

JUICY WORK NEWS

Updates from The Learning Advantage

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Mobley's Musings: "Let it Go."

Several of my clients are self-critical. When they get feedback they speed over the positive comments and agonize over the negative ones. Then they beat themselves up for mistakes they made. Since we are unable to correct past mistakes, why not think of them as learning and put in place strategies to not make that mistake again. If you already knew how to do something, you wouldn't make a mistake. And, if you aren't making any mistakes, you probably aren't learning and growing.

When we are hard on ourselves, we tend to be hard on others. I believe that everyone is doing the best he or she can at any given moment. And I have seen that in my clients. If we give ourselves the grace to realize that we are human and that being human means we aren't perfect, we have more energy for learning. Putting your focus on how to improve rather than torturing yourself about a mistake will make you happier and more effective.

Let your theme song be the one from the movie 'Frozen' - "Let it go." Move forward in a positive and cheerful way to learn and grow.



Ask Sandy How can I make my "no" stick?



How to Ward Off Energy Vampires

A colleague and I were discussing how some people give you energy while others drain the life out of you. At work, these "energy vampires" come in several guises:

- Whiners and complainers grumble about what's wrong but don't offer any suggestions for change
- Needy people constantly seek your affirmation and attention
- Blowhards and braggarts talk ad nauseam about their latest luxury trip or purchase
- Weed eaters and painstakingly precise people take forever to get to their point (assuming there is one)

Unlike traditional vampires, silver bullets, garlic and stakes through the heart are not appropriate deterrents for energy vampires. And I've found there is no

When you are asked to take on a task but choose to decline, are you prepared for the backlash that might follow?

Sometimes people try to nibble away at your no. Perhaps you've been asked to work on a proposal to win new work. But you've already worked on the last three proposals, which required long nights and weekends on top of your already busy job. You have every right to say, "Sorry, not this time," and you say it as politely as possible. Then the nibbling starts. Could you do the technical volume? Or maybe you could just do the references since you did them for the past three proposals and it won't be too difficult? Little by little you get sucked back in.

Worse are the people who repeatedly make last-minute requests, as if their failure to plan is your problem to fix along with completing your own work. These people don't nibble at your no; they pull out the big guns to obliterate it. Unhappy with your response, they go to your boss who comes to you and says, "We're all one team here; can't you help out?" And once again your no is disregarded.

Dealing with the "no nibblers" requires tenacity. You must be able to say no and mean it because if you give in even a little the nibbling is likely to continue. Depending on who the person making the request is — your boss, colleague, or friend — you may need to provide a reason that the other person would respect and accept. But in many cases, "no" is a complete sentence.

If your boss is the one who sabotages the stickiness of your no, you should make your boss aware of your current workload, deadlines, and priorities so they can better appreciate (and own) the cost of your taking on more tasks. You might note deadlines that will slip and request additional resources so the success of your project isn't threatened. The goal is to have your boss understand that in not supporting your no, they are accepting the potential downsides. Make your boss aware of your reasons for wanting to decline the work but emphasize that you will do your best to help the team.

Finally, if you find yourself saying yes but often regret it later, buy yourself some time when someone comes to you with a request. Tell them you'll review your workload and will get back to them with an answer in a reasonable timeframe. Then think about how you want to respond. Is there someone else you can suggest they get help from? Should you inform your boss about the request and how you intend to respond to it? Is there room for negotiation in their request?

single, sure-fire method that will ward them off. Each one requires a different approach, depending on the root cause of their sucking behavior.

For the whiners, I thank them for bringing the problem to my attention. But I don't let them off the hook that easily. "Come back to me when you have a solution and we can work on it," I tell them. After getting that response a couple times, they're less likely to complain.

For the needy people, I first determine whether I've given them the appropriate level of attention for the relationship. For example, with a valued business partner I discuss up front my expectations about how much time is needed for the relationship to work. If the partner still seeks attention, I look for ways to address his needs that don't require my time and presence. One partner valued being up to speed on new technology. By adding her name to the information technology department's updates, she was satisfied.

If staff members are constantly knocking on my door, I make sure they know how and when I will give them feedback and assure them that if they veer off track I'll let them know. If they still come to me for affirmation, I assume

Can you counter their request with one of your own? Thinking through the possibilities will prepare you to respond in a way that serves both you and the other person.

If you see a pattern in always saying yes when you really want to say no, you might want to consider the underlying reasons for your willingness to accept the situation and how it serves you and hurts you. You are your own best champion, and if you don't believe in yourself and your right to say no, you won't convince anyone else.

If you have any questions you'd like Sandy to address in future newsletters, email them to: sandy@learningadvantageinc.com



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they aren't busy enough and give them more work. An added benefit to giving people more work is that it tells them I have confidence in their ability.

When it comes to the blowhards, a reasonable assumption is that they have feelings of insecurity, because confident people don't tend to brag. If the person only brags around me, he might find me intimidating; in this case a little praising will help

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