

UP THE CREEK

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The Worry Trap

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Do managers have more to worry about?

It sure seems like it. As managers, we often do the heavy lifting by making the hard decisions. The buck stops here. Our decisions affect the services we provide, staffing levels, and our overall organizational culture, to name a few. And, while we gain input from staff and collaborate with colleagues, the pressure to make the right decision often rests with us.

This pressure can lead to worry.

Many of us hang on to our worry. We think it's an effective motivator or that it will eventually make us feel less anxious. Perhaps we will be able to control everything with our worry.

However, the fact is stress increases as we hang on and worry. An important note: not all worry is bad. There is something called productive worry. For instance, it is worth worrying about, "When will I have time to revise and finalize the annual department budget?" Productive worry helps you plan, problem solve and leads to action you can take right now. It creates a question to answer: "When will I work on the budget?"

Where we get stuck is when the productive worry slips into unproductive worry. Unproductive worry is when your worry moves into unanswerable questions that create a chain reaction. This chain reaction thinking could look like; "If I don't get time to work on the budget, then I'll get more behind. Then my other work will suffer. Then when my boss asks for the budget I won't have it and she will think I am incompetent and then she'll start micromanaging me and my life will be hell and I'll feel like a bad person!"

In This Newsletter

Supervising employees and leading in an organization is a tough job. This quarterly newsletter provides helpful research based articles with practical ideas to help you grow and flourish in your leadership role.

Business Quote

"Worry is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere."

Erma Bombeck

Fun Fact

Giraffes have no vocal chords.



Everyone worries about the future, and leaders are no exception. Yet the positive results you achieve are in spite of—not because of—the strain and stress of your worries.

Adapted from Robert Leahy's book, 'The Worry Cure' here are ways to help you stay out of the worry trap.

- Practice noticing when you worry about unanswerable questions and move yourself back to the question. What is the problem I need to solve? What action should I be taking? If there is no action to take, remind yourself the worry is useless.
- Describe what is in front of you. When you describe something it helps you stay with the actual facts and away from the “what ifs”. Literally list out what is in front of you (i.e. budget folder, email from my boss, last year's budget). This technique helps resist jumping to conclusions and worrying about all the possibilities that may never be.
- Stretch time. Most often worry is about something that is going to happen in the future. If you feel time is in control of you, you'll feel pressured to handle everything that could possibly happen and get it done right now. Instead, ask yourself: What will I do five hours from now? The next day? The day after? What are all the positives that could happen between now and then?

Worries may continue to pop up. Make a conscious decision to acknowledge them and dismiss them to give them a well-deserved day off! Also, remember to use your resources. Sand Creek can help you develop your own positive leadership practices. Let us help you, give us a call at 888.243.5744.

As a manager, what are some examples of things you have found helpful to reduce your worry and stay out of the worry trap?

Give us your answer and see what others are saying on our poll by visiting our facebook page @SandCreekWorkplaceWellness

About Sand Creek Workplace Wellness

Sand Creek specializes in providing exceptional workplace wellness services to support the human spirit at work. We embrace our core values of service, hope, trust, compassion, and wisdom in each interaction, thereby upholding our mission of providing helpful solutions to improve productivity and shining a light in the darkest of moments.

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to offer face-to-face counseling and consulting to those that voluntarily reach out to us. We are not simply a phone counseling service or online tool type EAP. Thousands of professional counselors form a worldwide Sand Creek network available to deliver personal care and support to you in your community. Our services are administered nationally, but delivered locally.

Sand Creek supports the relationship between individual health and overall organizational health. Our Organization Assistance Program (OAP) service extends the reach into the organization and provides work teams with a systemic approach to improve the health and well-being of an organization.