

It's Up to You, Part I

By George "Bud" Wassell, MS, LPC, CEAP
Director, Solutions EAP



Recently we've written a lot about weathering the current financial crisis. Mostly, we've tried to offer guidance and suggestions about how to navigate these times personally, emotionally, attitudinally and practically. But we really haven't addressed specifically how this might play out in your work life. To be sure many of the concepts we've discussed apply in the workplace; for example, keeping an optimistic attitude can help you deal with the ups and downs, but mostly the downs that employers, small and large are experiencing these days. And by the way, that includes all of types of organizations we serve: businesses, non-profits, healthcare, educational, municipalities and state agencies.

Some for sure, are being harder hit than others. But at the very least your place of work may have had some or all of these: budget cutbacks, furloughs, no raises, hiring freezes, layoffs, restructuring, early retirements and a variety of other measures to survive the next year or so.

Consequently, some people just aren't very happy these days. So what's a good worker to do to keep happy? The one thing I can come up with is: it's up to you. Your happiness is your responsibility and yours alone. Especially in these trying times you cannot expect your employer, boss, co-worker, family member or anyone else to make you happy. Well, they could at least stop making your life miserable, you say. Perhaps, but they're probably struggling like the rest of us and so the only thing you can do is:

1. Accept and ignore it. They'll get over it and you decide you won't let it get under your skin. In other words: "Serenity to Accept the things I cannot change."
2. Gently and politely ask them to change, modify or stop whatever it is they're doing to annoy you. In other words: "Courage to Change the things I can."
3. Stop, take a deep breath and dispute your own crazy, irrational beliefs that everyone must or should behave in a way that you approve of and makes you happy. In other words: "Courage to Change the things I can."
4. Know when to use which strategy. In other words, "The wisdom to know the difference."

Of course WORK has a layer of politics, policies and dynamics that we must all be aware of. You don't go up to the head honcho and tell him or her to stop doing something that annoys you, but actually there are appropriate, assertive ways to ask for what you need to be effective and productive.

Once you start practicing this – yes, it does take a lot of practice – you can really take a look at what truly makes you happy and fulfilled at work, at home and anywhere you are.

In the next three weeks we will look at some "Happiness" principles that offer some suggestions on leading a happier life at work and at home.

Call Solutions EAP at 1-800-526-3485 for assistance for all of life's challenges. It's free, confidential and open to your family members. Check us out on-line at www.solutions-eap.com