

# WORK • LIFE • EXCEL

## Work•Life Tips

- ▶ Rudeness is prompted by a state of agitation, disappointment, and anger. The customer who displays rudeness is usually in more pain than the recipient of the rude behavior. If you work with customers, you have likely been confronted by rudeness periodically. Learning to view rudeness from this "person in pain" perspective is a key to better coping with it. There may be short-term relief for acting rudely, but there is usually a rebound, which leaves the customer feeling worse. Understanding rudeness can help you detach from it personally, permit you to be more empathetic toward your customer, and help you appreciate the influence and value of your customer-service role.
- ▶ Getting a disappointing performance review can stir strong emotions. If you offer a written response, be sure to write professionally, using an objective tone, so you are portrayed in the best light. Let your first draft sit for a day or so. You'll more easily spot emotional or exaggerated statements that water down these types of employee letters. This is called catching the "purple prose." Let a friend outside of work review your letter for an even better insight. Purple prose is writing that is evocative and emotional, not measurable, and tends to undermine the author's arguments. For example, rather than use words like "never", "always" or "constantly", use "frequently", "repeatedly", and "daily". Then, add specifics. Much better!
- ▶ No one knows the exact financial loss of chronic email checking, but it may extend greatly beyond the time used to take a peek. Interrupted concentration, dealing with nonurgent emails, a sudden impulse to surf the Web about unrelated matters, and lost ideas all get thrown into the cost mix. Gain better control over email checking by closing out of your email program, turning off the mail's "in" sounds, using a computer disconnected from the Internet, choosing only specific times of day to check email, and considering whether you need more help, or even professional counseling, to stop obsessive email checking.

## Holiday Alcohol Use & You



If you drink alcohol, stay safe this holiday season by following a few guidelines: 1) Eat food to slow the absorption of alcohol. Foods high in protein, like cheese, work best, but any food in your system will help. 2) Steer clear of carbonated alcoholic beverages and "shots" to avoid rapid absorption of alcohol. Carbonization increases pressure in your stomach. This speeds the absorption rate of alcohol. 3) Understand your body's reaction to alcohol. Don't be fooled into believing that not "feeling it" after you've been drinking means

that you are "okay to drive." Not "feeling it" leads many people with a high tolerance to drink more alcohol than their peers. This leads to higher blood alcohol content (BAC) than for those in the group who react to "feeling" alcohol sooner by drinking less. The one with the highest tolerance therefore could have the highest BAC in the group, despite appearing unaffected! Never drive after drinking.

## Stress Takes a Holiday

If you begin feeling pressured and frazzled this holiday season because of too many obligations and high expectations for what must occur, take a moment and decide (if it is not too late) what the holidays really mean to you. What made past years special? See if you can include those things on your "must haves" list while limiting some less significant events. Choose specific times during the holiday season when you find personal time to relax and do what you want to do. Check your reflexes and watch the urge to ask, "Quick! What's next on the list?" every time things quiet down.



## Website for Complementary and Alternative Medicine

You don't have to go to a health food store to learn about complementary and alternative medicines (CAM). The federal government runs one of the largest websites on the subject, with discussions on hundreds of therapy and treatment options. From "aromatherapy" to "yohimbe bark," you will find it discussed at [www.nccam.nih.gov](http://www.nccam.nih.gov), even if no scientific evidence exists to support the use of an unusual medicine or therapy. You will find helpful discussions about the science, risks, and controversies associated with many complementary and alternative medicines, some which you may not easily learn any other way.





# Making Positive Feedback Perfect

**W**hen you give positive feedback to your coworker, be sure to include the “ABCs” of doing it effectively. “A” stands for “Affirmation,” “B” stands for “Be Specific,” and “C” stands for “Contribution.” Start with a positive statement that (“A”) affirms your coworker’s accomplishment(s)—“Great job!” Then, (“B”) be specific to let your coworker know you are sincere. Not giving specific feedback leaves your coworker wondering about your sincerity. “Wow, Susan! I loved your presentation. The three examples you gave of how we can better serve our customers were new and refreshing.” This type of positive feedback is even more affirming. But you can go still further. Acknowledge Susan’s (“C”) contribution so she knows she is

valued. For example, add, “I could see everyone’s eyes light up with new insights. I am glad you were the one we picked as our trainer.” By putting yourself in Susan’s shoes, you can see how she will feel positive about her presentation, you, her job, and the organization. This example of positive feedback shows how it can be a force for good. It also underscores how adverse a lack of positive feedback can be if it is ignored or, worse, withheld, when it is obviously deserved.

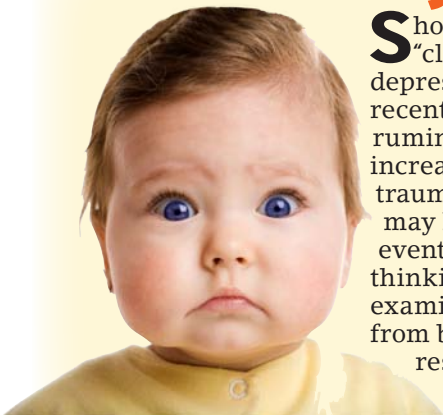
# Fast Track to Acceptance for New Employees

**Y**ou’re new on the job. Will there be a long wait for acceptance, building credibility, and getting included in conversations at the water cooler? Not necessarily. Three tools, which will speed your journey to faster acceptance, are at your disposal. They include being dependable, reliable, and a good communicator. These three virtues of effective employees are the most crucial to workplace productivity. Nearly all employers struggle to find and keep employees who have strong skills in these areas. Dependability means that you keep your promises about delivering work on time. Reliability means people can predict and count on your dependability rather than worrying about whether you’ll “come through with the goods.” Communication does not mean that you are great at stand-up presentations. It means that you know when to communicate with others, how to share information, and how much to offer so they can succeed with their tasks.



# Less Thinking about Traumas May Help

**S**hould you try to stop thinking about that bad accident or “close call” as the best strategy for preventing anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder? Possibly. A recent study indicates that rehashing negative events and ruminating on them is not necessarily helpful, and it could increase the likelihood of a more harmful outcome from a traumatic event. The old saw “just stop thinking about it” may have some merit after all. Not processing a traumatic event at all is bad, of course, but “incessant ruminative thinking” (dwelling on the bad memories repeatedly) and examining “what if” and “if only” scenarios can prevent you from bouncing back from a traumatic event and decrease your resilience. *Source: Depression and Anxiety 24:307-317; Incessant “Ruminational” Thinking on Negative Events.*



# Forget the Easy Addiction Cures

**A**s long as the Internet exists, there will be no shortage of scams to sell everything from books to pills promising people their addictions can be “cured.” Many scams promise a return to controlled behavior, not abstinence. This is a dead give-away to the scam. To keep billing your credit card is mission #1, which could be for expensive super-vitamins, etc. This business principle is called “continuity income.” Most successful scams employ it. Initially, you may be enticed only to request a free pamphlet or inexpensive book that discusses the “cure.” This is your entrance into a sales “funnel.” These companies rely on desperate customers. Addictions are not shortcomings requiring a secret formula, but are associated with complex, physically caused, and neurologically explained phenomena. Recovery programs and techniques that are time-tested, though more complex than a pill, do work best for most, and are highly teachable. Contact a medical doctor, professional counselor, or employee assistance professional to learn about effective ways to treat addictions.