Welcome to Week 5

Put your work stress into context

If you are suffering with stress at work, and let’s face it, we all have that problem sometimes then try this 10 minute mind exercise to put everything into context.

Park your car a little away from work in a safe place where you will not be disturbed.

Turn off the engine

Open the window slightly

Tell yourself “I am positive about the day – I am looking forward to . . .(pick one thing and focus on it, it doesn’t matter how small you will be able to find one thing in the whole day which feels okay)

Take 10 deep breaths- tense and relax your feet and your hands – visualise yourself as standing tall, strong, glowing at the centre of the room

Now take your ‘to do’ list for the day

Now focus on something worrying you

Ask yourself

Must I do this?

If the answer is “yes” then ask:

How bad is it?

(Compared to, for example illness in the family, or the loss of a dear friend)

It’s probably not that bad. Then ask yourself: Is this uncomfortable or inconvenient rather than disastrous?

So in this uncomfortable situation can you take control? Decide you are going to lessen its impact. You may still find it unpleasant but there will be at least one thing you can do to make it less unpleasant.

Imagine yourself doing that thing as strongly as you can

Imagine the best realistic outcome

See it

Make it brighter

Hear it

Make it louder

Relax

Let your tongue fall to the bottom of your mouth

Put your hands on your abdomen

Breathe deeply from your nostrils

Tense and relax your feet calf and thigh muscles in order

Tense and relax your hands forearms and shoulder muscles

Shut your eyes

Tell yourself

I am able to do the best for me today. I am looking forward to having the best day I can

Get on with your day



Workplace stress is damaging your health. Don’t take my word for it. This is what the government body, the Health and Safety Executive says.

“Work related stress, depression and anxiety continue to represent a significant ill health condition in the workforce of Great Britain. Work related stress accounts for 35% of work related ill health and 43% of days lost, in 2014/15. The occupations and industries reporting the highest rates of work related stress remain consistently in the health and public sectors of the economy. The reasons cited as causes of work related stress are also consistent over time with workload, lack of managerial support and organisational change as the primary causative factors.”

You can find out more at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress/stress.pdf>

So what can you do if you find yourself becoming ill because of your working situation?

I’m not going to pretend that this is easy, many of us just put up with a bad work situation but this could be shortening our lives.

This is serious! If you were being poisoned by your boss you would do something about it wouldn’t you? Well, stress could be doing you just as much harm in the long-term so screw up your courage and take action.

Can you cut down on the amount of work you do? Overwork and feeling that you have more work than you can get through is a major cause of stress.

Detail how much you do, and how much you could reasonably do.

Approach your line manager with the evidence and suggest you redistribute the workload.

If you do not get anywhere take the issue to your human resources department.

Don’t take no for an answer, you do have a legal right to work in a safe environment. Here is what the NHS choices website says:

“Employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees. This comes under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm). They're also required to conduct risk assessments for work-related stress.”

Perhaps you should also consider these lifestyle changes.

Can you move closer to work?

Commuting is another major source of stress. Are there any similar jobs closer to home?

Can you move to a smaller workplace?

Figures show that the bigger the workplace the higher the stress levels.

Think about it. It’s your health