



Tips for Employees to Reduce Stress

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Many years ago, I was working in an organization in Saskatchewan and struggling with some of the management's behaviours. My friend told me that her husband had taken several business and leadership courses so it would probably be wise for me to talk with him about the situation. In a matter of only an hour or so I learned four very important lessons:

Do not take on responsibilities that belong to another person- Every person has a monkey on his back. They carry them around on their backs and this is annoying. They want to get rid of theirs, so they reach back, grab them, and then throw them at you. Before you know it, you can be weighed down with several monkeys on your back that don't belong to you! It is important that you learn to grab each monkey and throw it right back. You don't have to be rude or disrespectful, but you also don't need to be so passive that you take on things that are not your responsibility. A little healthy assertiveness will help you to deal with this type of situation.

Avoid doing end-runs- When you have a problem with someone, make sure that you talk directly to that person about the problem. Often, people go to the parent, supervisor, or someone else, thinking that this will be the best way to deal with issues, but it isn't. In fact, doing this can either escalate the situation or create resentment that further harms the relationship. End runs are for scoring points in football - not for solving problems between people.

Make sure you have the resources you need- If a supervisor or manager asks you to do something, they need to provide you with the tools that are necessary to do the job. You cannot, for example, prepare accurate financial statements quickly without a good software program. Be reasonable in your requests but also make sure that you have the equipment you need to do the job before you make a commitment to meet a deadline.

Let the boss set the priorities- Sometimes people just take on more and more work because they think they "should" and then end up feeling resentful and burned out. It is far better to have the person in charge set the priorities when they ask for things to be done than for you to try to do everything in an effort to please everyone. If you say "I am working on the accounts receivable statements for month end. Would you like me to leave those in order to do this?" then the other person will have to decide which is more important or whether someone else could do the project.

Everyone has stress but sometimes we blame our job for this rather than learning strategies to manage the workload and reduce the stress. These four tips will help you to do your job in a healthier manner and not have to deal with stress in the older ineffective way that you used in the past.