Minimize Your Midlife Crisis

It’s coming—midlife! Can you avoid the much-discussed “midlife crisis” that comes with it? Although the midlife crisis has been called a “creature of the imagination,” and research disputes its existence and when it occurs, planning for it can make getting “over the hill” a little easier.

- Accept midlife as a time of transition and tool for personal growth. You are moving from thinking about how many years you have lived, to how many years you have left to live. It’s normal, but it creates anxiety.
- Plan ahead to avoid regrets by renegotiating the balance between time devoted to family versus the time you have invested achieving vocational and financial security.
- Think about your values. Use these values to guide you in acting on tough decisions. Examples include improving a marital relationship or relationships with children before they are grown, or engaging in new leisure or recreational activities.
- Plan for challenging life events that will come in the future to reduce their stressful impact (e.g., medical issues of aging parents, gradual erosion of personal health, financial security in retirement, etc.).

Midlife can stimulate the emergence of desires and impulses that have been unmet or unacceptable until now. Acting to satisfy some of these wants can add meaning to your life, while others may not be consistent with your values despite their appeal. The EAP can help you with tough choices that midlife brings.

March EAP Awareness Month

Activities are being planned by the State EAP office, agencies, departments and schools highlighting the services offered by the Employee Assistance Program. Please plan to participate! The seminar, “Charting Your Way Through Uncertain Times” is being presented in over 45 locations across the state. The “De-stressing Your Workplace” contest is accepting entries through March 31. See your EAP departmental representative for details or go online to www.state.tn.us/finance/ins/eap/ or http://intranet.state.tn.us.

Marijuana Savvy Parents

It is helpful to be a knowledgeable parent about marijuana because it is the most commonly abused illegal drug, especially by young people. Plenty of misinformation targets young people to argue for legalizing the drug. The American Medical Association still does not support the use of marijuana for any medical purpose, and its position has remained unchanged since 1997. It does recommend continued research into the benefits of marijuana, but not by smoking it. Instead, the AMA recommends the development of non-toxic, inhalation devices that can supply the medicinal ingredient in marijuana for those patients who might benefit from it.

Source American Medical Association, Policy H-95.952
Recapture Your Motivation

It’s natural to experience short periods of decreased motivation, even if you love your job. It’s nothing to get worried about. The human body was not designed to stay in a continual state of “ready-go” or “up.” A few emotional maneuvers can help you recapture your sense of excitement.

- Shift gears: On down days, try shifting your focus to other work activities you have been postponing. Something as different as filing stacks of papers or even straightening up your office can give you a sense of renewal.
- Change scenery: Take your work to a different location or environment, if possible. Or, walk around the block near your place of work.
- Leap-over. When the workload is heavy and appears to drag on, you may imagine nothing different will ever come along. Try thinking about the next big goal in your career or personal life to give you more juice.

When You Can’t Get to the EAP

Q If I am referred to the EAP by my supervisor, can I talk to the EA professional over the phone rather than see the employee assistance professional in person?

A Some issues can be easily managed and quickly resolved by phone. Others are better resolved by meeting with the EA professional in person. Everyone’s situation is different, but you won’t be refused help if you can only speak to the EA professional by phone. If the EA professional thinks a problem or concern would best be addressed in a face-to-face meeting, he or she will explain why and encourage you to make an office appointment.

Protect Yourself from Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a frequent and unreported crime, but every state has passed laws and taken steps to intervene and protect victims. The laws that protect spouses from abuse also apply to people who are not married, but have a familial relationship with one another. Rule #1 is to protect yourself and your children. This may mean leaving home and seeking a safe shelter. The EAP can help you find community and legal resources that can help.

Customer Service: The Little Bit Extra

Good customer service is easier than you think. Sometimes it is just doing a tiny bit extra. Remember, anything you do for someone makes that person your customer. The first and easiest thing you can do for good service is to smile! Greet someone with a smile, and it automatically makes him or her feel welcome and more inclined to be patient and more hopeful of help. Remember to smile when you answer the phone! Believe it or not, the caller can hear it in your voice and will appreciate it. Eye contact is important too, so at least look at your customer’s face. DON’T look down or look away to the side. As with the smile, eye contact makes him or her feel welcome. Listen to the person all the way through before you try to answer. The customer doesn’t want to be interrupted. Sometimes the person needs to talk around the problem in order to clarify it. Sometimes the customer just needs to vent their anger or frustration. He or she may only need you to listen. Remember, listening is a skill, and it takes practice to do it well. Identify yourself, especially when answering the phone. The customer wants to talk to somebody real, not an impersonal department. Greet the customer happily or positively by saying, “good morning” or “how can I help you?” or even just “hi, there.” Finally, be polite! Common courtesy is one of the rarest things in the world. “Please” and “thank you” and especially “you’re welcome” go a long way towards making the problem and the day a lot easier to handle and to live with.

Source: Richard Lyons