet.
- **Be firm but respectful.** “No” can be a direct, low-key answer. You can also soften the “no” with a compliment like: “Thanks for asking me to be part of such an important cause but I simply don’t have time.”
- **If necessary, defer.** Avoid giving an immediate response. Say something like, “I’ll have to think about that. Let me get back to you.” Make sure to follow up.
- **Offer a substitute.** Perhaps you’re too busy but would like to help out. Consider offering to pitch in with something else less time-consuming than the original request.

### The benefits of “no”

Learning to say “no” helps keep you in control of your life. It can help you build self-confidence and maintain a healthy balance in your everyday living.

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### *A Line in the Sand*

# When does a good thing become too much of a good thing?

There are many things we enjoy in life. Some of us like a cocktail now and then, chocolate, exercise, sexual activity or spending time on the Internet. Others may enjoy shopping or gambling. When does the enjoyment of these pleasures become a problem? Consider the following questions.

Do you:

- Constantly think about the next time?
- Take time away from your normal responsibilities to do it?
- Get negative comments about your focus on this?
- Feel uncomfortable or unsettled when you are not doing this?
- Continue it even if it has become a problem?
- Feel guilty over this activity?

Enjoyment lessens and problems begin when things change from “I want to” to “I have to.” This is an important clue that the proverbial line in the sand has likely been crossed.

An out-of-control behavior or bad habit can lead to abuse, and in some cases, addiction. If you are concerned you are on the edge of crossing the line, pay attention to the choices you make. Reflect on the sense of urgency behind those choices. If you feel you may be headed in the wrong direction, talk to someone you trust, and consider getting help. The earlier the problem is addressed — the better!

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All EAP calls are confidential, except as required by law (i.e., when a person's emotional condition is a threat to himself/herself or others, or there is suspected abuse of a minor child, and in some areas, spousal or elder abuse).

Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change.

