

Be positive about yourself

Perhaps the most talked-about method for pumping yourself up is telling yourself to work harder, get stronger, and develop grit. But some experts tend to disagree. Working on your self-esteem in such a way can have a few pitfalls.

Self-esteem is tied to external validation, so it's fragile, says Christopher Germer, PhD, a lecturer in psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. When things don't go right, or even when you don't get as many likes as you expected on a social media post, comparison, feelings of isolation, and criticism can happen. When you get down on yourself, you wind up doubting yourself, which makes it harder to take risks, learn, and grow. You become afraid of failure, and you're more likely to give up than to try again.

An alternate way is to try self-compassion, which involves showing yourself kindness when you're struggling, failing, or noticing something you don't love about yourself. In other words, give yourself a break! By caring and expressing concern for yourself during hard times, you're able to persevere and create changes.

Positive self-talk takes practice if it's not your natural instinct. If you're generally



more pessimistic, you can learn to shift your inner dialogue to be more encouraging and uplifting.

However, forming a new habit takes time and effort. Over time, your thoughts can shift. Positive self-talk can become your norm. These tips from healthline.com can help: identify negative self-talk traps. Certain scenarios may increase your self-doubt and lead to more negative self-talk. Work events, for example, may be particularly hard. Pinpointing when you experience the most negative self-talk can help you anticipate and prepare. Check in with your feelings. Stop during events or bad days and evaluate your self-talk. Is it becoming negative? How can you turn it around?

Find the humour. Laughter can help relieve stress and tension. When you need a boost for positive self-talk, find ways to laugh, such as watching funny animal videos or a comedian. Surround yourself with positive people. Whether or not you notice it, you can absorb the outlook and emotions of people around you. This includes negative and positive, so choose positive people when you can.

Give yourself positive affirmations. Sometimes, seeing positive words or inspiring images can be enough to redirect your thoughts. Post small reminders in your office, in your home, and anywhere you spend a significant amount of time.

Inside this edition

- Tips for heart-healthy eating
- Ways to deal with impatience
- Are you likable or popular for your status?
- Gaslighting can make you question yourself
- How to fight fear of the unknown
- Diets trends that should disappear

- Can writing gratitude letters change your brain?
 - The skinny on health scams
 - How to control your cravings
 - Top habits of organized people
- Energy Zone:**
Turmeric



Tips for heart-healthy eating

Some say the key to someone's heart is through their stomach — but the link between eating and the heart goes beyond romantic attraction. As a registered dietitian at Loblaw's, Karley Fallaise knows this first hand. Here is some of her top advice for achieving heart health.

Pack in the plants: Plants are a perfect source of protein for anyone at risk of cardiovascular disease. Chickpeas, nuts, tofu, tempeh and beans are just a few excellent substitutes for their higher-fat friends like beef, lamb, and pork chops. Not only are these a lean source of protein, but some are also loaded with fibre and heart healthy fats such as nuts and seeds.

Focus on fibre: There are two types of fibre. Insoluble fibre helps with regularity and keeps our digestive system healthy. Soluble fibre lowers blood cholesterol levels and may help reduce the risk of

heart disease. Some favourite sources of fibre include vegetables, fruits, lentils, beans and grains. According to Dietitians of Canada, there's no upper limit for fibre so there's no reason not to get plenty in your diet.

Limit alcohol: Drinking alcohol in excess can raise fat (triglyceride) levels in the blood. It can also lead to high blood pressure and heart disease. Nobody is saying you need to be a teetotaler, but it's important not to go overboard, especially if you're at risk of heart disease. See Canada's Low Risk Drinking Guidelines for more information.

Scratch the salt: While our bodies need some sodium to function properly, it's easy to get too much. Over-consumption may lead to high blood pressure or hypertension, which can increase your risk of developing heart disease, kidney disease and stroke.

Impatience: The enemy of a calm mindset

It might seem like your mood is inescapable when you're impatient, but you can improve your mindset with these tips.

Connect with logic - Impatience threatens to disconnect you from logical thought. When people are angry, they detach from logic. The part of their brains that manage reason dampens in favour of fight-or-flight, a stress response.

Logic dims because your system recognizes the need to give extra energy to survival. Of course, when you're impatient because you're stuck in a traffic jam or with someone who annoys you, your life isn't in danger. Your brain notes your frustration, though, and begins to shift away from reason to help you escape, or get rid of, whatever causes your angst.

At such a time, you need to engage your reasoning ability. You can achieve your aim by taking deep breaths. The breath is associated with fight-or-flight and calm. If your breathing is shallow and fast, you prepare to battle or flee. When your breaths are low and slow, your parasympathetic system turns on and makes you calm. So, take deep, long breaths when impatience arises.

Shift your emotions toward your heart - You can't think from your heart, but you can arouse emotions from the area. Your heart contains neurons that communicate with the rest of your body and brain. Place your hand over your heart to help you focus in the right area and breathe deep. Think about someone or something that makes you happy and grateful. Picture the person, pet, place, or activity that brings you joy, and continue to breathe slowly. Your impatience will decrease, and you'll feel better.

Tune into other people's needs - If a person rather than a situation makes you impatient, step into their shoes for a while. Imagine the slow driver in front of you is lost and looking for a place to turn. Recognize your friend who doesn't listen to what you say is preoccupied.

Forgiveness will come easy if you recognize why people behave in ways you dislike. Often, they are busy trying to accomplish their goals too.

Retain a sense of humour - Pause to note circumstances might be funny when you are impatient. Maybe you can laugh at yourself after getting mad at your computer. After all, it's only a piece of equipment. It's a helpful gadget, yes. But it doesn't have emotions, and there's no point in getting frustrated with it.



Publisher & CEO: Stefan Dreesen

Editor: Kate Van Hoof-Peeren

H&S Communication Specialists:
Alan Haycroft, Liz Slobodin,
Kevin Harvey

TOLL FREE: 1-888-655-4800

Mailing Address: 2010 Winston Park Drive, Suite 200,
Oakville, ON L6H 5R7

www.smartworkplace.ca | info@smartworkplace.ca

The information presented in Wellness Zone has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable. However, it cannot be assumed that all acceptable measures are contained in this article nor that additional measures may not be required under particular or exceptional circumstances, or your own company procedures, or by federal, state/provincial and local law.

Application of this information to a specific worksite should be reviewed by a wellness professional. Anyone making use of the information set forth herein does so at his/her own risk and assumes any and all liability arising therefrom. Specific medical advice should be obtained through consultation with a physician or other trained health care practitioner. Wellness Zone is published monthly by Smart Workplace Inc. www.smartworkplace.ca. All rights reserved. © 2023. No part of this publication is to be copied without permission from the publisher.



Are you likable or popular for your status?

According to psychologist and author Mitch Prinstein, there are **two kinds of popularity**, and which one you are matters. Many people associate their school days with being popular or shunned. Back then, what your peers thought of you seemed important. However, people strive for approval long past childhood and teenage years. Indeed, being likable is vital for your well-being regardless of age.

One kind of admiration people strive to obtain relates to status. Flash cars, big houses, and expensive holidays appeal to individuals who want others to admire them for their wealth and social standing. If you're concerned about status, you work hard to produce outward shows of prosperity.

The other type of popularity, which Prinstein suggests is preferable, relates to being likable. You can be popular for being rich, but this doesn't necessarily mean people like you. You're better off when others genuinely hold you in high esteem because they enjoy your company than when they only admire your status.

When the desire for popularity and likability begins

The recognition of the concepts of popularity and likability occurs during childhood. Notably, kids cotton on to the idea that it's wise to be held in high esteem at school. They want their classmates to admire them so they will be accepted and feel part of a group.

The type of popularity you reach for -- status or likability -- influences your behaviour, success, and well-being later in life.

Choose rank over friendliness, and you opt for the losing side. You may make money, but you could lose out socially if you don't

build skills that make you likable.

People support likable individuals in times of need. As a result, those who are most likable have many friendships and tend to be happy.

Of course, recognizing the benefits of being liked and achieving wealth will give you the edge. However, it's best to opt for likability if you can't manage both.

Why chasing status can reduce well-being

Going all out for prestige while being disliked leads to problems. Your relationships suffer, making you less likely to connect with others. Research suggests you might also be depressed and engage in substance abuse.

What if you're the unhelpful type of popular?

It's never too late to develop social skills and constructive personal qualities. If you think you've pursued status at the expense of likability, you can still find the agreeable side of your nature.

For example, you can reflect on how to be generous with your time and energy. Studies show people like others more when they make a physical effort to help individuals rather than shell out cash for good causes.

Also, become a good listener. Status-addicted folks spend a lot of time talking about their wealth and accomplishments instead of finding out about others. So tweak your communication skills.

Focus on gaining information, discovering people's wishes and dreams, and what they are experiencing in their lives. As a result, your likability score will escalate.

Being likable affects your happiness, relationships, and stress levels. Aim for prestige, but don't forget the importance of likability.

Gaslighting can make you question yourself

Gaslighting is one of those terms that seems to be thrown around a lot. Many people mistake gaslighting for other forms of psychological aggression and abuse, such as bullying and exclusion.

In fact, gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation. The person doing the gaslighting manipulates the person being gaslighted in a way that forces them to question their own version of events and even their own sanity. An example of gaslighting in the workplace could be a boss who says they don't remember you submitting a deliverable, even though you handed it to them a few hours ago. By making you question your own memories, gaslighters use your insecurities to try and control you.

Gaslighting seems to come more naturally to some people than others. In fact, not all gaslighters are aware of what they are doing.

A gaslighting situation at work can cause you to dread each week. This can prevent you from enjoying your personal life and even push you to look for a new job. The worst part is, gaslighting causes you to question your own experience, making it tough to seek help.

So how do you know for sure that you're a victim of gaslighting in the workplace? Watch out for these signs:

- You hear persistent negative accounts of your performance.
- You hear the suspected gaslighter publicly say negative things about you.
- You hear negative, untrue gossip about yourself.
- You find yourself questioning your perception of reality at work.
- The suspected gaslighter belittles your emotions, efforts, or perceptions.
- You're excluded from meetings or events relevant or required for your job.

The number one sign of gaslighting at work is persistent behaviour that causes you to question your own reality. The key to identifying and confronting this kind of workplace harassment is by taking note of repeated patterns over time.

If you suspect that someone at work is gaslighting you, here's what to do about it.

- Confirm that it truly is gaslighting.
- Document the gaslighter's behaviour.
- Get support and focus on self-care.
- Meet with your gaslighter. This might be tough, but you're going to have to confront your gaslighter on their behaviour. Be firm about where the other person seems to be having issues with performance, consistency or remembering details. Remember, your own performance is not the issue. If you don't have any success after meeting with your gaslighter, then schedule a meeting with a human resources rep or a senior manager to discuss the issue. Be sure to share all the supporting evidence you've collected. Remember, you shouldn't have to suffer constant psychological abuse at work, so don't be afraid to get the help you need.



How to fight fear of the unknown

It's natural to be afraid of the unknown. After all, the unknown can contain potentially almost anything -- which makes it impossible to prepare for. It is the uncertainty that is so scary.

Uncertainty, however, is part of life, which means that knowing how to handle fear of the unknown is something everyone must try to do. Here are five practical tactics for better dealing with this kind of fear:

1. Look on the bright side.

A more balanced view will reveal that there is as much reason for optimism as pessimism. Recall your past experiences -- weren't there plenty of times a scary situation turned out fine? And how about the instances when you had unexpected good fortune? Life has its difficult moments, but don't let that cloud your view of the good things that also happen.

2. Get specific.

Ask yourself what it is you are most afraid of happening. Try to dig deep. What feels like a vague, generalized fear may have some specific basis. A vague worry about the future may really be a worry about not having enough money for retirement. Next, ask how likely it is for such an outcome to occur. Questioning fears can make them deflate.

3. Become better informed.

Once you've gotten some specificity about your fear, learning more about the thing making you afraid can make the

situation better. A concrete, well-defined fear is something about which you can gain knowledge. Let's say you are afraid of flying. Looking up statistics on air tragedies or reading about how airplanes work may help your fear. Try to consider your fear from a rational perspective.

4. Take practical action.

Passivity is the friend of fear. Anxiety, stress, and fear are associated with feelings of powerlessness. The more you feel in control of your life, the less a formless, undefined fear of the unknown will bother you. Do anything that will make your life a little better -- exercise, clean your home, get some work done, talk to a friend, or try a new hobby. While these actions may not directly address the cause of your fear, they will move your focus to something else, which will improve your mental state.

5. Talk to someone.

Discussing what is bothering you with another person is always a good way to deal with worry, anxiety, and stress. Talking with someone you respect and trust -- or even just an acquaintance -- is a natural way to improve your mental health. Another person may be able to give you concrete advice as well. Failing that, simply lending you a listening ear is worth a lot. You may also consider seeking professional help from a therapist, especially if your fear is causing serious trouble in your life.

The unknown is always present before us. Nothing can change that. Since the unknown is never going away, becoming better at dealing with the fear the unknown generates is worth doing.

Diets trends that should disappear

Before diving into the next diet trend, it's important to understand that many products or regimens that influencers and celebrities are touting are not science-based. Here are three diet trends that should be put to rest: (according to eatingwell.com)

One-food diets

A one-food diet, sometimes referred to as a mono diet, involves eating only a single food or consuming that food at every meal for several days or weeks. One of the best-known single-food diets may be the grapefruit diet, which was popularized in the 1930s on the basis that an enzyme found in grapefruit helps to speed metabolism and drop pounds. Many of the foods promoted in mono diets are high in water content, which may help you feel fuller, but ultimately they'll be unsatisfying as they are low in calories, fat and protein. As with any restrictive diet, a mono diet tends to be very low in calories and, if followed long-term, may lead to nutritional deficiencies according to a 2021 publication in *Métode Science Studies Journal*.

Eliminating a food group

There's a reason why the food groups are called "essential nutrients." They are needed by the body for normal and healthy functioning. So, when you eliminate an entire group of foods, you put your body at risk of nutritional deficiencies. However, many trendy diets can call for limiting or eliminating entire food groups, such as the keto diet, which is a very-low or no-carb diet.

Detox diets

Detox diets or programs suggest that they are methods that will remove toxins, cleanse the body and promote health and weight loss. Programs may include fasting, drinking only juices, eating only certain foods, using dietary supplements or herbs, cleansing the colon through enemas, laxatives or hydrotherapies, or use of a sauna. Are these programs necessary for health? No.

While some "detox" diets result in short-term weight loss due to low intake of calories, many are falsely advertised and could be dangerous or harmful to your health. According to the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission have taken action against several companies selling detox programs for containing illegal, harmful ingredients, marketed with false claims of treating diseases, and unapproved for their directed use.



Can writing gratitude letters change your brain?

Many people recognize that gratitude can lift their mood in the moment. Few, though, know that feeling grateful has lasting effects that promote well-being long after they initially experience thankfulness. Indeed, one study shows that ramping up positivity by writing gratitude letters can change your brain, helping you experience greater mental wellness for extended periods.

The gratitude study and results:

Joshua Brown, Ph.D., professor of brain and psychological sciences at Indiana University, and Joel Wong, Ph.D., associate professor of counseling psychology at the same school, carried out a gratitude study, noting that most research regarding gratitude has entailed healthy participants.

They aimed to find out if boosting thankfulness benefits everyone, including those suffering from poor mental well-being, people who, understandably, can benefit most from increasing their mental health.

The study involved 300 participants who struggled with anxiety and depression. The researchers split them into three groups. They all received counseling, but one group also wrote gratitude letters, and another wrote about their negative emotions and experiences.

Study participants who penned letters of gratitude displayed increased mental health compared to the other groups when checked after one-month and three-month intervals.

Interestingly, writing about deep feelings concerning negative experiences didn't prove cathartic. On the contrary, rather than alleviating pent-up emotion, it worsened the participants' mental health.

When studying the participants' writing content, researchers looked at whether negative words mattered.

Those who penned letters of gratitude made lots of positive comments, while individuals who wrote about their experiences and feelings mostly used negative words.

The researchers concluded that gratitude letters work because they reduce people's focus on negativity. The more negative words the writers in the study penned, the more they suffered from poor mental health. The number of positive words written didn't make much difference; the lack of negative ones did, however.

Three months after the experiment, the researchers examined the participants' brains with an fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) scanner while they engaged in a gratitude-related task. They were required to consider whether they'd pass on a small donation given to them by a benefactor but only if they felt grateful.

They also completed a questionnaire about their gratitude level in general and were questioned about whether their decision to donate money stemmed from guilt or thankfulness.

The study revealed increased sensitivity in brain areas linked with decision-making and learning in the grateful participants, who were also more generous than those who experienced guilt.

It also turned out that the people who wrote gratitude letters displayed increased prefrontal cortex brain activation while experiencing thankfulness three months after the experiment started.

The conclusions suggest the effects of gratitude last and might teach the brain greater gratitude sensitivity, which in turn may increase future mental health. So, why not pen gratitude letters and ramp up your positivity for months to follow? Make it a regular practice, and the results may last a lifetime.

The skinny on weight-loss and other health scams

(NC) We've all seen the ads, on the sides of websites and on our social media feeds: "Doctors hate her," or "One weird tip to melt belly fat." They seem too good to be true, which is because they absolutely are.

These frauds offer little to nothing in terms of actual healthy weight loss, and nothing comes cheap. You can be on the hook for large up-front payments or locked into long-term contracts if you aren't careful.

But the scammers have gotten more subtle, and ignoring the margins of your web browser won't be enough to protect you from their lies on social media. You now need to watch out for the content your friends share as well.

Scammers have infiltrated Facebook and Instagram feeds and Pinterest boards alike with accounts solely devoted to promoting their useless "quick-fix" products.

Seemingly real users do nothing but link as many actual people as possible to the scam content. They post before- and-after pictures of weight loss "miracles." They post status updates of weight loss struggles and triumphs, even peppering in pictures of their pets to seem more real.

Not only does their fake content find its way into your feed, your friends can make it seem more credible by liking the content or commenting on it if they fall for a fake profile. Scammers might even add information to your friends' posts to make it seem like your friends endorse or even use the product.

Scams that promote themselves on social media are especially dangerous because they show up alongside content from people you know and trust. Always think about why someone made a post, especially if they seem to be promoting a product. Their post may have more behind it than you — or even they — realize.

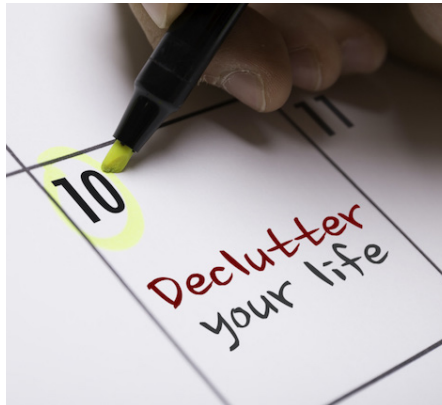
Find more information at www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/fraud.



Top habits of highly organized people

(NC) Even if being an organized perfectionist doesn't come naturally to you, big changes often come from small adjustments. Try out the following habits to help you organize your life at work and home.

1. Practice mise en place (putting in place). Chefs are trained to organize their workspace so that every component is in the right place. Design your space before you begin working to optimize your workflow and improve efficiency. It takes time and diligence but pays off when it is easy to find everything you need.
2. Take 15 minutes every day to organize. It doesn't matter what it is or whether you finish, small steps add up over time to create greater organization over the long-term.



3. Find small ways to reduce distractions. A solution as simple as choosing to wear a watch can improve your ability to concentrate. Forgo checking your smartphone and choose a classic and modern wristwatch.

energyzone

Looking to recover faster from your workout? Try adding this warm, peppery spice to your post-workout meal. Turmeric is a deep, golden-orange spice known for adding colour, flavour and nutrition to foods. A relative of ginger, turmeric comes from the rhizome (root) of a native Asian plant and has been used in cooking for hundreds of years.

Turmeric contains a high concentration of curcumin, one of the most powerful anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatories on the planet.

Superfoods like turmeric help reduce inflammation and promote circulatory health, thus expediting



the recovery process. Athletes that maintain a nutritious diet high in anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatories will be able to train harder, more efficiently, and more effectively.

How to control your cravings

Everyone enjoys the occasional salty snack or sugary dessert, but sometimes our food cravings can derail our healthy lifestyle goals.

These tips can help you develop some better eating habits and maintain a healthy weight.

- **Check in with yourself.** If you're craving something, understand what's driving you to the craving in the first place. Are you sad? Are you anxious about something? Knowing the reason can help you resist the craving and move on to something else. Create a distraction, focus on your hobby or try munching on nuts or fruit.

- **Skip the "empty" foods.** Highly processed snacks usually aren't packed with nutrients and can make your body feel hungry again sooner. Instead, eat foods filled with fibre and protein, which keep you fuller longer and don't give your body the chance to feel hungry as quickly. Your body can often confuse thirst for hunger, so be sure to drink lots of water.

- **Keep a food journal.** This is a great way to help you stay on track and easily make diet adjustments when necessary. Knowing what you eat can be very beneficial and motivating because you can see the healthy choices you make. If journaling is too time-consuming, there are food tracking apps that can keep you motivated.

- **Reach out for help.** If you're struggling with achieving a healthy weight, you may need some extra help to control cravings. Talk to your doctor about a new treatment option for chronic weight management.

