

WORKPLACE AND LIFE REFERENCE MANUAL

JOB TITLE: ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST II

AUTHOR: VIRGINIA E. (GINGER) ROBERTSON

CURRENTLY EMPLOYED

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Preface

This manual provides all of us in the work world important reminders to enrich our job experience and keep ourselves in check about proper workplace etiquette. There are also useful life tips here for you too. The manual is not meant to belittle anyone, rather to promote understanding of all we are in contact with. I hope the messages you will take from this manual are as follows:

1. Things do and will change; nothing last forever.
2. See issues objectively when reaching decisions and dealing with others.
3. Keep detail simple and brief, unless you are asked for more information on a subject.
4. Never take things personally.
5. We all have differing communication styles, part of our personality.
6. Make needed notes for future use when given information.
7. Acknowledge mistakes and find ways to quickly wrectify through apology and actions to remove mistake. Notify those to whom the mistake could affect and the steps taken to fix the issue.
8. No one is perfect in this life. There is time of trial and time of great and easy for us all. Sometimes you have to try a job or dating website, as an example, to see how it might work out for you.
9. Learn useful techniques for communicating with others, as we all have differing ways of looking at life and achieving our goals.
10. All relationships, whether work or personal have boundaries that must be respected. There must be some give and take (compromise and flexibility) and taking things slow when learning a new job or about a new relationship. If you have tried and tried to kindly resolve an issue and you are not being heard or responded to positively, then it's time to sadly move on. You have done your part in making a job situation/personal issue to work out.
11. Seek necessary help when you need it to make your life and all circumstances as stress free as possible. Realize you must make your own decisions. No one else can do it for you, though they may try to make you feel guilty for not doing things the way they would. You are your boss in the decisions you make.
12. If something quacks and acts like a duck, it is a duck. In all situations put safety first and keep your guard up. However, also don't be afraid to carefully go online or meet people at work or in life.
13. Always think before reacting to issues that are presented to you.
14. Remember that life is not always fair to any of us.
15. Do not ever get complacent, as this brings trouble in life and the work setting.
16. We all have "skeletons" to deal with. We are given choices to deal with them.

Introduction

Author: Virginia E. (Ginger) Robertson, with acknowledgements to others in my networking circle.

The following tips are hard for any of us to read or hear from others. However, in the end, they keep you accountable and make you appreciate the job/life you do have. You want to do things to keep your skills marketable and stress level minimal. So, hang in there during the tough times (taking leave when necessary/going on a nice trip or getting away). If there is an issue of job insecurity, try to look at various options to resolve this issue and present these to the proper authorities. Not having a job of any kind leads only to debt and financial hardship, thus an unsatisfying difficult life. This reference guide will help to insure security for you. In addition, you might be surprised as you read and reflect on the words of this document. Though it is not extremely formal in writing style, there are a lot of great tips in here as well that you can use and share. Many thanks to those who gave me input over the years, even when it may not have always been welcomed.

Life Skeletons

This is a hard issue to discuss. However, it is important to do so, as part of this reminder manual. As just mentioned and will be mentioned again, we all have some problematic issue. Many times we do not want to address these due to embarrassment and shame.

I want to share my skeleton, not because I am proud of it, but hope it can encourage someone else to deal with theirs.

I was born prematurely, the result of which was blindness and a small portion of my brain that is weak and slightly underdeveloped. Making notes, reflecting on my life, and talking to others in my support network has and continues assisting me in compensating for these just mentioned aspects of being blind with a slight brain delay. This delay caused General Anxiety Disorder (GAD), whereby a person is anxious and compulsive at times when stresses are happening and some times when not. The slight brain malfunction can cause reasonability to be short circuited at times as well, not understanding entirely implication of a directive given or why credit cards can be bad as an example. This is why I have some problematic challenges in life. I am totally blind and want to prove I am capable, even though I have the small brain disability. Growing up and as an adult, I sadly pushed people away, who legitimately wanted to help me. I thought I was invincible. Turns out I was not. When times got tough, I ran from challenges or did not want to face them. For instance, for many years, I denied I had a problem with debt, that nasty money habit. Some years ago upon family conversations about my habit, I had to come clean. It was difficult to do. However, I am on the road to recovery, with many thanks and much patience with my family, as I work to throw debt away and not go back there. Yes, there

are times I want to throw in the towel and give up on this journey. However, the better plan is to listen to family and budgeting tools calling me back, reminding me of the bad consequences of my skeleton and what the better plan is, staying on the northerly track not falling back in the southerly one. The job world for me is very similar. I want to give up when times are tough, but I cannot and should not. Addressing and confronting problems is not easy, but this life journey is most imperative.

I have learned that in dealing with a “skeleton”, it is important to confront the beast, be accountable to someone and honest with the people helping me deal with the painful issue. The ultimate goal in dealing with my “skeleton” is to be able to handle finances by myself, possibly retiring closer to family, learning contentment in a job till something does and will come along, mending fences, and being accountable to myself for my actions in life. Just as you can lose a job for not following direction from supervisors, you can also be fired in your personal relationships. This is due to making bad choices, resulting in the sad alienation from others.

In conclusion, there is hope in dealing with our individual skeletons. We have them whether we choose to admit them or not. Do this in private with your support network, whether the network is a group of therapist, family members, pastor, or treatment facility. Ugly skeletons can be overcome or severely minimized, thus a happier more productive life for those you care about and who care about you personally and professionally. As with all disabilities, people have to find creative ways of compensating for them by talking with your support network, taking medicine if necessary, and read and read again important work and life reminders, whether you want to or not to keep you on the northern (positive route) and not the southern road (negative route) Again, there is hope for overcoming our skeletons. I am a working example in progress, as we truthfully all are.

Thoughts on Communication and Anxiety **Author: Dr. Jody Hagen, Clinical Psychologist**

“All of the following ideas were from my own head based upon what I've learned/applied over the years.”

- When feeling nervous in a situation that “feels” like a confrontation, try to remember that feedback and constructive criticism are normal processes in employment. Try to focus on truly listening and “find the truth” in whatever is being said. If you notice that you are becoming stressed internally and are being asked for a response, don't be afraid to just politely ask to be excused for a moment and then go to the ladies room, or where-ever to “regroup”.
- Try to be mindful of boundaries with regard to work versus personal. While you may develop some friendships at the workplace, essentially, we don't

look to our places of employment to meet our social needs, as this can lead to problems.

- See if you can find the book: “Difficult Conversations” written by Douglas Stone on audio
- Reframe the meaning of “counseling statement” from something horrible to a mechanism for feedback and an opportunity to make a correction and move forward. Hopefully avoiding the same pitfall again.
- Be mindful of your thoughts. Just because you think something, does not make it true. Hopefully, this can help slow down the process of any reaction based upon “internal” triggers versus the reality of what is happening in the present moment, externally.
- Also, be mindful of “preaching” or offering unsolicited spiritual correction, as this tends to be more accepted between 2 people who have agreed to be accountability partners, etc. or who have an ongoing, reciprocal relationship with one another..... not between a supervisor and his/her subordinate. (Our bosses don’t usually take well to this)....
- Don’t ever be afraid to just say, “You know, that’s a great question. I’m going to need to get back with you on that.” You can respond in this way to almost anything (within reason) when you are afraid you might say something you don’t really need, are feeling anxious, etc. There are very few situations where we absolutely HAVE to give an immediate response.... Thus, buy yourself some time and delay the response so you have time to really think about it, seek counsel, or whatever you may need to do to ensure that you aren’t responding impulsively, in anger, in defensiveness, etc.
- Guilt and condemnation are not from God. Yes, He will convict us of sin, and He always provides a way out by pointing us toward the grace of Jesus. So, when you are feeling a sense of condemnation or guilt, use the weapon of your faith, which is the Word of God, just like Jesus did when being tempted in the desert. Recognize that it is the enemy, or man, bringing this against you and do what James tells us, “Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee.”

Landing a Job

Author: Virginia E. (Ginger) Robertson, with acknowledgements to others in my networking circle, including my parents, friends, my own researching, and agencies that work with the visually impaired community.

(The following list is by no means an exhaustive one—rather it gets you on the road to getting and retaining a job).

- Network, network, network with family, friends, co-workers, acquaintances, and using the Internet (if you have computer access). If no computer access, seek assistance from schools, libraries, family, friends, career centers, etc.).

- Read books and other literature and/or listen to information or watch DVD/ videos on getting and retaining a job.
- Don't, absolutely do not, wear your "grubbiest grubs" to an interview or on the job itself. Instead, dress appropriately for the job and for the interview.
- Remember that first impressions are everything to an employer.
- If you have a disability, seek assistance in locating employment from those people and organizations that can educate and advocate for you working in society.
- Be on time for interviews, your job, and trainings.
- Do not overdo your makeup and jewelry on an interview or job itself.
- When answering questions, always stay positive in your approach—even when dealing with a challenge.
- Pursue future employment and life goals quietly.
- If there are differences in people listed on your application than what is currently true for a supervisor, be prepared to explain why there is the discrepancy. As a for instance, you might cordially tell interviewer that your current supervisor is new to you and not as familiar to you; thus, why he/she is not listed on your application. Furthermore, those people listed as references have a better sense of your capabilities performing job tasks associated with a particular position. If asked about contacting current supervisor, you can say yes or no, no if they do not know you are looking or not as familiar with your skills and yes if they do have a good rapport with you and are glad for you to add to your job experiences. This exploration is done quietly and not widely publicized. You do not do not want to jeopardize your current employment situation.
- Create a good resume, cover-Letter, Why Hire Notice and have references ready for the interview. (Tips on this can be found from the Internet, in books, friends, colleagues, and, last but not least, your family).
- Create a portfolio of work samples to illustrate your skills and abilities to a prospective employer. Remember, though, to not share information in documents that is confidential in nature.
- If there are gaps in your career or education, be prepared to explain these. As a for instance, I had to leave school for a time to care for an aging family member; or, I was relocating to pursue better career opportunities.
- Research thoroughly the company you want to work for and indicate to the prospective employer that you have done this.
- Get to the interview at least 10 minutes early and collect your thoughts.
- Remember to keep answers to the point and brief when answering questions; only give the information asked for and stick to question at hand. Employers want to know that you can answer their questions but listen as well
- Do not overkill on your disability issues with the prospective/current employer. Remember to always stress words, attitudes, and actions in a positive rather than negative way, when presenting answers and explanations for circumstances. In dealing with disability issues for instance, stress ability by using terms such as "Differently Abled", or

“Ability Abled”, as the “dis” in disability denotes unable. While the world has come a long way through laws and education, the stigma still remains regarding people who are different from those we associate with in society. We still judge and look down, unfortunately, on others different than us, whether it is judging races, religions, political beliefs, and, of course, those with disabilities. Again, it must be emphasized to use words of positivity when describing your abilities, challenges, and weaknesses that may present on the job or in an interview.

- Here are some useful interview follow up tips...
- 1. Send a nice but concise Thank-You letter immediately, within 24 hours, following the interview. (Follow up in two-three weeks if you have not heard anything. This keeps your name in front of the prospective employer and shows them you are still interested in the job).
- 2. If for some reason you are not the selected candidate, realize it may not be you with the problem. The prospective employer saw something a little more in another candidate. Thank the prospective employer and move on to the next possibility. Keep all employment doors open, even those that did not select you the first time you applied. Remember that each new interview allows you to remind yourself of proper interview etiquette and the chance to grow in your interview technique. Move forward with your current job, stopping to take stock of what you are blessed to have.
- 3. When or if you do land a new job, show respect to employer you are leaving by giving two weeks' notice in writing. No matter how you may feel, be professional in your letter of resignation—not belittling current employer you are leaving. The same rule holds true when you have tried various strategies for making a job work; however, due to unforeseen illness or other factors, you have to voluntarily leave your job.

Tips for Retaining a Job

Author: Virginia E. (Ginger) Robertson, with acknowledgements to others in my life networking circle. Items in this section dealing with stress related issues came from my sessions through church and various therapists. Other advice came from friends, family, supervisors, my own experience, and through On the Job Training (OJT) sessions.

(The following list is by no means an exhaustive one—rather it gets you on the road to getting and retaining a job, and handling life's issues.).

- Always follow proper protocol. No matter how you feel or what you may think, it is the right thing to do. Your supervisor is always the one you go to for any and all work related issues—no matter what they are and how big or small. Put issues in their hands to handle or to give you further instruction. It is better to ask your supervisor if you are the least bit unsure about

a situation/policy, rather than make a mistake or have a repercussion against you. Your supervisor provides necessary guidance and important reminders to assist your job growth.

- Remember important rules about privacy and security so you are not in any violation that could harm you or your company/agency and the people you serve. The reference section includes information on HIPA, PII and privacy and security. A good rule of thumb in dealing with sensitive information is “When in doubt, do not give it out”. The better alternative is researching policy and talking with your supervisor/management staff before taking action on situations involving HIPA, social engineering, privacy, and security.
- Get plenty of rest and exercise so you can think straight and logically each day and do as policy and management ask. Take time away if you need to get refocused. You want to have positive relationships in the workplace.
- Do not do not become complacent in your job or in life. You do not want to forget important directives given you by your supervisor. These are meant to shape your job and life growth. When directives have been given you in a conversation, get these in writing and review daily if necessary. Follow these directives daily till given different instruction to follow. There are dire consequences to not following directives, including write ups in your file. You do not do not want negativity in your file. Follow directives to the absolute letter. In life, be willing to try new ideas and/or situations presented to you.
- Remember that we all have different personalities. Issues important to you may not mean a thing to someone else. Utilize tips and guidance from others to keep you positive while working with personalities not in sync with yours. This may seem unfair, but sometimes you must be creative in dealing with and respecting others. Be creative and thoughtful in coming up with solutions to issues. Remember you are the peacemaker

and follow a higher power who is your ultimate guide through good and challenge of life.

- Whether at work, church, on a committee, or in other situations where you are dealing with others, take the higher road. It may not seem fair, but it's important to remember who and whose you are—your higher power. In representing God or whomever your higher power is, you are not to be a gossiper, and/or constant worrier about everybody else and what they are/are not doing. Take the higher road and focus on what you must do to accomplish tasks at hand. Pray for those who do unkind things and hurt you.
- When told by your supervisor that people are making complaints on you, nicely respond with an apology, and try finding ways to lessen the issue brought to your attention. This is even if the complaint is petty in nature. Again, life is not always fair, and people can single each other out for anything, whether justly or unjustly. You, the target, must be strong and overcome the challenge of a situation that's been presented. You are to be about representing your higher power at all times. Keep going on the higher road; don't stoop to the low road of being a busy body. Take the higher road always.
- When you have been communicating one way, but you are asked to communicate a different way by superiors, do not do not assume you have necessarily done anything wrong. Also, if others are to know about a change in how your tasks are done, that is for superiors and not you to notify others about. For instance, if per previous directive you were emailing when asked to let supervisor know when assisting someone, and the directive is for you to now actually tell your supervisor either in writing/phone/in person and wait for response, you must do this new directive. If supervisor sends you a note in writing advising of change, reply with gratitude; then, go on with the rest of the day's tasks. People who may come to you must clear anything through your supervisor. Again, if there is a change in how your

responsibilities are done, keep the peace by saying nothing to those you have been helping. If colleagues want you to help, you and they must speak with your supervisor at the time of request. There is no need for you to tell them when a policy changes for you; this is the supervisor's job if they choose to do. Perhaps there is a change from your superiors because some may feel that those asking your help just are taking advantage of your willingness to help, or giving you their job duties rather than do them instead. Superiors just want to protect you from the possibility that others are taking advantage of you. Again this may or may not be the actual case at all for a sudden change in policy. When you should know that you have done wrong is if you are actually told this at the time of the new change in your policies for handling tasks. Supervisor must indicate a wrong by you when making a change to how you handle tasks if you have indeed done anything wrong with regard to procedure. If no wrong is indicated and as said before, just do as told without question, making note of the new change for the records.

- Do not display emotions of upset to those in authority in the workplace. Instead, excuse yourself and go to the breakroom, restroom, or somewhere away from the upsetting situation/person and get regrouped.
- Working in a private office is different than working in a more public office setting, cubicles for instance. In a building where each person has a private office, you do have to be respectful to others. In a cubicle setting, you have to be extra respectful and conscientious of others around, because there is not a door on each cube. People can easily know all that is going on, whether their business or not. Keep information and discussion within your private office/your cubicle as much as possible.
- From time to time, review your agency policy and procedure to always keep in check your agency/company's rules.
- If there is an issue you feel strongly about, remember your causes may not be those of

others. If you feel the need to talk to your local representatives and/or media, only only mention yourself and not your religious denomination, employer and the like. The issue you are taking a stand on is your issue. You can only speak for a group or organization if that is part of your assigned duties. You do not want one issue you are trying to fix to bring your ouster somewhere else. For instance, if you have a crumbling transit service, don't state "I work for X Company. They know how I feel and support me". You need to let people you discuss your personal cause with know that you are here on your behalf alone. All you can speak to is what you are aware of. Before you go to outside sources from company you are having the challenge with, make sure you understand your employer's/community group's policy. This is so you don't do not jeopardize your current job/community service efforts. Remember that work is work and personal is personal, even though an effect of transportation issue for instance, may interfere with the work setting. It's not the responsibility of your work setting/community group to deal with your transportation/or other personal issue. If issues cannot be dealt with quietly on a break or lunch, stay home stay home take leave take leave and deal with problematic issue. Avoid conflicts of interests in everything you do. Be grateful to all who are giving you direction and guidance in dealing with a problematic issue.

- Utilize your agency's/company's course trainings on computer skills, and managing in a work/life setting to enhance your future career goals and job performance. Most agencies/companies have an Office of Development and Training (ODT), which offers various courses through live seminars, online, and/or Interactive Video Training (IVT).
- Even if others may use their phone or have lengthy personal conversations with co-workers, it is wrong and disrespectful to your supervisors and other workers. Come in each day and just quietly do your job; even though you may wish to have small conversations, just whisper or talk your absolute softest.

Remember, you are the peacemaker and compromiser, wanting to work peaceably and in a Christ like manner with others. It may feel like a challenge to do this and may seem unfair, but it is the right thing to do, walking in his way and not that of the typical world. Sometimes you have to do the unpopular thing and “take the road less traveled”, but you are the better for it.

- Hopefully, all meetings you are asked to attend are positive. While you want to always be positive when a meeting is called, if you sense some mistake caused the meeting, prepare a well thought out professional statement/response. Admit any possible wrong and apologize. If you do not feel you were wrong, if meeting regards a wrong, likewise be prepared with a thoughtful professional statement to counteract an issue brought to your attention. Remember to be grateful to those shaping your life and career; even though you may not feel what is being brought to your attention is really valid. You do not do not want to burn any bridges if at all possible.
- If a wrong has been brought to your attention and notes placed in your personnel file, listen to what is said, read documents given you, and respectfully respond to the one making the observation about you. When you do give a written rebuttal, make sure it is thoughtful, apologetic, documentation to back up your case, and steps you are employing to end the issue/label addressed to you. Note that documentation includes email, notes from medical authorities, and your written understandings from any previous meeting on current personnel concern brought to you. You want to prove the label given you is unfounded and/or is not an issue to continually be overly concerned about, for instance you given label of “unprofessional”. In essence, you want to show those making the observation about you that they are wrong. It’s important to work on issues brought to your attention not only to repair your current employment situation, but to help you positively gain future employment. If

feeling frustrated with your current situation and feeling trapped, take time away and get your focus right and ready to face the situation with a new positive mindset. Being negative only brings trouble. Do all you can to be positive during tough times.

- If for some reason a meeting concerns the ultimate action taken against you, termination, be gracious during the meeting. After the meeting or when you are told, quietly gather your things and leave. When in private, talk to your support network and carefully prepare your response to the firing. If you do get an interview for a future job, read information and consult with counselors and employment professionals to insure you present the termination in a positive light, even though it was a horrible thing that happened. You might, as an example, indicate that your leaving was mutual, or that you used the time to explore ways you could have possibly handled situations differently. The important thing to emphasize is why this new company should hire you.
- Try to schedule teleconferences and other such meetings in a meeting room so as not to disrupt other co-workers. As a part of this, use headsets so others do not hear the webinar/teleconference.
- If stresses, no matter what they are, get overwhelming, plan in advance to take a mental day for R&R. Bringing, feeling, and showing stresses at work can be bad.
- Don't think you are being watch? Surprise, you are. Thus, you must do all you can to keep conversations and noise of any type to a minimum. You must also abide in policies.
- Absolutely do not solicit for anything—religious issues, campaigning, and the like.
- Always secure your workstation before leaving it, as well as adhere to other agency policies concerning security.
- Never ever do anything of a questionable sort—drugs and the like. To be safe, you can let your supervisor know if your physician makes

adjustments to prescribed medicines you take, in case you have some adverse reaction.

- If you need help dealing with the challenges of work, seek help from your agency Employee Assistance Program (EAP), agency training classes, or a counselor of your choice. You want to do all you possibly can to avoid the ultimate action taken against you—being let go. Remember to utilize information gained from therapy and workplace trainings on behavior, personality, and conflict resolution each day in order to minimize your stress level. One way of doing so might be to keep a good book or a device to listen to/stream music or other interesting programming of choice. Remember, though, you are in an office setting and the music/special programming is for your enjoyment alone, not the whole office. This reminder tip is with the assumption you are not in an office setting that music or special programming is freely played for all, a restaurant, hotel, or doctor's office for instance.
- Read these work tips daily and study agency policies, if necessary, to keep you in check with what is expected/required of you. Think of agency policies and your special work reminders like your "Work Bible" that must be adhered to.
- When moving and whether for work or personal reasons, remember to organize your move into small elements, rather than one large project. As with anything else, research thoroughly. Make lists and check them throughout the moving process. Contact and get quotes on moving. Make sure to get mail forwarded and change your address to the newer one with all vendors/creditors/colleagues/friends/family. Use the move to decide how to possibly downsize or better organize your home/office. If renting your location, keep maintenance requests to a minimum if possible by making a list and getting several small items fixed at the same time. Larger issues, like leaking, need prompt addressing. If you will need any type of disability accommodation, give this information

in writing to the proper authorities. You may need more than just a statement from you for such request, as in a note from a primary care physician (PCP). For more information on moving, seek assistance from family, friends, colleagues, books, newspapers, magazines and online.

- As crazy as a phone job might get, still take a moment to get an idea of what the caller is wanting. As hard as it is, have a smile to your voice on the phone, and in face-to-face and written communication. Do not assume you know what a caller wants; even if you think you do. It is not for you to be judgmental about how many times someone calls in a day; thus, treat recurring and new callers respectfully. Do not assume you know who is calling in, because you never know who your next caller really is; they could have a new issue from the last time they called. Furthermore, it could even be a member of the media or the Governor's Office, people who could have a hand in letting you go for your rude attitude. How would your "higher power" feel if you did not take his/her messages of kindness and consideration to heart. The "higher power" would not be pleased at all with your negativity. While you may not be able to openly discuss religion in the workplace, you can freely display it in your kind attitudes toward all—even phone callers and those you may be annoyed with.
- Nicely and calmly, with an emphasis *on nicely and calmly*, take control of the phone conversation and do not do not let the caller control the conversation. Instead, you, the receptionist, take the necessary control and appropriately direct the caller by giving them a phone number or transferring them to the appropriate place. You do not have to be an expert or a counselor in all subjects caller needs help with. However, you need to get just enough information to appropriately direct caller. If you are a main phone person for an agency, your job is to ask just enough to see what caller needs and transfer appropriately, taking as little time as possible. You,

Receptionist, are not are not a counselor or are not to counsel callers with phrases like... (you might call or try talking to Blank Blank at 000-000-0000. It is the responsibility of others answering inquiries to spend longer time in conversation/counsel or advise the caller about their concern. The main receptionist will just use phrases like.... Say: "our technician will be happy to help you. I'll transfer you." "I'll let Ms. Rhea know you need to speak with her , and one of us will call you back to set up a time." "how may I direct your call?" "What's the reason for your call today?—(Let them answer do not do not play a guessing game.---Are you calling for x, for y, for z?) Again, just get least amount of information to transfer the call appropriately. Do not do not say "I don't know or I cannot do Z. Instead say..." "While am unable to address your concern, I can transfer to someone who can further assist you". Do not do not keep repeating the same thing over and over, but transfer appropriately. Remember it is the Information and Referral Specialist (I&RS) or a Crisis Manager, with special training, that is responsible for advising and spending several minutes on a call. You can tell caller... "Please call the Crisis Line at 000-000-0000", as a for instance. (Do not say "You must or you need to call", as this implies you are giving orders rather than nicely directing the call." You, Receptionist, ask more closed-ended questions, while those with more expertise ask the open-ended questions. While receptionist has to know what the agency provides, they do not have to relay everything on a subject. Receptionists leave deeper conversations to those with more expertise. The receptionist generally takes between 30 and 60 seconds to transfer a call. If you are experiencing phone glitches, indicate to callers this issue is being addressed and apologize for the inconvenience.. caller welcome to call back at a later time. When callers are angry, you can say...."I'm sorry you've had this problem; I'll transfer you to someone that can assist you." If caller begins cursing and being abusive, say...

“I have explained X situation. This call cannot continue under these circumstances. You may call back when calmer. For now, I will need to disconnect this call if you continue abusive language.” When call ends, notify your supervisor and any other necessary authorities. If you get call asking for a person not with your agency, you can say “Apologies, but there is not anyone with that name.” what caller says next will determine your logical course of action. In essence, you are to just keep it simple by giving options of transferring, leaving a voice mail, or send an email for a return call. Take yourself and your interpretations of caller’s feelings out of call when emailing.. Say “Please call Kay at 000-000-0000 regarding provider issue.” (Say nothing else in email about caller’s feeling frustration and such.) Receptionist is to Keep it Simple Silly (KISS), tons of detail not necessary, when you are strictly about just transferring calls.

- Remember to be firm but not not rude when giving caller options available to them. You can try this process.... “Transfer the caller to the appropriate person. If the recipient of the call does not answer, inform the caller they can leave a voicemail. If the caller does not want to leave a voicemail or calls back saying they didn’t answer, inform the caller you can email the recipient to call them back. If they ask if there is anyone else they can talk to, inform the caller you are directing the call to the person they need to speak with. If the caller request you email, you email that person only and copy your supervisor.” Finally, in today’s world, more and more people are strictly using cell phones to handle business. If you get a call where someone is on a cell phone and you cannot understand the caller, ask for their number in case the call is accidentally lost. Additionally, if caller says they are in a dead zone and cannot take return calls, ask them to call back at their convenience so we can further assist.
- *Remember you do not do not want to be rude, but nicely control the call. Let’s examine the following.... Now, honestly consider the following scenario, thinking about the just mentioned tips in handling phones and the stresses they can bring—especially when you*

allow frustrations to control you rather than you controlling them in a nice manner... Imagine, imagine, imagine, imagine: You can't pay your bills because your employer did not process pay checks, and no one can help you. Your mother/grandmother needs help and you don't know where to turn. Would you not resent it very much if the person on the phone did not care at all? The answer is a resounding yes, yes; you would not like for someone to have an attitude with you, just because they dislike their job and answering phones. When you answer the phones, you are the engine that makes the agency function. So, you must do things correctly, getting just enough information to appropriately handle the call. Not doing so will cause you to misdirect calls, co-workers to resent this, and horrible consequences for you—immediate termination and write-ups in your file. Additionally, you may have a difficult time locating future employment, due to negative actions on your previous job. Always remember “Do unto others as you would have done unto you”. Thus, if you want patience and kindness shown to you, you must also be patient and kind—even taking this rule a step further and being patient and kind to those who are not patient and kind to you. This last step is bold and shows you are willing to step out of your comfort zone when dealing with others around you. Not being afraid is part of your walk with your “higher power”.

- If you get a bunch of nasty calls or are having a horrible day in general, **absolutely do not ever, get angry back with the callers; just hold your piece.** Then, when a call is done, try to excuse yourself, (getting help with the phones), and retreat to a quiet place for 15 minutes or so. You might also immerse yourself in fun work related activities such as a mass mailing or typing a memo and merging it. Hey, you could even do something silly for a few minutes like play with one of those stress squeeze computers or balls. (Just do something to take away the sting of a phone

call(s), or for that matter, the sting of a horrible day.

- Never, ever assume anything. In work as in life, this brings nothing but trouble. Thus, ask for clarification to be sure you are doing things the way supervisory staff want—even if it does not make sense to you. Just do as you are told and document document document everything when necessary.
- As has been and will continue to be emphasized in this manual, follow all directives given you, even though you may not fully understand or agree with them. Follow them to the letter and make needed notes for yourself to study daily if need be. Not following directives have dire consequences: write ups in your file, meeting discussions on said problematic issue, and possible termination. Follow every rule and policy to the letter, soe the dire consequences do not happen for you. You may think you know someone's thought processes, but you really do not. Never ever assume anything. Come in each day and do your job to the very best of ability. Doing a great job will assist you as well should you look for other work options. Remember you answer to a much higher power, who expects you to walk in his way and not that of the world. Be positive in the midst of good and challenge of life and the work setting too.
- In dealing with management on assignments/performance evaluations, all you can do is your best. Document your efforts and think positively when you turn over items for them to assist in shaping your job fate. Remember we all are human and we cannot control someone else; we can only control us and our actions. While we cannot control another's reactions, we can control their perception of us by how we convey our thoughts through tone of voice and body language. On the job, just try to relax and do your best each day and know you do have support if needed.
- It is not fun having debt. It is good if you can save some for the future. Unfortunately,

though, ugly debt happens to a lot of us and for various reasons. While we all don't have the same resources, we can all work hard not to be in nasty debt. If you are going to have a credit card, make sure you can pay it all when it comes due; otherwise, you risk horrible interest, possible bankruptcy, and lowering of your credit score to name a few consequences. Do not neglect your obligation to creditors, rather work with them if the need arises and stay true to the commitment you made to pay your bills timely. Your job can be stressful; so, have just a little fun out of your check, but pay the bills too. There are various ways to save for that day of retirement, but still enjoy "the fruits of your labors". Seek assistance on this from your employer, financial advisors, and companies, like Janus, or T. Rowe Price, that deal with financial and retirement planning. There are a wide range of financial companies and counselors, like Suze Orman and Dave Ramsey, or Accredited Debt Relief and inCharge Debt Solutions, as well as family and friends to help you stay on track. Once you get out of debt, try never ever to go back again. Force yourself to use a debit card, cash, or checkbook. When you don't have debt, you do have more freedom. Use a checking program or create an Excel spreadsheet to help you create a budget. If you have a lot of debt, seek assistance in knowing which card/account to pay off first—usually the one with smallest amount owed. When smaller card/account is paid off, take that money and apply to next largest bill and so on. To further start you on the road to debt freedom, utilize these few examples. Here are some examples of wise planning for entertainment and other costs that might be considered in a budget as follows... If you have spent your \$20.00 for eating out, there is no more of this for the month. Similarly, if you are at home all the time and NatGeo Wild is your favorite TV channel, you should get the lowest package that has that channel in it to enjoy at the end of a stressful day. If, though, you have Sirius and XM, which are

now one anyway, give up one of the subscriptions, and just keep one service. Shop around for the best deals for your entertainment dollars, as companies, (like DirecTV/Dish Network, and/or ATT Uverse/Comcast), want to keep happy customers and add new people as well with promotions. Remember that whichever provider you go with, there is some good and challenge, as provider A has this channel or service, but provider B has this other program or service. There are times you may want to switch providers, but doing so all the time can just add to your debt load. Remember that you are trying to reduce, not increase, your debt load. These examples illustrate items to factor in when planning a budget. Other items, like car payments, can be considered and included in your budget in a similar manner. As a part of examining and reshaping your financial life, take advantage of any benefits/discounts offered by stores/ restaurants you frequent, and/or your employer/neighborhood association/apartment management, thus assisting you in saving money all you can. As previously said, planning is crucial in achieving what you want from life. Keep in mind that the option for getting out of debt for you may not be as viable for someone else. This is why there are several options. As with anything in life, research thoroughly before coming to a decision.

- Being healthy is another struggle for all of us. Even if you have developed a condition like diabetes, issues with blood pressure, etc, it's important to do all you can to minimize the condition by exercising and proper diet. Try to be open in this and in dealing with all life issues. For instance when family suggest a new menu for the holidays, be open to this. You might find new foods and recipes you love. If you do not get your most favorite holiday dish, look at enjoying it another time. Remember though that everything is in moderation.
- Set rules for yourself. For instance, deny yourself dessert today, if you had some last night. Maybe you can decide to not touch the home computer until you first exercise. Seek assistance in dealing with health and diet from friends, family, health care professionals, books, magazines, newspapers, and online. Health concerns is one of those things, like debt,

that we all have a problem with and do not always take kindly to help from others.

- Life brings times of good and times of stress and challenge. One of these times can be the holiday season. This can be due to the loss of close friends/family, having to confront wounds with others, and working to make piece with others more than usual. If you need assistance, please seek help from your stable support network of counselors, clergy, friends, family, and health professionals. In the work setting, it's also important to share more than usual and allow everyone to enjoy some time away from the work world.
- Remember that in all areas of life, including the work setting, we all have differing styles of communicating. If someone does not communicate in the same manner as you, *do not do not take it personally*. For instance in dealing with a phone job, person A expects you to call just before transfer of the phones; however, person B assumes that when they said for you to send the phones to them, that's exactly what they mean; so just literally do as directed. Note that some people never want you to assume anything, while others want you to take them at their literal word. When the "literal person" says they are available for you, you, the "not so literal one", can know and trust "literal one" truly means what they say. This is also true when dealing with directives given. For the "literal type", just literally follow the directive given. Then, if an issue from the directive presents, state to the literal person you are following directive, but the caller/visitor is not understanding it or being cooperative. What do you, (Supervisor), suggest? As has been emphasized and will be said again, everyone has differing communication styles; so, make note of ways to achieve peace in harmony with those you regularly communicate with, and *do not do not take anything said personally*.
 - Here are useful strategies in dealing with communicator types. Some people are easy to communicate with. Others need more kindness and understanding of their challenging style. Still yet, others exhibit traits of both the Easy and Challenger types.
 1. With the Easier communicators, both parties always understand where the other stand, no uncertainty. Communication is ongoing and open.
 2. With the challenger types, you have to "play the game". This means do the directive given today, even though you were given directive A yesterday and B today. Just document document the change. Then when in meeting regarding yearly evaluation and/or when opportunity presents, thoughtfully mention concerns. Indicate what you understood a directive, now in question, to be. When sudden change is given you, do not ask why or explain yourself. Just quietly do what you are told. For instance, last month you were instructed to let more than one person know when you suddenly have to be out of office or away from community commitment. When this is brought to your attention to now only tell

supervisor/group leader, then do as directed. When you are suddenly out of office again, phones don't get answered timely, and you called out for it, be prepared like this... Explain: "per previous directive", (State your understanding of directive.) For this particular issue in question, it is to only notify one, not multiple people. You were not in any way trying to be disrespectful. You were just trying to follow what you understood instruction given you.) This scenario is also useful when dealing with issues you are needing to follow up on, such as a new hard drive or software for computer. As you can see, you must carefully follow challenger personality type's lead by nicely and respectfully play the "constant change Game." . The Challenger Type requires more understanding when dealing with them.

3. Besides the easy and the challenge communicators, there are the in between types. These type exhibit traits of the previously mentioned extremes. You need to learn and note the buttons that open the line and those that are off limits in order to peaceably develop a harmonious communication structure. It should be emphasized that all personality types/managerial styles can be a life lesson and mentor for your growth and vitality, though you believe otherwise.

Here are some articles to help you understand another person's communication style and personality.... These articles are not at all meant to demean another person, merely to help us all understand each other and living peaceably together.

Articles Articles Articles:

6 management styles and when best to use them – The Leaders Tool Kit



Overview

Who: Rosalind Cardinal

What: Shaping Change

Career: [Communication](#), [Leadership](#), [People Management](#), [Self-Development](#)

Type: [Expert Advice](#)

Bottom Line

POSTED APRIL 16, 2013 BY ROS CARDINAL

FULL ARTICLE

Think back on your career and the managers you have had. I am sure that you have had good managers and others who were maybe not so great. When I ask people to list what made the good managers “good”, most of the examples they give me are to do with behaviour, or style.

One of the interesting things about style is that [managers with the most flexibility in style](#) get the best outcomes from their people. [Leadership](#) style is not about good/bad, right/wrong: leadership style depends on the task, people and situation to be managed.

6 Management Styles

According to Hay-McBer there are six key leadership or management styles.

DIRECTIVE

The DIRECTIVE (Coercive) style has the primary objective of immediate compliance from employees:

- The “do it the way I tell you” manager
- Closely controls employees
- Motivates by threats and discipline

Effective when:

- There is a crisis
- When deviations are risky

Not effective when:

- Employees are underdeveloped – little learning happens with this style
- Employees are highly skilled – they become frustrated and resentful at the micromanaging.

AUTHORITATIVE

The AUTHORITATIVE (Visionary) style has the primary objective of providing long-term direction and vision for employees:

- The “firm but fair” manager

- Gives employees clear direction
- Motivates by persuasion and feedback on task performance

Effective when:

- Clear directions and standards needed
- The leader is credible

Ineffective when:

- Employees are underdeveloped – they need guidance on what to do
- The leader is not credible – people won't follow your vision if they don't believe in it

AFFILIATIVE

The AFFILIATIVE style has the primary objective of creating harmony among employees and between manager and employees:

- The “people first, task second” manager
- Avoids conflict and emphasizes good personal relationships among employees
- Motivates by trying to keep people happy

Effective when:

- Used with other styles
- Tasks routine, performance adequate
- Counselling, helping
- [Managing conflict](#)

Least effective when:

- Performance is inadequate – affiliation does not emphasise performance
- There are crisis situations needing direction

PARTICIPATIVE

The PARTICIPATIVE (Democratic) style has the primary objective of building commitment and consensus among employees:

- The “everyone has input” manager
- Encourages employee input in decision making
- [Motivates by rewarding team effort](#)

Effective when:

- Employees working together
- Staff have experience and credibility
- Steady working environment

Least effective when:

- Employees must be coordinated
- There is a crisis – no time for meetings
- There is a lack of competency – close supervision required

PACESETTING

The PACESETTING style has the primary objective of accomplishing tasks to a high standard of excellence:

- The “do it myself” manager
- Performs many tasks personally and expects employees to follow his/her example
- Motivates by setting high standards and expects self-direction from employees

Effective when:

- People are highly motivated, competent
- Little direction/coordination required
- When managing experts

Least effective when:

- When workload requires assistance from others
- When development, coaching & coordination required

COACHING

The COACHING style has the primary objective of long-term professional development of employees:

- The “developmental” manager
- [Helps and encourages employees to develop their strengths](#) and improve their performance
- Motivates by providing opportunities for professional development

Effective when:

- Skill needs to be developed
- Employees are motivated and wanting development

Ineffective when:

- The leader lacks expertise
- When performance discrepancy is too great – coaching managers may persist rather than exit a poor performer
- [In a crisis](#)

When I run a program on the six styles, I like to use an activity to demonstrate the styles in action. The group is divided into 6 teams and a volunteer leader comes in to lead each team using just one of the styles. I set them a task that takes 30-40 minutes and then we debrief how it felt and what outcomes were achieved. The task is easy, so people are skilled. This is what happens:

The DIRECTIVE leader orders the team around, sets high standards and disciplines those who don't meet the standard. I brief the leader beforehand to change his / her mind several times during the activity and also to take a phone call and leave the room. When the leader is out of the room, the team usually stops work – concerned about the consequences of continuing without the micromanagement. After the activity the team reports that they are [frustrated, angry and disengaged](#). It is interesting how quickly the team loses enthusiasm and initiative under the directive leader. The leader reports that the style is “high maintenance – I felt like I had to be everywhere, watching everyone, it was exhausting”!

The AUTHORITATIVE (Visionary) leader [sets the vision for the team](#), clearly and compellingly, then steps back and allows the team to work. The leader steps in from time to time to reiterate the vision if required, but that is all he / she does. The leader reports that the style was “easy – I didn't have to do much and I could see how the style would free me up to operate strategically”. The team report enjoying the activity, and feel enormously proud of the work they have done, often getting out their smart phones to take pictures posing with their creation.

The AFFILIATIVE leader takes time helping the team to bond. They often sit down for a cup of tea and a round table sharing of stories. Often the activity is not even commenced as the team gets caught up in getting to know each other. More task focused team members often look around and get anxious when they can see other teams working. Sometimes one of those people will leap in and take control, effectively “sacking” the leader. The team reports that they enjoyed the sharing and relaxed atmosphere, but that they started to wonder when they would start work. The leader often reports that it was “challenging keeping the focus on team bonding – they started to get sick of me after a while”

The PARTICIPATIVE (Democratic) leader starts by asking all the team members what they would like to do, then voting on the options. They start in the car park, and I have on occasion seen the team vote to get a coffee and disappear. They are then startled to find when they return that there was an activity to do that they missed! Even when the team votes to come inside and do the activity the

progress is slow as everything has to be agreed before action happens. Team members report that they [enjoyed being consulted](#) and having a voice in the decision making, but got anxious when they could see lack of progress compared with other teams. The leader reports that “it was easy – I didn’t have to make any decisions”.

The PACESETTING leader sets a cracking pace from the beginning. The team operates with high energy, engagement and motivation. The leader sets members tasks, but then takes the task off them if they are “not performing” and gives it to someone else. Despite this, the team members remain engaged, seeing this as a consequence of the high standards set by the leader. At the end of the task the team reports that they enjoyed the experience, are [proud of what they achieved, but are exhausted](#). The leader is often exhausted too, saying “it was fantastic, but really challenging to maintain the pace and focus. I am glad we only had to do it for 40 minutes”!

The COACHING leader focuses on the learning experience. When a team member proves to be particularly good at an aspect of the task, the leader has them demonstrate and teach the others. The team gets absorbed in the learning and people are often surprised to hear that the time is up. They are [engaged with and proud of their achievements](#), even though they often don’t fully complete the task. The leader often reports that they “really enjoyed working with the team and I’d love to have had more time so we could finish because we were doing a great job”.

It is a fascinating exercise that demonstrates clearly that there is no best style. The most appropriate style will depend on the people (their experience, values, motives) and the situation (stable/changing, new/seasonal team, short/long term focus). The key to being an effective leader is to have a broad repertoire of styles and to use them appropriately.

Rosalind Cardinal

Rosalind Cardinal is the Principal Consultant of Shaping Change, a Hobart based consultancy, specialising in improving business outcomes by developing individuals, teams and organisations.

Ros is a solutions and results oriented facilitator and coach, with a career in the Human Resources and Organisational Development field spanning more than 20 years. Ros brings an energetic and proactive approach combined with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Her expertise spans leadership development, organisational culture, team building, change and transition management, organisational behaviour, employee engagement and motivation, strategic direction and management. Visit [Shaping Change](#) website and connect with Rosalind.

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DISC_overview.pdf

Personality Insights Inc.

A Powerful Way to Understand People

An introduction of the DISC concept

By Robert A. Rohm, Ph.D.

Each Person has a Unique Personality

Each person's perspective is built in to who they are. Some people call it personality. Some refer to it as temperament. I am sure that some of your family and friends are VERY different from you. If you are like me, you have often asked yourself, "Why did they do that?" or "What were they thinking?" or "What were they NOT thinking?" The starting point of understanding people is to realize and accept the fact: Everyone is not like you! Have you ever said something to one person, and received a certain response, then said exactly the same thing to another person, and received a totally different response? The basic reason they respond differently is that people have different personality styles! You said the same thing, but what they "heard" was not the same. Wow, can that be confusing! Different is not bad, it's just different! A lack of understanding of ourselves and others can lead to real problems such as tension, disappointment, hurt feelings, unmet expectations and poor communication. As you know, it is hard to work with a problem, especially if you do not understand what is going on inside the mind of another person. Here is the Good News

There IS a way to understand people – if you know the model of human behavior! There is a simple key to understanding how people behave and how they are motivated. This key will allow you to unlock the mystery of motivation. It will teach you the power of good relationships! It will also show you how to reduce conflict, improve productivity and relate with others in ways that are more effective.

A Little Background

Twenty-four hundred years ago, scientists and philosophers, most notably Hippocrates, began to recognize differences in behavior that seemed to follow a pattern. Many psychologists and scientists have explored behavioral patterns over the years. In 1928 Dr. William Marston wrote *The Emotions of Normal People* after earning his doctorate from Harvard University. Marston theorized that people are motivated by four intrinsic drives that direct behavioral patterns. He then used four descriptive characteristics represented by four letters to describe a person's behavioral tendencies. The letters he used were D, I, S and C. Since that time, the "DISC" concept has been used and applied in many ways.

Building on a "Wellness" Model

Many behavioral models focus on what is wrong with a person to identify "disorders." The DISC model is based on normal behavior, not abnormal behavior. DISC is a "wellness model" that is objective and descriptive rather than subjective and judgmental.

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The DISC wellness model is a good starting point for understanding people, but, as you might guess,

DISC can easily be used inappropriately to label someone or point out another person's

"weaknesses." We approach the DISC model with two perspectives that allow it to be used

appropriately as an effective and encouraging tool for understanding others:

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We use a POSITIVE approach to highlight STRENGTHS.

(we believe your strengths should "carry you")

We use a POSITIVE approach to address BLIND-SPOTS.

(we believe your blind-spots should "concern you")

The bottom line is that healthy, positive relationships come from having an accurate, healthy,

constructive view of yourself and others.

So, now that you know where the DISC concept came from and the importance of having a positive,

realistic approach, let's take a look at the Model of Human Behavior using the DISC overview.

The Model of Human Behavior

The model of human behavior is based on 2 foundational observations about how people normally behave:

Observation #1: Some people are more outgoing, while others are more reserved.

You can think of this as each person's "internal motor." Some people always seem ready to "go" and "dive in." They engage their motor quickly. Others tend to engage their motor more slowly or more cautiously.

Observation # 2: Some people are more task-oriented, while others are more people-oriented.

You can think of this as each person's compass that guides them. Some people are focused on getting something done; others are more tuned-in to the people around them and their feelings.

With both observations, we want to emphasize that these behavioral tendencies are neither right or wrong or good or bad. They are just different. We are simply identifying normal behavior styles.

People have different styles, and that is okay. We represent these 2 observations in the diagrams below.

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Thus, we have 4 behavioral tendencies to help us characterize people:

-

Outgoing

-

Reserved

-

Task-oriented

-

People-oriented

Everyone has some of all 4 of these tendencies at different times and in different situations. However, most people typically have 1 or 2 of these tendencies that seem to fit them

well in their everyday behavior. And, on the other hand, 1 or 2 of these tendencies usually do not fit

them well, and these tendencies may even seem "foreign" to their approach to life. The balance of these 4 tendencies shapes the way each person "sees" life and those around them.

By combining the 2 previous diagrams, we can show 4 basic quadrants of the circle as shown below:

The Model of Human Behavior

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Thus, 4 basic personality traits emerge from our diagram corresponding to the 4 quadrants of the circle (In clockwise order):

•

Outgoing and Task-oriented (upper left)

•

Outgoing and People-oriented (upper right)

•

Reserved and People-oriented (lower right)

•

Reserved and Task-oriented (lower left)

Next, we will add descriptive terms for each of the four main personality types that emerge in the

diagram. The descriptive terms will begin with D, I, S and C.

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Describing Each Personality Style

(4 Different Types - 4 Different Priorities)

As mentioned before, we will add the descriptive terms to the diagram. Notice the letters D, I, S and

C appear in the 4 quadrants of the circle in the diagram below. You will also notice that descriptive

terms have been added in each of the 4 corners of the diagram.

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Now we can further describe each of the four main personality styles:

The Dominant "D" type - An outgoing, task-oriented individual will be focused on getting things

done, accomplishing tasks, getting to the bottom line as quickly as possible and **MAKING IT HAPPEN!**

(The key insight in developing a relationship with this type person is **RESPECT** and **RESULTS.**)

The Inspiring "I" type - An outgoing, people-oriented individual loves to interact, socialize and

have fun. This person is focused on what others may think of him or her. (The key insight in

developing a relationship with this type person is ADMIRATION and RECOGNITION.)

The Supportive "S" type - A reserved, people-oriented individual will enjoy relationships, helping or supporting other people and working together as a team. (The key insight in developing a relationship with this person is FRIENDLINESS and SINCERE APPRECIATION.)

The Cautious "C" type - A reserved, task-oriented individual will seek value, consistency and quality information. This person focuses on being correct and accurate. (The key insight in

developing a relationship with this individual is TRUST and INTEGRITY.)

To summarize the DISC Model of Human Behavior (in clockwise order) :

•

D stands for the DOMINANT Type which is OUTGOING and TASK-ORIENTED.

•

I stands for the INSPIRING Type which is OUTGOING and PEOPLE-ORIENTED.

•

S stands for the SUPPORTIVE Type which is RESERVED and PEOPLE-ORIENTED.

•

C stands for the CAUTIOUS Type which is RESERVED and TASK-ORIENTED.

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What Is Your PQ?

We spend years in school developing our intelligence to effectively use our mind.

Developing our

unique personality to effectively use our behavior is just as vital to successful living. Your

Intelligence Quotient, or IQ, measures your intelligence. Your Personality Quotient, or PQ, refers to

your ability to understand yourself and others for effective communication and teamwork. Studies

have shown that technical skill, beginning with intelligence and developed through education and

experience, accounts for only 15% of success in the workplace. The other 85% of workplace success

comes from people skills! These skills are developed through learning better ways to behave and interact.

As Dr. Robert Rohm likes to say, "If I understand you, and you understand me, doesn't it make

sense that we can work more effectively together?"

The Elevator Test: Which Type Are You?

The elevator doors are about to close on an eager rider who is trying to get on the elevator. Four people are already inside the elevator. One of the people in the crowded box is in a hurry and does not want to wait (outgoing and task-oriented). There is also a bubbly, energetic passenger who holds the door open while greeting the newcomer (outgoing and people-oriented). A third rider is happy either way and smiles while waiting patiently (reserved and people-oriented). The final passenger is concerned as she calculates the weight to see if the elevator can handle another person (reserved and task-oriented).

While not perfectly scientific, this scenario depicts in broad brush strokes the Dominant (outgoing/task-oriented) person who is focused on getting somewhere fast; the Inspiring (outgoing and people-oriented) person who is energized by all the interaction; the Supportive (reserved/people-oriented) person who reacts calmly and tries to get along regardless; and the Cautious (reserved/task-oriented) person who wants to make sure the added person doesn't exceed the weight limit!

As you can see, there were four different people who responded to the same event in four very different ways!

You Are Off To A Good Start!

One of the dangers of learning about DISC is that you may think you already understand all there is to know about it now. Did you know there are not just 4 personality styles? We identify 41 specific personality blends that they are all very different. Even within the 41 blends, there can be a wide variety of nuances.

The Next Step Is ...

There are 4 basic steps in learning how to work with other people. Learn about the

1. Learn about the Model of Human Behavior
2. Take a personality profile assessment to learn about yourself.
3. Study material that teaches you how to read the personality of another person
- 4.

Study material that teaches you how to adapt YOURSELF to work better with others.

To learn more, please visit us online at <http://www.personalityinsights.com/>
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(This above article was taken from:

https://personality-insights.com/DISC_overview.pdf.)

Respecting the Chain of Command – Like a Pro



Respecting the Chain of Command – Like a Pro | SimonStapleton.com

Maybe you have a **[difficult boss](#)** or maybe you think it's a good time to **[break the rules](#)**, but chain of command doesn't just hold water in the military. Chain of command is an important tool in the hierarchy of a business and one that should be respected by employees. Teaching and understanding why the chain of command exists and why it should be enforced is important. Before jumping up the corporate ladder, consider these reasons to use your chain of command.

[Following the Chain of Command Shows Respect](#)

Not every decision your boss makes is going to be appreciated. In fact, many will seem counterproductive or even ridiculous. That being said, going to the next

boss in line or taking your complaints higher up the ladder won't endear you to your immediate supervisor. It will just create tension and distrust.

The chain of command is important step in creating trust and respect with your immediate supervisor. Ultimately, they are responsible for making sure you are productive and happy at work. While there are situations in the form of harassment or ethical breaches that it is advised to ignore the chain of command, in most situations, your immediate supervisor should be kept in the loop of concerns or issues you have in your job.

Ignoring Chain of Command Reflects Poorly on You

Jumping the chain of command not only looks bad to your immediate supervisor but also to the person you approached. CEOs, VPs, and COOs don't have time to field every employee complaint. Their time is valuable and they rely on managers and supervisors to take care of employee issues. Using their time to discuss departmental issues will only leave a sour taste in their mouth about you as an employee. Discussing issues with your supervisor shows that you respect them and trust that they will act when necessary.

Chain of Command Covers You

Even when you try to follow the chain of command, sometimes issues are not resolved. It may be necessary to skip to the next higher supervisor or perhaps the ramifications of your issue are bought down on you rather than the boss who was informed. In either case, following the chain of command during your initial complaint ensures that you have documentation that you attempted to follow the chain of command.

The Chain of Command Enacts Change

The chain of command wasn't just put in place to field complaints or complicate change. The chain of command actually promotes change by raising concerns in an orderly fashion. Imagine if every employee just arbitrarily decided who to contact when change is needed. While some people may contact the right people, many will just create more confusion by trying to involve employees that can't help with the issue.

The chain of command gives order to workplace issues. Your boss may know who needs to be contacted but if they don't, they will turn to the next higher person until the proper employee is found. This system streamlines the process so that issues can be resolved quickly without involving unnecessary parties. While an employee may think they know who needs to be contacted, often supervisors have a better idea of what employees perform which tasks.

The Chain Goes Both Ways

Respecting the chain of command doesn't just mean showing respect for your superiors but also for those working under you. Showing disrespect for the

proper channels will only encourage your employees to do the same. Why would they come to you when you so easily ignore your own boss?

The chain of command isn't some archaic, cruel way to torment employees; quite the opposite actually. The chain of command encourages employees to have a closer relationship with their supervisor and enact change through a single system. Without the chain of command, the workplace would quickly get overwhelmed with complaints and calls for change without a unified way of addressing them. Unless there's a serious reason for ignoring the chain of command, discussing concerns with your supervisor creates a relationship of trust and respect while getting things done.

Ken Myers is a father, husband, and entrepreneur. He has combined his passion for helping families find in-home care with his experience to build a business. Learn more about him by visiting [@KenneyMyers](#) on Twitter.

(The above article on Chain of Command was taken from <http://www.simonstapleton.com/wordpress/2014/01/16/respecting-the-chain-of-command/>.)

Letters of Reconciliation

If needed in work or in life, here's a "Letter of Reconciliation" that you can fill in the necessary gaps to fit your situation....

Letter of Reconciliation

You're ready to write a letter, but you don't know how to go about it. What should you say? Since every case is different, these are no exact rules for writing a letter of reconciliation. But, here are some recommendations on the main ingredients you may want to include in your letter:

Say, "I'm sorry."

Be honest in your writing. Have the courage to say, "I'm sorry I did x, y, z" or say "I was wrong about x, y, z." If you're not describing something

you did, then maybe it's the way you felt. For example, "I'm sorry for being resentful" or "I'm sorry for holding a grudge." If you feel you don't need to specifically name any scenario, then don't. Sometimes, saying I'm sorry and discussing your feelings are all it takes to get the ball rolling.

Say, "Will you forgive me?"

Ask for the other person's forgiveness for what you've done. For example, "Will you forgive me for x, y, z?" If you don't find it necessary to name a specific issue, then simply say, "Will you forgive me for any hurt or offense I may have caused you?"

Say, "I forgive you."

Specifically tell the other person that you forgive them for what they've done. If you don't find it necessary to name a specific issue, simply say, "I forgive you for any hurt or offense you may have caused me."

Other things you may want to include in your letter.

Say, "I love you."

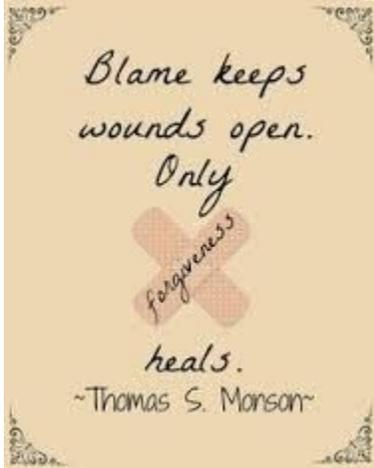
Say, "I'm praying for you."

Say, "Thank you."

Say whatever you deem important. What's important to you may also be important to the other person.

Lastly, don't be evasive; say what you know needs to be said.

What are some things you should exclude from your letter?



If you are reaching out to make amends, it's best to stay away from the following:

Pointing the finger.
Assigning blame.
Making excuses.
Using harsh words.
"Telling people off."

Remember, "Love covers over all wrongs," but "hatred stirs up conflict."

Do you need help getting started?

If you're still having trouble getting started, formulating your thoughts, or writing that first line, "[click here](#)" to see an example of a letter. You may also see actual letters written by others on our "[Healing Letters](#)" page!

[Next: Before Sending Your Letter](#)



Read a sample [Letter of Reconciliation](#).

See our [Healing Letters](#) page
to read actual letters
written by others.

(The above information on Reconciliation was taken from
<http://thehealinglettersproject.com/how-to-write-a-letter.htm>.)

More Helpful Life and Work Tips

- At the end of a hard day and you have not planned for the mental day off, do the following: Go home and just relax by venting with a good friend or family member, listening to nature sounds, having a favorite food or beverage of choice, taking a nice hot bubble bath, immersing yourself in fun activities of your choosing, and lathering yourself in a scent you enjoy—like Lavender. Additionally, just forget totally forget everything for the day you just had; you cannot change what happened or did not happen at work. Remember these upcoming things while you unwind and prepare for the next day... You cannot control other people, but you can control yourself and your emotions. Mature adults don't, absolutely do not sit around and sulk or blow up at every little thing that comes up; they quickly move on from project to project or call to call. Yes, we all learn ways of coping with life when growing up. We have various role models to help us. If a behavior learned is no longer desired, such as quick temper or sulky attitude, again, please don't be afraid to seek assistance from EAP, a counselor, rabbi or pastor to get the bad behavior curbed quickly. These people are here for you, as well as friends and family members that do not mold bad behaviors. For purposes of keeping your job intact, you can let your supervisor know that you are seeking help for dealing with undesired behaviors. You do not want work and personal issues to intertwine. Keep them separate, which is why you want to seek necessary help from your support network. In seeking help, realize that different members of the network may be more or less available to and for you at different times. Hopefully,

one day everything will be harmonious for all personally and professionally.

- Tomorrow, the day after the ugliness you suffered, start a new and ask for Him Above's (your "higher power's") help. It is good to just sit and let God (or "higher power") speak to us with out interruptions. This can be hard to do sometimes but definitely worth it. Just listen to what God (your "higher power") is saying, not what your head is throwing at you. Use devotionals, scriptures— from the Bible, Koran, Torah, etcetera, meditations, and other important books and support systems of your faith/denomination to assist you. Also, try rereading this entire set of tips; or, just read the parts you need the most to start the day on a positive note.
- In starting the new day, spend time thinking and reading about "what He above would do". He cares and truly understands us all. One way you can be more understanding is to show your "tender or softer side". While you don't want to cry for every caller that phones in, you can at least convey a sense of understanding by using words like "I hear what you are saying, or you seem upset; I would be too." There are four core feelings which are scared, sad, mad, and glad. Within these areas there are deeper feelings, of rage, guilt, depression, anxiety, and giddiness. You want to be able to imagine the pain the person must be feeling (empathize). While you may not know a person's stress in caring for a person with a disability, you do know what it is like to face challenges personally—like having a hard time meeting bills or everyone always yelling at or rejecting you. Think of a stressful issue you have experienced, then, relate that situation to the callers situation in your mind—thus words of feeling coming naturally to you and diffusion of the caller's misdirected anger, as a for instance. Note that the term "empathy" is more of the emotional awareness because you have also been through the situation. Unfortunately, if you had to put a family member in the nursing home, you can empathize with a friend, phone caller, or co-worker who is doing likewise. Empathy and sympathy **are not not** one in the same. They are different. Use the just mentioned information as you remember and consider the following: The caller is not mad at you; you are just the first person that answered the phone. The caller is currently experiencing various situations and handling the only way they know how—takes things out on the one who answers the phone. The problem is with the caller and not you. Keep this in mind when caller phones in.
- The following information will help you understand differences between **empathy, and sympathy...**
It is fair to state that both sympathy and empathy are acts of feelings. With sympathy though, you feel for the person. You pity or feel sorry for them but you do not necessarily understand what they are actually feeling. As a result of this you tend to have no choice

but feel sympathetic for the person because you do not understand the problem or predicament that they are presently having.

Empathy on the other hand takes a little more imagination, work, or even similar situations to gain empathy for someone. It is most often referred to as higher order in the overall complexity of the human emotions.

You can describe empathy as sharing a feeling with someone. So do you notice the difference between the two so far? With empathy to an extent you are placing yourself in the persons place, you have a good sense of how they feel, and you also understand their feelings to some degree. Sometimes it may seem impossible for someone to feel empathetic to a person's feelings because of their reactions. These reactions involve their thoughts and feelings towards the issue, which are going to be unique to each and every individual. The idea of empathy though implies a much more active process than sympathy does.

It is hard for you to be empathetic to a person's feelings but it can be easy for you to feel sympathy. It is easy for you to feel sympathy for someone who has lost a loved one, has undergone some certain kind of trauma, or have faced some very difficult times.

When sympathy is expressed to a person that is experiencing grief, it suggests to you that that person is alone in their grief. Empathy on the other hand suggests to the person that you are right by their side through the whole issue that they are dealing with, at the moment. You have the ability to imagine how it is to be in their shoes, and you are with them during their time of stress and turmoil.

The difference between sympathy and empathy is often misunderstood but when you understand the differences you will be able to use the terms in a better manner. **(The just mentioned information was taken from <http://www.differencebetween.net/language/difference-between-sympathy-and-empathy/>.)**

- Do things for you, personally, to keep yourself creating a positive image with positive feelings and thought processes. Thus, this will help you show a little more of your "soft side". You can create positive experiences by thinking about what feelings and thoughts those around you are conveying as you engage in conversation and hang around others.
- Remember that all relationships, both personal and professional, require some compromise and give and take on all parties involved. Furthermore, it is important to always show gratitude to those you share life issues with. You want to do all you can to maintain not drive away a relationship.
- Show initiative in the work environment. (Employers like this). As a part of this, consider it an honor when your supervisor says "the design and information in an assignment are up to you." Thus, be happy and grateful that your supervisor trusts you enough to allow you some freedom. Do not take comments as criticism or

smartness. The comments are an honor to be worn proudly by you from your supervisor.

- Create an assignment log, and make note of what tools you used and were given to do the assignment and instruction for the assignment's completion. Then, if there is a misunderstanding between you and the person that gave you the project, nicely and considerately tell the person, who assigned you the project, what you understood the steps to be. Document this part of the assignment too, just in case there might be a misunderstanding at yearly evaluation time. You don't want unfair criticism leveraged against you; so document, document, document, and document.
- Remember to approach extremely large and not so large tasks in small chunks. Not doing so will bring unpleasant consequences for you. These include unnecessary stress and the inability to logically reason. You want to have a clear sound mind always every day on your job.
- Remember to KISS and no TMI—Keep it Simple Silly rather than giving Too Much Information. Brevity is best; if more is needed those around you will ask for more. This rule is useful in all settings, whether personal with friends and family or professionally with co-workers and colleagues.
- When corresponding in a letter or email, be sure your subject and details of the issue at hand are clear—so clear there is no room to question. For instance, you do not want to send an email sharing about options on your phone system and assume recipient knows what you are meaning to say. They do not know your intended meaning. As an example situation, spell out the fact you are aware of options in the company voice mail system that could make handling phone calls easier. However, you are just merely sharing information. The ideas here are only items to consider for possible change. Stress you are not implementing change on your own, but just conveying possible options. Doing this will prevent misunderstanding. Begin and end correspondence cordially. Don't (do not) be in such a hurry to get your response out—take a little while and carefully and thoughtfully consider every word of your correspondence—no matter your emotional state. This tip cannot be stressed enough. Again, if you need help, seek counsel and read articles so you can always be professional.
- Note that there is a difference in preparing minutes and transcription. With minutes, you are giving a general narrative of what happened in a meeting, with no opinion or copying word for word everything said. Use words like emphasized or explained when talking about points made in the meeting. Give names of people in attendance and who lead a discussion or made motions. For more on minutes, see the references at the end of this manual. In transcribing, you are writing everything said word for word. A

transcription is a word for word what was said. Even “filler words”, such as uh and hmmm, have to be included. If there are issues in both types of writing, words can be utilized with italics and parenthesis/brackets around the notations. Making the notes lets the meeting attendees know there were some challenges in the recording of the meeting. Please refer to the references at the end of the manual.

- Create yourself a desk manual (collection of cheat notes) that is based on information you have researched and gathered from your fellow co-workers. Keep this reference manual updated, since there are changes in office policy and staff.
- While it is all right to brainstorm (share ideas among each other in the workplace, it is not permissible or acceptable for one person to do another’s job. Make note on the ideas gained from brainstorming, and use these to complete necessary assignments.
- If an assignment presents a challenge, a minutes one for example, you might try the following to begin addressing the problem areas.... ” I hope the attached will not reflect negatively on my ability to write and produce quality work. I did these to the best of ability, even though there was much challenge in understanding some of the recording and items of discussion. I am not comfortable with this particular set of attached submissions or future ones, due to complex subject matter and challenging parts of recordings.

Thank you.” Or, you might say this instead: “I care and want to do the best job possible. Thus, I hope the attached will not reflect negatively on my ability to write and produce quality work. I did these to the best of ability, even though there was much challenge in understanding some of the recording and items of discussion. I am not totally comfortable with this particular set of attached submissions. Many apologies and thanks for your vote of confidence, and understanding.” In the minutes document, it is also okay to say something like.... *(there was challenge in detailing the discussion points, as some people were far from the recorder and transcriber’s unfamiliarity with all the discussion issues.) This note in the document, just as in a transcription, should be in parenthesis and italicized. Always remember when assisting others with a project that you can only do the best you can with the tools you are given. Make the best of the situation and do your best, giving constructive feedback when necessary for future request to assist with the same task.*

- In working with others, both individually and on a team, remember to respect the time of others. You can do this by sending an email; then, wait 3-5 business days (non-urgent), or the beginning of next business day (more urgent), to do a friendly email/phone call follow up. You do not want to bombard people. Keep track of phone calls, letters, and emails; so you can follow up appropriately. With written

correspondence, give the recipient 10-30 business days for a response—due to the mail. If needing a more urgent Regular mail response, send the correspondence Certified or Priority mail.

- It is important on the job and life as well to minimize errors. Ways to do this include studying agency policies, utilizing tools to assist you with spelling and grammar checks, seeking assistance with the editing of large and sometimes not so large documents to be sure you are making the point you want in a presentation/report/speech. Furthermore, you can assist yourself with the lowering of error percentages by reading and using books on writing or speaking, and creating your own speeches/writings that you can study and practice refining. Doing these things will increase your skills and abilities, thus making you more marketable. Your goal should be to strive for no more than three errors—with the ultimate goal of zero or no errors in a document/presentation.
- When given assignments for your supervisor/or others, prioritize the tasks. If several are due around the same time, you might meet with those needing a task done and find out their priority, in case your prioritization is not theirs. Always be thorough and diligent in completing tasks timely. If you can, try and beat rather than meet or exceed a deadline. Sometimes projects cannot help but meet the deadline. This is true when working in a team setting and there are many parts to a project.
- Always, always, be courteous and never, ever, rude. This is so important because not doing so can result in an unfavorable outcome for you.
- While none of us are perfect and do have an occasional time when an urgent situation comes up to be handled, this cannot and must not be a constant event.
- Make calls and limit emails and/or Internet use (of a personal nature) to lunch or breaks. When you are at work, you are there to do your job and not work on personal issues all day long. Yes, it is true that we all have times where a personal call runs over a scheduled lunch period or a break, but, again, this must not be the norm for you. If need be take some time off to get personal issues resolved, if they are starting to disrupt your ability to do your job. When at work, the motto should be “Job First, Personal Issues Last”. This is still true if you have had something of occasional urgency to come up, work should be first, even if personal issue has to be put on hold for a moment or two while handling a request from a co-worker or phone caller.
- Do not become overzealous in expressing your thoughts and feelings.
- All policies have a reason—even those you do not necessarily agree with. For instance, you may think the agency policy on inclement weather is unfair because you must take leave even

when you don't have the ability to get to work or your area is unsafe temporarily due to ice and snow. Additionally, those who risk their lives get rewarded if they make it in by a certain time and the office, then, closes. Businesses, whether public or private, have an obligation all the time and in all situations to provide the services they do. This is why they enact the policies and standards they do. So, to deal with such issues as inclement weather policies and your opinions, you can nicely express your feeling of how the policy could change for the betterment of all. After this, though, you must realize you have done all you can and understand that policies have a reason. In the end you must do what is safest for you in a difficult weather situation and feel good in your decision. Another such example of dealing with policy, that you may not agree with, is being asked to work during a holiday, due to local/national legislature being in session, and/or your particular company/agency does not observe a specific holiday—Good Friday, Christmas Eve, or President's Day for instance. You may not like or agree with the policy of working the holiday, but it is what your current job demands. Serving the public requires you to be open and available to meet necessary needs. You must accept the situation and realize you will be compensated in some way for working a holiday. Special benefits for holiday work might include: alternating with others the following year in exchange for working this President's Day, receipt of other employee benefits Birthday instead of Columbus Day off, or being paid time and a half for working on given holiday, as an example. Remember that all policies have a reason

- Should the time arise and those above you decide to either take the company/agency through a merge or reconstruct how business is done, use your home as your sanctuary and vent in private not publicly with your support network. Be glad to have a job, because others do not. In your mind and with your support network only vent about your different feelings. When you are informed of changes, use a nice enthusiastic tone to ask questions and get answers to issues that will be affecting you. Perhaps, those in charge might have bigger positive plans for you down the road, but you must cross this transition and new way of doing things hurdle first. While grievances are an option if an unfair situation presents, they absolutely cannot be used every time you don't agree with some new change. Grievances are used for serious workplace violations, not for something you don't necessarily feel is fair. So, go into meetings with your new supervisor with positivity and with an open mind to what they have to say—asking questions and expressing any concern in a calm tone after you thoroughly listen to what is said to you. You may not like all that is being said, but listen and speak kindly. Absolutely do not go around with a sullen sulky

attitude when you hear about workplace changes you do not agree with; instead, eagerly meet changes—remembering that your current and new supervisors are just messengers for those above wanting things done differently. Work hard for that new supervisor, just as you enthusiastically worked hard for the old supervisor; as they and you bring unique perspectives to the table. If one of your favorite responsibilities is being taken away, see if you can be creative and come up with a new favorite aspect of your new given set of responsibilities to counteract the parts of your job that are not your favorite. Utilize, these just mentioned tips as well, if you or your current supervisor move on to a new job opportunity.

- It is very unfortunate and sad, but sometimes new work relations, no matter how hard you try, just do not work out. Under normal circumstances, the chain of command is the rule and not not the exception. However, when you have tried to make job situations with other staff work and still no success, seek advice from articles on “chain of command”, and your support network in private to assist you in this scenario of unfortunately having to do the exception rather than the normal chain of command rule. Do learn your agency’s proper chain of command and policies for utilizing this and other resolutions for solving staff issues. If you do go straight to the head of the agency, your documentation must be factual, not emotional, when presenting to the director/agency head. You must be ready to thoroughly explain why you were not able to follow the normal protocol for issue resolution. When asking the agency head for a meeting, do something like this..... Send a message from your home phone or email/or contact very discretely at work. Ask for a strictly confidential meeting and you need to address a matter without fear of retaliation. Present the documentation at the meeting; then, do a brief discrete email or phone call follow up in two to three weeks, if you have not heard anything. Depending on what the follow up response is like, either pursue other options for a positive work environment or accept the information provided you—try coming up with more strategies to deal with current challenge.
- If you can in an extremely challenging work situation, try seeing each day as a new opportunity for change. When you know you have exhausted all efforts to let upper management know about a situation, and you don’t get the results you desire, all you can do is to explore other options—looking for a new work environment, and come into current environment and just quietly do what you must do each day. As a part of doing what you must do each day, while still in a less than desirable situation, do things exactly as supervisors want—even if it does not make sense to you. As an example, do not do not be rude to callers, but apologize to them and explain that the options you are able to do, as the Receptionist, are either transfer a

call or send an email to office staff. However, sometimes, as in all cases, there are exceptions—caller is threatening to call the head of the entire agency or get cell phones for staff, then, you can locate someone to help the person. You, the person stuck in a tense situation, can take comfort and feel good in knowing you have truly done all you can to get an intense challenge solved, as the one just outlined. Now, just realize you have done all you can to resolve an issue; any problems are on those people making you miserable. In other words, the good news for you is that you are not the one with the problem; it is those creating the drama that have the problem. Remember, they have the problem and the “monkey on their back”; it is not you. If someone wants to question you about handling a situation in a particular way, you can nicely explain that sometimes we all have to put judgment first in handling a situation. I know you, (person hassling you), do not agree with what I did, but it was what had to be done for the situation. If the person hassling you is not anyone over you directly, nicely tell them that you are doing your job/handling a life issue to the best of your ability. If the person wants to discuss why you handled something a certain way, advise them that they can talk to your supervisor; however, with outside work issues, you (person being questioned), have the right to live your life safely without discussion on everything you do.

- Remember about the fact that we all have and need boundaries in all aspects of life. If it's your supervisor upset with you, you can nicely explain your reasons for handling a situation a certain way. If the hassling continues from immediate supervisor, advise them you are going to utilize chain of command. If it is someone outside of work, you can nicely tell them you will not continue to discuss said issue, why you have plant pictures in your email for instance.

In a personal matter, you might say something like....

“It's regrettable I cannot openly share all of my life with you without harsh judgment. This is even when I have tried to assure you about an issue. I know we both are meaning well in our discussion, but this topic is only creating strife not building our relationship. This subject has been handled and is no longer a topic for discussion. We can discuss other subjects that bring good to our relationship or on which we agree.”

If none of these strategies work, talk with your support network about your next steps to follow.

- All parties feel hurt and sadness when relationships are not going as well as had honestly hoped. You must do all you can to “develop a thick skin” to deal with those personalities not totally in sync with yours. For example if someone in your circle chooses to hold a grudge or be short tempered to you, that is on them. You, the person who has grudge held against them or is dealing with a short fused person, must rise above and pray for that person. You must follow your Higher Power's positive lead, and “kill people with kindnesses and a smile”. Hopefully, the one with anger can

- come around and let go of it. You, the one to whom the anger/frustration, was directed, should also let go of hurt by engrossing yourself in a fun workplace assignment and/or some fun relaxing activity to take the sting away. Keep lines of communication open and be nice to those who continue to be short fused/hold a grudge. Everyone has bad and good times and is not perfect.
- Go make it a great day, as each day is new. Be calm and relaxed. Hey, at least you are getting money for bills. You have to pay your bills and live your own life, right? Since you are not a millionaire, you can't quit a job over some misunderstanding. However, if you need some time off to get refreshed, then take it and do not do not feel bad for doing so. You have to do what you must do for you and take care of your needs. Remember that home is your sanctuary—a place to be quiet and reflect, as well as consult with members of your support network, and spend time getting your problems off your mind.
 - Again, and as mentioned before, when you have done all you can, personally, to deal with an issue using positive communications, the issue is yours no more—you do not have the problem—*emphasize that you do not have the problem*. The issue rest with someone else above you. As another example, when you have put an event on the calendar, been approved by management, and submitted necessary forms beforehand, do not worry about taking time off/participating in an agency function. It is for other staff's concern now; they will deal with the phones or other issues that must be handled. Let your worries go and enjoy the activities you asked for approval in advance to participate in.
 - We all have problems, are not perfect, and make mistakes; so, how to know if you, personally, do have a problem? Ask yourself if you notice some change in you, or if others have noticed and have nicely pointed this out to you. Usually concerns will be pointed out by several people, not just one person. If all these things you answer yes too, then, you do indeed have a problem; so seek help from your support network.
 - If a conflict/disagreement arises between you and a co-worker, family member, friend, or creditor, try resolving the issue yourselves with diplomatic and civil dialogue. If this does not work, get a mediator involved—counselor, manager, other family member, attorney, etcetera. All involved should uphold their end of the agreement made.
 - In documenting information, try just putting the main points together in a weekly journal. Sometimes doing the daily log can make you more stressed about a situation, because you never let it go—it's with you in setting A and continues with you in setting B. Remember home is your sanctuary or your palace of escape.
 - You want to be responsive and not reactive to situations. Reactive approach is more emotional in nature, while responsive is more a careful thinking of details before communicating them to someone.
 - Know yourself and the things at work and life that trigger your defenses. Stop the defense mode by self-talks and realize, always, you don't owe

- anyone an explanation for why you completed a task a certain way unless the person assigning and/or needing your help asks you to explain yourself. While you may be detail oriented, others are not—thus, show respect continuously in emails phone calls and face-to-face conversations; otherwise, people that aren't as detailed oriented will be highly agitated with your lengthy detail. Save your details for when it is really really necessary— jobs on the line or why presentation has inaccuracies beyond your control. Keep your explanations simple but pointed... To clarify, you would like the first paragraph deleted from the manual; or, you would like to have 25 dozen doughnuts ordered from Krispy Cream, correct?
- If needing help dealing with a new and differing management style, read articles online, in magazines, books, the newspaper, and seek assistance from your support system. Finally, remember that nothing stays the same forever—things do and will change. Transition is hard for us all, but utilizing the right coping strategies, as mentioned here, can assist you in making the change easier. Just keep doing what you must do to approach work daily with a happy attitude, and do things personally and professionally to enrich your life to meet your future desired goals.
 - When you receive commendations/recognition for your work you do, be grateful and thank those who gave you the honor. Take a few moments to realize you are more valuable than you may think to an employer. You are blessed more than you know to have current job. In realizing this, perhaps you can better enjoy each day. Remember that in work as in life, every day presents good and challenge in it. You will have good and not so good days too.
 - In doing self-talk, be positive... Say: Gee, I messed this assignment up, but I understand and will be less detailed when reporting about a project/other issue in the future, unless asked for necessary information. Take ownership if you did make a mistake. Another approach to mistake admission might be... If you can stop yourself immediately when you know a mistake is happening and admit to it. If someone else finds a mistake/error you made, then, thank them for letting you know about the action in question. Tel the person, if you truly feel you might have made a mistake, that you sensed you were not doing the project right, and explain the steps you took so the issue won't happen again. Realize also that once the mistake has been prayed for forgiveness, and fixed the mistake is a mistake no more. The mistake is gone, erased, history, to not be repeated. If, on the other hand person presents you with some wrong/allegation/rumor they heard, and you honestly know you did not do the bad deed, then, clearly state this by saying... I did not commit this allegation brought against me. Furthermore, it's really sad that people have so much time for telling untruths about others that they cannot adequately focus on their own life. (Note, though, if several people mention the same allegation again and again, perhaps you should examine you and seek immediate help from your support network to get the issue addressed and your best course of action to take.) Remember

that when a mistake is made and you are communicating about it to start off admitting the mistake; then, end the situation positively, as shown in the assignment example earlier in this paragraph.

- We all have three parts in dealing with our attitudes and ideas.

1. The Child (displays feelings of wide range).
 2. The Parent (criticizes, gives rules, shows authority over us).
 3. The Adult (carefully considers both the parent and the child when making a decision).
- When not at work, spend time with family and friends, at church and church functions, watching TV, exercising, listening to music, work on your computer (if you have one), and enjoy whatever hobbies and activities make you happy and free of stress. Also re-read old books and read new ones for the first time on topics of your choosing. If you are dealing with a particular challenge or life is not going your way, read and/or re-read self-help books dealing with your challenge. Revisiting books, including the Bible, Torah, and Koran, as well, assist you in reminding you of useful information. Revisiting books and articles also helps you gain new information that maybe you missed on the first reading.
 - Remember about privacy and confidentiality. This means keep issues about consumers/clients in the office and not, not outside in the community.
 - Be careful not to ask too much in assistance from your co-workers. Make needed notes when they give you information the first time; so you do not interrupt their workday with your issues. Doing so quite frequently might scare them away and create an isolationist work environment for you—the person needing assistance.
 - When you feel complacency coming on in your job, reread your work tips, pray and examine if this really is the job for you and act accordingly, as well as take that all-important r&r time to get you back in the right frame of mind.
 - Remember that every job you accept has good and some challenge in it. There is no escaping this fact of life.
 - When responding to others during a challenge situation, no matter how you may feel about the person, choose and think very hard about the words you use so as not to be misconstrued.
 - Documentation can be your best friend—so document document document issues that occur. In this way, if an adverse action is attempted on you, you can have proof of what was said and done—thus being able to adequately make the argument against adversity. It may seem like effort, but you will feel better doing it and it helps keep you and others accountable.
 - In dealing with issues of clarity on a subject and whether written or spoken, do not be afraid to ask for clarification by using a phrase like “I think I hear you saying” blank (blank meaning for you to fill in whatever you are hearing. Also, remember to read or think about what is being said for a little while first; then, see if you don’t figure out what is being said—at that point, ask your clarification statement. This all assumes you have a little time to think about an issue, and it is not a critical situation that must be responded to ASAP. If you do need a quick response, then kindly remember about tone of voice and expression.

This means being nice and not being abrupt—no matter how you feel in the moment. If necessary, keep your special “Workplace/life Bible,” of these tips, handy to refer to in a heated moment—reading and pondering quickly before a response in critical situations.

- Keep a journal of your thoughts and ideas. It makes you feel better. Later upon re-reading, you may find yourself laughing at some of the statements you wrote, but other statements not so much.
- Your objective in reading self-help books and seeking therapy is to utilize the ideas, learned in sessions, constantly in your life; thus, there will be the need for non-dependence on a therapist for an issue the rest of your life. For instance, if you are having problems in the workplace or family, learn and use daily the ideas gained to truly make your life better. This cannot be stressed enough.
- While it is not always easy and our personality can get in the way, always always be professional. Part of this definitely entails not ever taking anything personally. Do not even assume negative thoughts—only assume positive thoughts when anything is said or requested of you. This is because everyone is needed to make an agency/personal relationship work. Do not misinterpret everything said or asked of you, as this brings and borrows unwanted, unwarranted and unnecessary stress to you and others before you even know what the full scope of a situation is. See these examples and understand the importance of not taking things personally. For instance, if you are told of an unexpected meeting, do not do not assume the meeting is bad; there could be exciting new things to do and try. Another illustration of this point is when you know that without a doubt you have pondered these notes and sought council before having a written, phone, or face-to-face conversation with someone and done your best, but the person comes back with a quick snippy response, understand and realize you are not the problem at all. It is the person giving the snippy response with the problem. It’s easy to be hurt by these two examples, but realize those people are having a bad day. Furthermore, that person that snipped at you is showing there bad negative energy at this moment; so just overlook and ignore the negative energy. Say something like... “This is just the way they are, I can’t control or change their personality on my own; this change has to come from the one who was short with you”. Doing these entire things can and will help you to not become unnecessarily stressed; then, needing to resort to your coping mechanisms to deal with the stress. You want to assume happy thoughts no matter what. If you need help, again, seek assistance from your EAP, a therapist of your choice, family, friends, your family physician, and others in your networking circle; so that undesirable aspects of your personality do not turn into job and/or life negativity.
- If you are just so into taking things personally, not only seek help from your support system, as previously stated in the above paragraph, but

have a time each day that is totally free of noise. Reflect on worries concerns people that you agree and may not agree with, the world at large, and anything else on your mind; take these concerns to your “higher power” too. After this time period, you are not allowed to think about worries and negativity in your life anymore until the next day’s worry period. You can read an article from http://helpguide.org/mental/anxiety_self_help.htm. Another great book is **THE MINDFULNESS AND ACCEPTANCE WORKBOOK FOR ANXIETY: A GUIDE TO BREAKING FREE FROM ANXIETY, PHOBIAS, AND WORRY USING ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY** by John P. Forsyth and George H. Eifert. This special time of day, whether in the morning afternoon or night, might also be that period to spend time in and with Him Above—whether it’s with God, Jesus, Buddha, Allah, or to whomever your denomination supports as a “higher power”. If you are really heated with someone or some issue, get cooled down from that issue first, so you can concentrate on what your “higher power” is saying through sacred books, routines of your faith, and meditation. **Remember to “Push Back the Pain, from Antoinette Tuff, a hero who saved lives in an Atlanta School shooting. Remember that we all are human and have various strengths and weaknesses we bring to the life and job table. We are all unique too. In having your “quiet time” daily, you might also find a special place for this time each day—maybe in your bedroom, outside on a deck or patio, in the kitchen to name a few places for this time with no interruptions. Allow your “higher power” to speak to you and you to him/her and to look at Acknowledging the One Above with Acknowledgement, Confessing, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (making requests or lifting of concerns). (These just four words of Acknowledgement, Confessing, Thanks Giving, and Supplication stand for (ACTS). You want your job day and/or fun/errand day to be full of kindness to others, open-mindedness, no issues taking personally, and professionalism always when resolving issues.**

- Remember that old saying “Better Safe than Sorry” when dealing with people and situations. Even if you think something is okay (like sharing about an event that could benefit all of a segment of society, like people with disabilities), just ask if you can share with those in that community. The presenters may only want certain people in that community to come and may get upset with you. Furthermore, while it is all right, in many circumstances to send a word of apology for a wrong, in some cases, you should go on after that person indicates a wrong done. Just pray to your “higher power” and journal entry in private about your sorrow for any miss-intended consequences resulting from you intentionally trying to do well—which unfortunately, backfired for you.

- In dealing with wrongs, we have all done them, whether we choose to admit them or not. While some time and space is good, you don't want grudges and lack of communication forever. Pray to your "higher power", asking for forgiveness for your part in a wrong committed. Also, seek advice from mutual friends, counselors, people outside the situation, read books and articles on apology and how to do so effectively, and spend time in deep reflection about your actions and ways to improve your part in the relationship. Hopefully, all parties desire the relationship to have a positive outcome, rather than letting wounds continue to hurt. Perhaps a good strategy might be rekindling a relationship around a holiday or some common issue that all parties are passionate about. While those with disability can face more hurt sometimes, due to our lack of mobility, we must learn from our wrongs too and do things like always having backup plans; thus, we will not feel so panic stricken when our preferred friend/family members are not as available to us. In addition to always having a plan B ready when plan A fails, grab a tape recorder to journal your thoughts, get a spa treatment, talk with a real close friend, go out to eat or something wonderful to help take the sting of multiple stresses away. There was a popular song several years ago that talks about "Starting All Over Again" by Hall and Oats. The song is like an anthem for broken relationships of most any kind, though it is mainly a love song. Maybe when sending the word of apology, you could also send this song "Starting All Over Again" by Hall and Oates as an attachment as well. Be prepared for whatever the other party's response is, realizing after sending this note or calling the person, that you, (the one trying to have communication), have truly and honestly done all you can possibly do to make a relationship work. Here is a sample of an apology, when dealing with other parties who may feel overwhelmed by your initial warranted/unwarranted frustration with them...

"I hate it that I acted so upset, angry, desperate—saying hurtful things I shouldn't have, while under so much stress. You did not deserve any of this. Time away from our friendship allowed me some time to reflect and I can now see better ways of channeling multiple layers of frustration.

In addition, I sure miss having you to talk to when you fix my computer (or whatever fun things you shared together). Can this broken friendship be mended? I want to sincerely apologize and am asking you to please excuse my uncalled for outbursts and know this won't happen again.

Regretful"

If the person you are apologizing too is not much of a communicator, you want to give them space and time, a little more space and time than for a person who is more of an open communicator. When you try that one last time, after space has been given, realize you have done all you can do. The fate of the relationship with a co-worker/friend/family member/lover is now in the hands of the party failing to make reconciliation. While you

can keep the door of hope open for the person holding a grudge and/or choosing not to devote positive energy to a relationship, you, (the party asking forgiveness and trying to make things right), must devote your positive energy to those people who are still in your life. **Remember to “Push Back the Pain, from Antoinette Tuff, a hero who saved lives in an Atlanta School shooting.**

- It is easy, and we all do this in our own way, we forget all these things mentioned here when moments are heated. We can and do blame someone in some way for some harm caused. Instead of acknowledging a person’s feelings, many of us become defensive—giving our thoughts in a non-constructive way. Doing this, can and does cause further harm. Perhaps what you can do when you come home, after a hard day of dealing with difficult people is heavily engage yourself in a movie or some program and talking with friends about more than your problem. This will get you in the “Here and Now,”—rather than just staying in the day’s events or something that happened two days ago. Think of home like your sanctuary, your escape, your palace, and a place to forget work or bad experience dealing with others in public, where those that upset you today are nowhere in sight now (tonight), because you are in your safe escape. Treat yourself nice in your castle. Do constructive self-talk to yourself and try to just breathe when your stress level is starting to rise. Keep in mind as well that supervisors you have will come and go, as will you, so things won’t be the same forever. If you should get an evaluation you feel is not fair, you, (the employee), do have rights—just have all your documentation ready. If you need help with this, seek assistance from your support network. We are all human; so your stress level and your coping mechanisms, as well as strengths and weaknesses, may not be the same as someone else’s. Yes, all the things to deal with stress that was mentioned before are great, but these other avenues are good when those mechanisms do not appear to be working. Remember that all you can control is you alone.
- Whether you choose to accept it or not, all of us are a part of God’s big family. As a result, it’s important, in normal life as in your job, to work with the family to achieve peace and harmony in dealing with issues. Life is about some give/take or compromise between various people in reaching issue resolution; thus, you must do your part in this effort. For instance, you may not feel you have anything to share with a friend or family member; however, they have come to expect that you will call them on a certain day each week. Also, you may want some privacy at home; so you turn your phone off to charge it and sometimes to just rest your mind from talking so much lately. The way to compromise here is to do some of what you want, turn off phone for a little while, but then make sure you program your phone’s voice mail in to double check and make sure you have no missed calls. You never know who might have left you a message with something of significance that you need to know and respond to, whether at home or work. While others

may not always respond to you when you call and it may seem unfair, you want to do the right caring thing and respond and keep your phone on as much as possible. The same is true with handling emails you receive at work or home—respond back, even if nothing new to say. Just acknowledge the other person's communication with you. You might also try advising the person overly or lovingly concerned about you that we all get busy and daily life happens. You have tried calling the concerned person but also have trouble reaching them at times. If it makes the concerned person feel any better, you can offer to get a medical device and the concerned person can receive daily alerts. If the situation is personal, you might advise the concerned person that we all have issues. If any thing urgent happens, a friend, relative, supervisor, or hospital will notify of an emergency. Otherwise, there is not anything to be overly concerned about. If the situation is a business one, you might make notes on how many times you tried to contact the concerned party, but were unsuccessful. Then, apologize for the inconvenience, just as you would for a personal concerned party, and ask to get the corrected and appropriate times party of concern may be available for communication. You may not feel close with everyone in the "family," but God and Christ call for us to love and accept each other. Again, follow the teachings of your "higher power," whoever that is.

Accomplishing Job/Life Tasks with Visual Disability

Author: Virginia E. (Ginger) Robertson, with acknowledgements to others in my networking circle. Items in this section dealing with stress related issues came from my sessions with Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). Technical aspects of doing a job with visual disability came from local organizations for the blind, supervisors, friends, and my own personal experience throughout the years.

The following list is by no means an exhaustive one—rather it gets you on the road to getting and retaining a job as a person with a visual disability).

- This section begins with statements, mentioned earlier, that bare repeating here as well.... “Do not overkill on your disability issues with the prospective/current employer. Remember to always stress words, attitudes, and actions in a positive rather than negative way, when presenting answers and explanations for circumstances. In dealing with disability issues for instance, stress ability by using terms such as “Differently Abled”, or “Ability Abled”, as the “dis” in disability denotes unable. While the world has come a long way through laws and education, the stigma still remains regarding people who are different from those we associate with in society. We still judge and look down, unfortunately, on others different than us, whether it is judging races, religions, political beliefs, and, of course, those with disabilities. Again, it must be emphasized to use words of positivity when describing your abilities, challenges, and weaknesses that may present on the job or in an interview.”
- Ways to help co-workers assist you on the job when you have a disability include: seeking assistance from the local Disability Rights Center (DRC); organizations/individuals that deal regularly with your specific disability; make notes of various accommodations from previous jobs and illustrate these (show an example of how a time sheet looked, or how you cross stacked papers to be stuffed in envelopes for a mass mailing); find ways to save your employer money, if you can, when equipment purchasing must happen; and much more. (All with disabilities have various techniques they have learned over the years to do their job effectively). Remember to get necessary official documentation for accommodation requests. You can get this information from doctors or those agencies that work with your particular disability.
- When you have a disability, as bad as it may sound, you have to prove yourself. The way to do this is to follow rules to the letter. When you make a mistake, admit to it and apologize.
- Keep blank copies of forms used for time and leave forms—able to show a future employer how forms were made accessible.
- When you have a mailing project, where one letter, one application/brochure, and one return envelope must be sent together, have the person overseeing the project to place the sets of items in

different stacks and tell you how many of each item to send to each person. As an example, renewal packets for one of your agency's programs would be done like this... Place renewal applications in a stack, envelopes for sending in a stack, letters for recipient in another stack, and return envelopes in yet another stack. You will need to be told how many of each stacked item a recipient gets.

- Besides the utilization of speech package or magnification software, some with visual disability may require the use of a Reader Assistant, Braille Display, or Electronic Video Magnifiers (EVMS). Again, consult with agencies that work with visual disability.
- Make Braille labels, (using special labeling paper), for mail slots and special folders for mail distribution.
- Create several desk guides, (one for each job you have been in), to assist in handling situations that come up.
- In the community of people with visual disability, various means of getting around the workplace and town can vary—some prefer the cane, others a dog, and still others to go sighted guide. The person with the visual disability should know the basic techniques for the method of getting around that they use. However, if there is challenge with the person with visual disability and how they maneuver, seek assistance from an Orientation & Mobility (O & M) Instructor and/or from the dog guide school the person with visual disability attended. Utilizing the just mentioned sources can help to dismantle any preconceptions those not use to the person with visual disability may have regarding walking around the workplace and/or to and from daily life activities. It is helpful if employers understand if such an employee is late due to the public transit service. Ways to deal with this issue are to communicate with the supervisor when you (the employee using public transit) is going to be just a few minutes late; give employee a 10-15 minute grace period before charging leave, and have the employee call only if they will be over 10 minutes late. Perhaps and instead of charging leave the employee utilizing public transit could make up lost time on mornings that he/she arrives before their regularly scheduled start time. Also, make the transit service aware of the constant late arrivals. Those with other disabilities have ways they must maneuver too. People with questions should not be afraid to talk to the one with a disability, as well as seek assistance from agencies specializing in disability issues—Division of Services for the Blind (DSB), as an example. Businesses are to be commended for making accommodations for all.
- When necessary do not be afraid to utilize various support systems to accomplish life tasks/goals. For instance, if a workplace website is not accessible, work through the chain of command to get accessibility. If transportation is an issue, alert the proper authorities with the transit service, government entities, and disability rights organizations. If you want change, you must nicely but assertively take action and follow through, keeping all documentation ready. To borrow the quote, “squeaky wheel gets the grease”.

- In dealing with disability issues, seek assistance from organizations like the Disability Rights Center (DRC), for guidance in requesting a particular accommodation for personal or professional purposes,
- Making a paper gage (out of sleeves for brochures) to use for telling you where a blank spot on brochure was so labels could be placed. In addition, create a straight edge out of cardboard for insuring labels are placed straight as possible on large and not so large envelopes. Do this by cutting straight two pieces of cardboard that span the length of the envelope and about eight fingers wide for large envelopes and four fingers wide for smaller envelopes. Place masking tape around the cardboard pieces. **(Note that differing widths and lengths are used depending on envelope size.)** Now, use this straight edge to help you align labels straight as possible on envelopes. For small brochures requiring a sticker to hold the brochure shut, create a template out of two pieces of cardboard and put pieces together with masking tape. The cardboard should have a big enough notch cut out for the sticky for the brochure closure and a notch cut for where the recipient label must go as well.
- Create and utilize a specialized workplace manual, like this one, listing pertinent information that anyone can do to keep themselves in check with general workplace protocol. We all can slip from time to time; this type manual keeps you always in check. (Note that those with a disability do not always get the chance to work while growing up; thus, they may not know what work environment norms are. A manual, like this one, can help with the workplace norms challenge and other challenges too. Furthermore, those with disability could also attend special prevocational training to know how to handle college and the workplace appropriately).
- Filing information (created file folders with labels, made a desk file showing the files in the cabinet and shared with supervisor, organized information in the folders (placing any handwritten or hard to read information on top so supervisor would see what the scanner would not scan), and purged when appropriate necessary information from files.
- Using an AIO (All in One) Printer to read materials, instead of a more expensive special scanner that is tailored for the visually impaired. (Note more expensive scanner cost employer more to meet accessible accommodation and did not really do much better at reading the scanned material, than less expensive AIO Printer/fax/Scanner/Copier would do). (Note that if materials were hard to read or handwritten, items are given to your supervisor to assist you with unreadable material.
- Since many agencies utilizing a large network to link offices and divisions together do not always comprehend how those with disability must use assistive technology, do what you can to educate them about how network settings can interfere with assistive technology, (like JAWS). This may entail contacting the network staff, your immediate IT Specialist for your office/division, and the tech staff at the assistive technology company, (like Freedom Scientific Inc.), and have a conference call and troubleshoot issues. If the network staff will not make concessions, see if the assistive

technology company can come up with possible work around for you to do your job effectively. After all attempts have been thoroughly tried, it may be time to start a job search in earnest.

- One difference from working on your home computer and work computer is that at work, you are not free to surf the Internet all day; you must do job related tasks. All information in the work setting needs proper securing. Thus, you the person with visual disability may also have limitations as to what you can do with/without administrative rights to the company network. It is for this reason that when updates are needed for your speech package, network staff must do this. They will download the update to their system then remotely push the update to you. By contrast at home, you, the person utilizing speech, can download updates and update your speech settings by yourself. Remember work computers and other office equipment are monitored, and security must always be maintained and respected by all in the workplace. If for some reason you need more access to your agency network, check with your supervisor on agency protocol for granting more access. All companies have special rules governing office equipment and networks.
- Yes, we all have stress in all aspects of life; thus the importance of getting necessary help and coping mechanisms for dealing with issues constructively. Having therapy and using mechanisms over time can help you better understand why you are the way you are and make desired changes. This point is mentioned because when you have a disability, you have a little more challenge to overcome. Remember to seek help in your job and living life independently as possible from special agencies trained to deal with your specific disability. So, when you think you have had a bad day on the job, just remember to be very grateful that you have a job. Others in the disability and non-disability community would love to be where you are and have a job. Those without work have an even harder time than you in making ends meet financially each day. It truly is easier to get a new job when you have one. Thus, keep your life as stable as you can, work hard at the job you do have, and explore your future goals. Additionally, reach out to your fellow friends/family members with and without disabilities to help them, as much as possible, to explore their career options.
- If you are on disability benefits or are applying for them, follow all the rules. Fill out all necessary paper work accurately and thoroughly. Provide all necessary documentation. Submit all paper work, whether for a new application or a renewal application, in a timely manner. Do as much as you can online as well. This information, just mentioned for applying for disability benefits, is true if applying for anything—public assistance, college scholarship, driver's license, public transportation services, or disability Identification cards/car/van decals, and anything requiring appropriate paper work with proper documentation.
- When you have issues where editing a Word document in SharePoint, try the following: Go into SharePoint and your Phone Directory, as an

example of a document. Where you hear JAWS say “DAAS Phone Directory”, (or whatever your document is named), then, tab once and arrow down once to hear “Edit document graphic. Next, shift-enter twice quickly; or, if the button is a mouseover, press the JAWS key (insert on number pad)-CTRL-Enter together to move forward. Then, use the command control-left mouse key at the Edit in Word Option, where JAWS, then says, “Mouse Click” when keystroke was performed once. The document opens for you to edit. These steps were tested a few times to be sure the accessibility approach for document editing truly worked, at least for this author at time of writing this manual. Furthermore, these just mentioned steps are less risky than rerouting cursors and then having to guess where you are to get to “Edit Server Document button on SharePoint.” If, such steps just mentioned fail, however, you may have to resort to the routing cursors, and/or contacting the web programmer to redesign the application for more guaranteed results. This is because applications can change and a resolution for today may need to be changed for tomorrow.

- On your job, make notes for copying documents, as every copier is different. Labeled the main parts of the copier, using special labeling paper.
- Share special resources, American Printing House for the Blind (APH), with your supervisor in case special supplies were needed.
- If you are asked to work on a mail-out and the envelopes do not have an adhesive strip, use tape to seal the envelope. To assist you, the person with visual disability with this task, it might be helpful to seal the envelope in sections; thus, seal the left section of the flap with a medium strip of tape; then, seal the right half of envelope the same way. Be sure to smooth the tape down good to prevent easy unsealing in the sending process. Envelopes will be face-up with the flap iat the top farthest from you.—toward a wall for instance.
- Stack multi-copied documents in a cross looking style on desk so you will know when each set ends. (Then, you would place individual copies of work in folders).
- Use paper clips and or clamps to group different sets of labels together. (Groups of return labels for the same company held together with a metal clamp, while groups of all the recipient addressees grouped using a large paper clip) This made it possible to do massive mailings.
- In situations where you are asked to send so many brochures or books to this group and so many to that group, make Braille/large print labels and clip them using clip binders to the set of or portions of envelope sets. This is because a stack of 100 envelopes, with stack of five books per envelope, would have to be sub divided first; then, put Braille/large print label on smaller subset of envelopes, as indicated previously. As you complete a section or subsection of envelopes, place the special section Braille/large print label aside for future use. For example, if you have two different sets of envelopes to do, (a large set of 5 brochures, and a smaller

- set of 1 brochure per envelope), place label on a subsection of the large 5 set after pulling a book and envelope to be mailed; finish that set and place label on second set; then, put aside when done with all subsets. For the smaller set, complete the set and place label aside. For such a project, keep other indicated sets separated—set of five brochures on desk by printer and smaller set to be completed by the telephone; thus, not running the risk of set mixing.
- If needing to assist with a newsletter mailing, do the following: Letters are placed on desk whereby label is at top back side of newsletter booklet and two sticky tabs are placed on top and at right near bottom staple. Envelopes then stacked like files in cabinet whereby staple side on left and label is facing away from you. The mailing label is originally placed on back side of envelope whereby bottom of letter is nearest to you for placing label.
 - Know the rules and to whom, at the Social Security Administration (SSA), you can address necessary questions regarding SSDI/SSI issues while working. The personnel office, where you are employed, may require you to write a letter/memo explaining why you need to freeze, decrease, or accept your salary for purposes of SSDI/SSI.
 - If you and your supervisor are working on a project that is web based and your JAWS speech package is not showing you certain aspects of the page, try tethering the JAWS to pc cursors and/or routing the JAWS to pc cursors, then arrowing down and see if you can't read the needed text. If you can, use the right arrow to find the choice needed and reroute the cursors then hit the left mouse button to take you where you want to go. When tethering the cursors, make sure when done to untether the cursors. Use for tethering/untethering cursors the following: CTL plus Insert plus Minus on Num pad). Just like in documents, web pages might also need refreshing to make your speech package behave right—so do Insert plus Esc. If you still need accessibility help because form or web site is just not user friendly, let your supervisor know so this issue can be taken up the proper chain of command at work, or contact a technical computer specialist of your own at home to assist you. In doing so, you may find a great JAWS scripting tool that is if using JAWS for your speech package, is the Hot Spot Clicker program. This program and a guide for using it can be found at <http://www.hotspotclicker.org>.
 - If you find, when updating your speech package, that certain aspects of documents do not work as they once did, keep your current version of your speech package installed for the areas that do work. However, also try reinstalling the former version of your speech package and create a different hotkey for the older version. When needing to access the problematic documents and one version of speech package gives you problems, close newer version and open older version with your different hotkey. Only have one version of your speech package open at a time, and only have one version automatically start when your computer is restarted.

- Here are some more special JAWS Tips for working with Windows 2007 and Office 2010. First, if you notice that when you log in that JAWS shuts off, do the following: Go into Basics Menu choose for JAWS to Automatically start, Start JAWS Automatic....; press spacebar and choose the options dealing with log on and log All users” by checking the respective boxes; then hit okay. Second, where things are located is a little different. You will want to explore the new menus, both for Windows 2007 and for Office 2010 or for any future versions of both the Microsoft operating system and the office suite. If you have spreadsheets or documents, created in earlier versions of Microsoft Office, be aware that when you open these documents, you won’t be able to maneuver them. This is until you route JAWS to pc cursor first. Then, you will need to use your CTRL-right arrow keys and listen for JAWS to say something about a document coming from the Internet and the document being protected. You will need to keep going until you hear JAWS say “Enable”. You will, then, reroute cursor and hit your left mouse button and save change. Now your documents are accessible and useable again.
- Work with your supervisor to create necessary forms to do your job independently --PR (purchase Requisition) form and/or an I&R (Information Referral) form. (Before these were created, they either were not done via the computer or were not done with accessibility for screen reading software in mind).
- If you had to create a new form in word and base it on the former form, like an I&R form, maybe do the following: Type the main information you wanted and allow a space after the colon to insert Edit Boxes, drop down boxes (where information you plug in will now go), or check edit boxes. You would have to decide the length of each field--unlimited or a specific number. When protected JAWS would need to tell you where you are when you tab--DOB, for instance where to plug in the Date of Birth.) It would be good to have sighted assistance on this--preferably you (person needing form) and the computer tech person and/or someone in your agency experienced with forms to assist in creating your job form. The reasoning for the possible new creation is each new version of Word adds support for new features, and drops support for old features replaced by updated features. To even try editing the older document (the sample I&R form done in 2003), you would have to rename it to end in .docx to support the new developer features. Also, the check boxes and form fields in that older document were not truly interactive; they were really holdovers from the very first implementation of Word. In the newer versions you can insert ActiveX controls which are truly interactive. In the properties field of each control, you can specify the text that appears beside it, what happens when it is clicked on, what state is in by default (checked or not checked) etc. On form fields you can specify what default text appears, such as "click here to edit" or whatever. These controls are off of the developer menu under Controls. See the following link to further assist <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/create-forms-that->
- Create memos and letters and sent these per supervisor approval in various jobs held.

- When needing to print an item, like a Leave Balance Worksheet, do the following to use less paper: Go to your Page Setup menu, and choose landscape and print at 80% instead of the default of 100% and portrait. Other workbooks/worksheets, though, may require different specifications—monthly phone log prints on 4 pages, because there is so much data that is needed; cramming everything on one page will not make good reading to the sighted person. Thus, you will need to use, for the Monthly Phone Log at least, a landscape page and print to 52%. If creating a phone tracking form when you need backup assistance, try these specifications of selecting your print area of cells with data, center vertically and left horizontally. Consider your data and use good row, column and cell height and width. Finally, print at 100% and in landscape. When sighted assistance is given you on a particular worksheet, write down the specs so you can attempt the process next time. Never be afraid to get sighted help from someone you trust and who understands your disability issues—whether the person assisting you is in or outside the work setting. If a document is very confidential in nature, see if you can come up with a similar document in your home files, if you must go outside the workplace and utilize your support system to get sighted assistance on an issue. A sighted person would need to give you some guidance on the printing of workbooks/worksheets, as some aspects of print quality are visual in nature.
- When you need to sign a form, like a time sheet, on a specific line, you the person with visual disability can do this by first getting assistance in creating a template that covers the entire page except where the signature line goes. The sighted person will need to use some carbon paper and trace the pattern of the time sheet or whatever the form needing templated is. Then, the hole where signature goes will need to be cut out. The template itself can be made using Braille paper or poster type board.
- Save blank copies of Label sheets to insure right label size used the right one for the right labeling job. (From these, make labels for various companies we send mail to). As a part of this, seek assistance from a co-worker or supervisor in understanding how regular paper and labels come out of a printer. Make notes on these things. Then, after doing a label for a company for mailing, make a note for your records as to the next label you will use when reinserting label sheet into the printer.
- In completing mailing assignments, where you must use a stamp device, (like address/day stamp), and the person using this has a visual disability, you could use your cardboard template for label placement and stamp above where template is. You could also try just placing stamp device on envelope where stamping is needed. A sighted co-worker will need to let you know if the stamp device runs out of ink, where they want stamping to occur, watch for ink smearing, and assist you with refilling stamp—thus insuring blank envelope does not leave the office. Put a piece of masking

- tape on the front side of labeler, (facing you), and this will let you know you have the address printing in the right direction.
- Some people with visual limitation utilize a signature stamp for signing their name on documents. These stamps can be found at office supply stores. A signature is written on paper then scanned and the image is placed in the stamping device. The device is then inked and cap placed on device until ready to use.
 - Copiers with touch screens have LCD screens—thus, you cannot put labels on the screen itself. Microwaves, on the other hand, have a numeric keypad with indentations on the panel where the buttons are located. If your job requires you to make copies, you will have to have sighted assistance with this, or your agency will have to purchase a copier more user friendly to the person with visual limitation. In many instances, though, you can talk with your supervisor about taking on a co-worker's task in exchange for them assisting you—thus softening the hardship of the person with visual impairment being unable to use the touch screen copier and the other co-worker having to take on part of another person's job.
 - In dealing with training classes where you will be learning a software program, see if you can get into one that is tailored for a visually impaired user—that is if you are a person with a visual disability. Classes where a person with visual impairment attends that is not using a computer to learn software can be accommodated for by allowing the person to get materials ahead of time or making the materials accessible so the person with visual disability can actively participate in class discussion. An example of such a class would be a business communication/filing/writing course.
 - Seek insight from other agencies that work with people that have a disability when you need assistance on ways you could better be independent on a job and/or to assist you in assisting your supervisor in dealing with an issue—(purchasing of equipment for instance).

Conclusion

Author: Virginia E. (Ginger) Robertson, with acknowledgements to others in my networking circle.

To conclude the workplace/daily life manual, it's important to remember that we all are unique, were not raised the same, have differing perspectives to bring to the employment and life table, and can all be a success by persevering. Creating a support network is a wonderful way to help you understand each other, be open-minded, and further your career aspirations by dealing with life's ups and downs. We all are human and do not cope with issues in the same way, thus the importance of seeking help through various treatments and therapies. You have to know and understand your problems and want and need help before it can happen; thus, a new beginning of harmoniousness for all personally and professionally. This author has found that if the five core need areas of Physiological (body maintenance), Safety (deal with shelter), Belonging (our nature with others—kindness), Esteem (Higher position in group with respect from others and power), and Self-Actualization (becoming all we're capable of achieving) are met, there can be a balanced life. Note that our Spiritual needs are apart of this to and must be met. This information, just mentioned, is a part of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and was taken from <http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/maslow.htm>. You might want to spend some time now, upon reading this manual, reflecting on your life, who is in and played a major role in molding your life, and examining your future career/retirement goals. This author knows she is certainly not perfect and has burned bridges along the way. However, she hopes to be like the parable of the Prodigal Son, found in the Bible in the Gospel of Luke, and be welcomed back with open arms, while continuing to enrich and grow in her life's experiences. The author, like we all are, a continuing work in progress with ups and downs along the life journey.

Finally, I would like to end with a nice set of rules that would make your higher power, whomever that is, proud. Following this is a wonderful article about facing challenge and persevering through the roller coaster of life's ups and downs. This first article was shared with me by a dear Christian friend at church recently. It fits quite well into the scope of this life/workplace manual. It is my wish these thoughts can help us all...

36 Ways to a Simple, Happy, Lifestyle: Thoughts for Ponder/Use Daily
An Angel says, 'Never borrow from the future. If you worry about what may happen tomorrow and it doesn't happen, you have worried in vain. Even if it does happen, you have to worry twice.'

- 1. Pray**
- 2. Go to bed on time.**
- 3. Get up on time so you can start the day unrushed.**
- 4. Say No to projects that won't fit into your time schedule or that will compromise your mental health.**
- 5. Delegate tasks to capable others.**

6. Simplify and unclutter your life.
7. Less is more. (Although one is often not enough, two are often too many.)
8. Allow extra time to do things and to get to places.
9. Pace yourself. Spread out big changes and difficult projects over time; don't lump the hard things all together.
10. Take one day at a time.
11. Separate worries from concerns. If a situation is a concern, find out what God would have you do and let go of the anxiety. If you can't do anything about a situation, forget it.
12. Live within your budget; don't use credit cards for ordinary purchases.
13. Have backups; an extra car key in your wallet, an extra house key buried in the garden, extra stamps, etc.
14. K.M.S. (Keep Mouth Shut). This single piece of advice can prevent an enormous amount of trouble.
15. Do something for the Kid in You every day.
16. Carry a spiritually enlightening book with you to read while waiting in line.
17. Get enough rest.
18. Eat right.
19. Get organized so everything has its place.
20. Listen to a tape while driving that can help improve your quality of life.
21. Write down thoughts and inspirations.
22. Every day, find time to be alone.
23. Having problems? Talk to God on the spot. Try to nip small problems in the bud. Don't wait until it's time to go to bed to try and pray.
24. Make friends with Godly people.
25. Keep a folder of favorite scriptures on hand.
26. Remember that the shortest bridge between despair and hope is often a good 'Thank you GOD.'
27. Laugh.
28. Laugh some more!
29. Take your work seriously, but not yourself at all.
30. Develop a forgiving attitude (most people are doing the best they can).
31. Be kind to unkind people (they probably need it the most).
32. Sit on your ego.
33. Talk less; listen more.
34. Slow down.
35. Remind yourself that you are not the general manager of the universe.
36. Every night before bed, think of one thing you're grateful for that you've never been grateful for before. **GOD HAS A WAY OF TURNING THINGS AROUND FOR YOU.**

The following is taken from

http://www.everydayhealth.com/health-report/new-year-guide/how-to-be-a-better-you.aspx?xid=salesnl_6768_20130208. It sums up a lot of what this

manual has to say about all of life's good and most challenging issues we all face.)

How to Be a Better U

Chances are your New Year's resolutions include a variety of self-improvement goals. The beauty of aiming to be a better you is that you can positively affect the people around you, too.

By Madeline Vann, MPH

Medically reviewed by Cynthia Haines, MD

New Year's is a time when many people think about what they want to do differently in their lives, with goals for self-improvement that go beyond losing weight or getting to the gym more often. "This is actually a good time to reflect on ways to live our lives more fully and positively," says therapist Glenda Brooks, LCSW, clinical social worker at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Your reflections might lead you to conclude that you want to be a better person overall or, more specifically, a better friend, a better employee, or a better neighbor.

How to Be a Better Friend and Relative

Many people start off the New Year wanting to make getting closer to friends and family a priority says Mack T. Ruffin IV, MD, MPH, the Max and Buena Lichter Research Professor of Family Medicine and associate chair for research programs at the University of Michigan Health System in Ann Arbor. The challenge of this excellent goal is identifying action steps to get you there. Try these:

- Turn off the TV. "Are you coming home, sitting down in front of the TV for hours, and then getting on your computer?" asks Dr. Ruffin. You can share these activities with family, of course, but they also have the potential to prevent real connection. Try activities that foster engagement and discussion, instead, like cooking dinner together or discussing current events.
- Be grateful. "Practice gratitude for your blessings and look for ways to help those who are having a harder time than you are," advises Brooks. Even simple acts like sending a note of gratitude (yes, even a text or e-mail) to someone you care about can help build your own happiness and make you feel more connected.
- Let go of regret. Whether you're holding onto something you did or someone else did, now's the time to let it go. "Forgiving not only ourselves, but the people around us allows us to have healthier relationships. When you hold onto grudges and you can't get past the hurt, you end up making the relationship worse," says Brett Blumenthal, author of *A Whole New You: Six Steps to Ignite Change for Your Best Life*. If you need help figuring out how to let go and whether it's a good idea to rebuild a relationship, consider talking to a therapist or counselor.
- Take time to connect. It's easy to take key relationships for granted when life gets hectic. Make this the year that you put down your chore list and

pick up your phone to schedule a coffee or lunch with that friend or relative you've been meaning to call for longer than you would like to admit.

How to Be a Better Team Player at Work and Improve Your Career

If you've been treading water at work, take time to review where you stand in your career. There are some important factors that help people feel more satisfied on the job, including optimism, work drive, and feeling that you have control over what you do and its impact, according to research in the journal *Work*. Here are ideas for improving your situation at work:

- Work on a positive attitude. The way we talk about work isn't always positive (are you guilty of having "a case of the Monday's" or calling it "the grind"?). Make sure your contribution is valuable and that you recognize that when you discuss your work with colleagues. You'll experience a renewed sense of being part of a team.**
- Seek out more autonomy. One of the toughest situations is feeling that you have no control over your time or assignments. Talk to your supervisor about ways to get more control over the work that you do, possibly by recommending or volunteering for projects that get you excited about the work.**
- Ask for training. A lot of workplaces offer training or educational benefits that enable you to get ahead; ask your supervisor or human resources if such opportunities are available to you in the areas you'd like to improve.**
- Be upbeat at the water cooler. When you share recent accomplishments and offer an ear to a colleague trying to resolve a work-related issue, it's helpful to everyone and it makes you look like and feel like a team player. What's harmful to you and the work environment is personal or unkind gossip — the more you engage in it the worse you'll feel.**

How to Be a Better Member of Your Community

According to research done in the department of psychology at the University of California, Riverside, people who volunteer their time to help others are generally happier. There are many positives that come from getting involved in a cause you're passionate about, says financial adviser Ivan Illan, CSF, founder and managing partner of Aligned Wealth Preservation & Insurance Group at MassMutual Financial Group in New York City and Los Angeles. Illan assists clients in making financially smart charitable plans and is also personally active in causes that help the mentally ill and the homeless. He acknowledges that often it takes time and commitment to the cause of your choice before you start seeing change: "You can do something for years and years, then finally, there's a breakthrough and the right connections are made," says Illan. And when it's something meaningful to you, that reward is priceless.

If you haven't reached out to help in your local community before and aren't sure where to start, go to places where you already have connections, such as a faith institution, your children's school, or your workplace, which might have volunteer opportunities, suggests Brooks. But, she adds, "Start simple. Taking on too much can be draining and can cause us to give up," she says.

The wonderful aspect of each of these "better you" self-improvement goals is that your actions will also benefit those around you. And that's something to be proud of.

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Being Content

Below is a great sermon from Pastor Wade Shownes. It was given at Highland Valley United Methodist Church (HVUMC) November 3 2013. Wade is and was a great Pastor. However, I felt the need to move on to a smaller church for various reasons. We all need change sometimes.

Hebrews 13:5-6 Cultivating Contentment

(Show iPhone) Did you know these things are technological traps? They are wonderful tools when you need them and you can do just about anything you need to do with them: you can make a list on the notepad, you can calendar events and connect to any other electronic calendars on any computer you may have, you can take a picture, you can email that picture to someone or send it as a text message, you can send a text message to someone, you can play a game or let your child or grandchild play a game to keep them occupied. There are so many things you can do with this device it's just amazing. And you can actually make a phone call with it too.

Now do you remember your first cell phone? Mine was a bag-phone that I kept in the car. All you could do was make a phone call. But then the small hand-held phones appeared – and I had to have one. Then flip phones came out – and I had to have one – and Debbie had to have one. It's been 17 years since that first bag phone was plugged into my car's lighter socket and I've been in the trap ever since. The newest, latest, greatest comes out and I gotta have it. I'm not content with the old – I gotta have that new one. I was so proud at one point

because I beat my son, Patrick, in getting the newest iPhone by two weeks. I just kept my mouth shut and when he said, "I got the new iPhone today!" I replied, "Yeah, I've had mine for a couple of weeks now!" He couldn't believe I got ahead of him in the tech world for just a moment.

This, by the way is not the latest iPhone. I've got at least another year on this one. I waited to buy this one until my iPhone 4 was on its last leg. But I'm sure I'll be getting the next new one when the service contract is up on this one.

Isn't that the way it is with a lot of things. We have something that is perfectly good. It's still serviceable and working fine, but a newer model came out – new and improved – and we gotta have it. Cars change their appearance or new models come out and we gotta have them. A new fashion trend pops up and we gotta have it. Your best friend starts to build a new house and you look around at yours and think, "What a dump." You gotta have a new one. And on and on it goes. Remember sometime back, I said we were drowning in a sea of stuff?

Then we come to Jesus, who reminds us that life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. Jesus said this in response to the man who asked Jesus to make the man's brother divide the family inheritance. This prompted Jesus to tell the parable of the rich man who had an extraordinarily good crop. The man tore down his old barns and built new bigger ones, quite proud of his new wealth. But then the man was told that his life would end that night and the question was asked, who then will own what you have, and he was told to store up treasure that would make him rich toward God.

But our culture shouts that it's not true, these words of Jesus. As I said last week, our culture urges to spend more and accumulate more, so despite the fact that we say we believe Jesus' words, we still find ourselves devoting a great deal of our time, talents, and resources to the acquisition of more stuff. We say that our lives do not consist in the abundance of our possessions, but we live as if they do.

Have you ever heard of Restless Leg Syndrome? Back in the late '90's, I was urged to have a sleep study done because I wasn't able to stay awake

during the day. If I sat down, I'd go to sleep. When I was driving, I would struggle to stay away. There's no telling how many miles I have driven while at least my mind was asleep. So I made an appointment at St. Vincent's sleep lab. I showed up at the appointed time and they told me to get ready for bed and come back to the room. I did and they proceeded to wire me up. Leads running from my head, leads running from my chest – it was strange to say the least. After they got all that hooked up they told me it was time to go to sleep. What they didn't understand is I didn't have my pillow – I don't go anywhere without my pillow. I didn't have my fan – I sleep with a fan year round. I usually read for a while before I go to sleep and they wouldn't let me do that. They just said go to sleep. I was surprised that I was able to close my eyes, but somehow I managed. I'm usually up a couple of times during the night, so they had to unhook me to go down the hall. Finally morning arrived and I was anxious to hear the results of my strange night with people monitoring me on computers all night.

They told me that I was quite busy at night and proceeded to tell me how many times I had awakened and moved around. No wonder I couldn't stay awake during the day. Then they told me I had Restless Leg Syndrome. I had never heard of this because at that time it was not so widely discussed. They told me that my legs crawled and contracted and twitched, which caused me to wake up many times during the night. Debbie had already told me that many times. So I asked, "What do I do?" They answered, "There is medication but we don't like to prescribe it, so just have to live with it."

There have been many articles written and lots of suggestions made since then, but I just live with the situation. And so here I am at 60 years of age with legs that could go dancing by themselves.

Restless Leg Syndrome is a medical condition but there is a spiritual condition we might call Restless Heart Syndrome. Its primary symptom is discontent. We find that we are never satisfied with anything. The moment we acquire something, we scarcely take time to enjoy it before we want something else. We are continually discontent.

Now there is a certain discontent that God intends for us to have. God actually wired our hearts so that they would be discontent with certain things, causing us to seek the only One who can fully satisfy us. We are meant to yearn to know God more, to cultivate a deeper prayer life, to pursue justice and holiness with increasing commitment, to love others more, and to grow in grace and character and wisdom with each passing day.

The problem is that those things we should be content with are the very things we find ourselves hopelessly discontented with. For example, we find ourselves discontented with our stuff, our jobs, our churches, our children, and our spouses. God must look down on us and feel the way we feel when we give someone we really care for a special gift and he or she asks for the gift receipt. It's as if we're saying to God, "I don't like what you have given me, God; and I want to trade it in and get something better than what you gave me."

The Apostle Paul is an excellent example of contentment. In his letter to the Philippians, he wrote of the "secret" to his contentment. Like Paul, we can learn to be content in whatever circumstances we may find ourselves. Four keys, which include the "secret" Paul referred to in his letter, can help us to do that.

The first key is four words – words that we should say when we find ourselves discontented with something or someone. Those four words are: "It could be worse." This is essentially the practice of looking on the bright side or finding the silver lining. It is recognizing that no matter what we may not like about a thing or person or circumstance, we can always find something good to focus on if only we will choose to do so. It could be worse.

The second key is a question: "For How Long Will This Make Me Happy?" So often we buy something, thinking it will make us happy, only to find that the happiness lasts about as long as it takes to open the box. There is a moment of satisfaction when we make the purchase, but the item does not continue to bring satisfaction over a period of time. Many of the things we buy are simply not worth the expense. This is why it is a good idea to try before you buy. The third key is to develop a grateful heart. Gratitude is essential if we are to be content. The Apostle Paul said that we are to "give thanks in all circumstances." A

grateful heart recognizes that all of life is a gift. Contentment comes when we spend more time giving thanks for what we have than thinking about what's missing or wrong in our lives.

The fourth key is asking yourself, "Where does my soul find true satisfaction?" The world answers this question by telling us that we find satisfaction in ease and luxury and comfort and money. The Bible, however, answers the question very differently. From Genesis to Revelation, it tells us that we find our satisfaction in God alone. Saint Augustine wrote in the fourth century, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you." Jesus said the two most important things we must do are to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind," and to "love your neighbor as yourself." If we keep our focus on these two things, we will find satisfaction for our souls and lasting contentment.

In addition to cultivating contentment in our lives, we need to cultivate simplicity. Contentment and simplicity go hand in hand.

To cultivate simplicity we must set a goal of reducing our consumption, and live below our means. Before making a purchase, we should ask ourselves, "Do I really need this and, why do I want it?" These questions will help you to determine the true motivation of your desired purchase. Is it a need, a self-esteem issue, or something else? You may find yourself wrestling with your true motive and decide that your reason for purchasing the item is not a good one.

Then we should ask ourselves, "Are there major changes that would allow me to simplify my life?" Consider selling a car and buying one you pay for in full, downsizing your home, or getting rid of a club membership you don't use. Ask yourself questions related to your home, possessions, job, and activities to identify some significant changes that will simplify your life. Remember, if you cannot do all the things God is calling you to do and you're unable to find joy in your life, perhaps it's time to simplify in some major ways.

Simplifying your life requires the practice of self-control. Solomon wrote, "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a person who lacks self-control." When a city's walls are broken through, the enemy can march right in and

destroy it. There is no longer any protection. Likewise, self-control is a wall around your heart and life that protects you from yourself, from temptation, and from sins that are deadly and ultimately can destroy you. Self-control comes down to making a choice between satisfying an impulse to gain instant gratification and choosing not to act upon the opportunity for some higher cause or greater gratification later. Self-control is about forgoing instant gratification by stopping to think about the answers to three questions: What are the long-term consequences of this action? Is there a higher good or a better outcome if I used this resource of time, money, or energy in another way? Will this action honor God?"

A few years ago, the founder of Domino's Pizza, Thomas Monaghan, experienced a spiritual re-awakening when he realized that all his wealth was not making him happy. Monaghan began selling off his stuff: three houses designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Detroit Tigers baseball team, and thirty vintage automobiles – one of which was a \$13 million Bugatti. He was quoted as saying, "None of the things I've bought – and I mean none of them – has ever really made me happy."

What did Thomas Monaghan find that meant more to him than money? He found the "life that is truly life." Once he learned not to put his hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put his hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment, then he was on the path to true contentment.

Next Sunday is Consecration Sunday. We will be filling out Estimate of Giving Cards in worship. I hope as you prayerfully consider what you will give to the ministries and work of Highland Valley that you will consider what defines your life and how you might need to reorder your life to be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. Contentment is a great gift that God will give us when our lives are lived in the way God wants us to live.

Reference Notes

Author: Virginia E. (Ginger) Robertson, with acknowledgements to others in my networking circle.

Here are five books, one mentioned earlier, to use as references in further

assisting you in life: **THE MINDFULNESS AND ACCEPTANCE WORKBOOK FOR ANXIETY: A GUIDE TO BREAKING FREE FROM ANXIETY, PHOBIAS, AND WORRY USING ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY** by John P. Forsyth and George H. Eifert”, “The Four Agreements: A practical Guide to Personal Freedom (A Toltec Wisdom Book)” By Don Miguel Ruiz, “Boundaries: When to Say YES, When to Say NO, To Take Control of Your Life” by Dr. Henry Cloud, Dr. John Townsend, “The Seven Minute Difference” by Allyson Lewis, and “Difficult Conversations” by Douglas Stone. (These books are available in various formats). Also, seek assistance from family, friends, church, online, books, and through therapy. Along with these books, some good health and wellness websites are The National Institutes of Health (NIH) at <http://www.nih.gov>, Difference Between Similar Terms and Objects at <http://www.differencebetween.net>, Web MD at <http://www.webmd.com>, Changing Minds and Persuasion at <http://changingminds.org/> Help Guide at <http://www.helpguide.org>.

Here is further information for some very useful writing resources...

Unless writing for a Journal type piece, write in a third-person for professional purpose. Also, follow proper grammar and the following tips:

When you are announcing a list is to follow you would use a colon instead of 3 periods. When you are stating something or making a point, use an italic font.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Use-Italics>

Also, look at the main site of <http://www.wikihow.com>.

The following are other good sites to consider. If you have trouble linking to the site, copy and paste the particular link in your web browser to open. The links follow:

<http://www.klariti.com/>

<http://explicit.businesswriting.com/>

<http://www.simonstapleton.com/wordpress/>

1. http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Formal_Paragraph_Writing

[The Healing Letters Project - The Project](http://thehealinglettersproject.com/the-project.htm)

thehealinglettersproject.com/the-project.htm

○ [Cached](#)

The Healing Letters Project is about writing “**letters of reconciliation**” to your family, friends or loved ones. The purpose of the letters is to make amends with the ...

<http://writing2.richmond.edu/WRITING/wweb/paragrph.html>

<http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/writing/1a.html>

http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/writer_resources/grammar_handboo

<http://www.iei.uiuc.edu/structure/Structure1/tenses.html>

<http://www.nwe.ufl.edu/~epittman/f051102/diagans.pdf>

<http://ualr.edu/owl/misspelledwords.htm>

<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learn/LearningConnection/?PATH=/Resources/la/Shorter+sentences+for+better+writing/&default=Welcome.htm>

<http://lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/students/fwalters/para.html>

http://www.techscribe.co.uk/ta/how_to_write_instructions.htm

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/cheklist.htm>
<http://www.rscclcc.tn.us/owl&writingcenter/OWL/LittleWords.html>
<http://www.engl.niu.edu/comskills/instructors/lessons/grammar.html>
<http://www.engl.niu.edu/sourcebook/II-1-13.html>
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/languagearts/secondary/rightdirection3/015step?&print=true>
<http://mumpsimus.blogspot.com/2005/06/in-praise-of-long-sentences.html>
http://www.methodist.edu/english/dd_mm.htm
http://www.mce.k12tn.net/reading39/paragraph_unit/lesson6.htm
<http://www.learningbooks.net/wholeword.html>
<http://www.learnenglish.de/grammar/spellingtext.htm>
<http://www.langevin.com/road/checklists.html>
http://www.criticalreading.com/grammar_reading_writing.htm
http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=1101
http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson1101/AnalyzingInstructions.pdf -
http://www.gavilan.edu/tutor/documents/FrequentlyMisusedWords_000.pdf
http://coachingwizardry.typepad.com/confident_writing/2007/05/whats_the_point.html
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/commas.htm>
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/runons.htm>
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/GRAMMAR/grammarlogs1/grammarlogs287.htm>
<http://www.businesswriting.com/cgi-bin/commonmisspelled.cgi>
<http://grammartips.homestead.com/caps.html>
<http://grammartips.homestead.com/betty.html>
http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar_quiz/grammar_mastery.asp
<http://www.grammarbook.com>
<http://cac.ophony.org/2008/06/27/a-very-long-sentence/>
<http://www.azed.us/>
<http://www.myenglishteacher.net/sentencefragments.html>
http://www2.actden.com/Writ_den/tips/sentence/tense.htm
<http://712educators.about.com/cs/writingessays/a/paragraphs.htm>
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>
<http://www.libraryonline.com/default.asp?plD=49>
<http://aliscot.com/bigdog> -- Big Dog's Grammar: A bare bones guide to English
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/> -- lots of good help on this site!
<http://grammartips.homestead.com/caps.html> -- specific questions answered
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> -- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
www.alexcommunications.com/style_guide.htm -- writing guides
www.correctpunctuation.co.uk/ -- Help with correct punctuation
www.criticalreading.com -- "Reading and Writing Ideas As Well As Words"
www.dailygrammar.com/index.shtml -- good archive of grammar lessons
www.dictionary.com -- a multi-source dictionary search service
www.eatshootsandleaves.com - has a punctuation game with explanations
www.getitwriteonline.com/archive/index.htm -- good archive of writing tips

www.grammarbook.com/ -- The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation

Answers - excellent!

www.grammarerrors.com/ -- a guide to the most common errors in the English language

www.grammar-monster.com/ -- good for help with punctuation and parts of speech

www.lousywriter.com -- a free online resource to improve your writing skills

www.webgrammar.com/ -- help with writing or research

www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html -- Common Errors in English

www.yourdictionary.com -- "The Most Comprehensive Online Resource for Your Dictionary Needs"

[How to Write out Numbers | eHow.com](#)

Fractions are **spelled out** in writing. "One-half of the people stayed." Compound numbers are **hyphenated**. Twenty-two people went to the game. ... Practice writing a **100** placement number. Once you can say the number placement, ...

www.ehow.com ›

[Numerical References](#)

If a number greater than **100** appears at the beginning of a sentence, ... **Hyphens** are used when the numbers are **spelled out** to begin a sentence. ...

www.rules.utah.gov/agencyresources/manual.../ch01s04.html -

[Rules for Writing Numbers](#)

Spell out single-digit whole **numbers**. Use numerals for **numbers** greater than nine. ... If you choose to **spell out numbers** because one of the **numbers** is a single digit, ... or broadcast without the prior **written** permission of the author. ...

www.grammarbook.com/numbers/numbers.asp -

[English numerals - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Note: When writing a cheque (or check), the **number 100** is always **written** "one hundred". **Numbers** at the beginning of a sentence **should** also be **written** out. ... In literature, larger **numbers** might be **spelled out**. On the other hand, ...

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_numerals –

Grant Writing Sources:

1. [How to Write an RFP, FREE Template and Sample](#)

rfptemplates.technologyevaluation.com/how-to-write-an-rfp.html

You +1'd this publicly. [Undo](#)

Aug 28, 2012 – Learn tips on how to write a professional RFP. FREE Template and Sample of **how to write an rfp**.

1. [How to Write a RFP | eHow.com](#)

www.ehow.com › [Business](#)

You +1'd this publicly. [Undo](#)

How to Write a RFP. A **request for proposal**, also known as an **RFP**, is a document you create when you need to procure new goods or services for your business ...

1. [How to write a proposal - a step by step process](#)

www.how-to-write-proposals.com/

You +1'd this publicly. [Undo](#)

Learning **how to write a proposal** can be a simple step by step process. This website and the book **How to Write Proposals, Sales Letters & Reports** are designed ...

- [How to Write a Grant Proposal - Cover Letter to Budget nonprofit.about.com/.../foundationfundinggrants/.../grantpr...](#)

- You +1'd this publicly. [Undo](#)
[Grant Writing for Government Agencies vs. Nonprofits - For ...www.forgrantwritersonly.com/forum/.../grant-writing-for-governme...Cached](#)

Mar 16, 2010 – Numerous **grant**-making foundations require that grantees have 501c3 status among their other guidelines, but **government agencies** seeking ...

1. [Government Grant Writing for Beginners ...www.multi](#)

[culturaladvantage.com > ... > Grants Reading RoomCached - Similar](#)

Advice for **writing government grants** for beginners. ... Here again money can be taken from corporations, **government agencies**, foundations and can also be

...

1. [Grant Writing Courses with Grant Writing USA](#)

[grantwritingusa.com/faq.htmlCached - Similar](#)

Grant Writing USA delivers two day, high performance **grant writing** and ...

That said, if you work for a **government agency** and choose to pay by check and you ...

1. [How to Hire a Grant Writer ...www.agwa.us/hireagrantwriterCached - Similar](#)

Researching **grant** opportunities for your organization; **Writing** proposals to foundations or applications to **government agencies**; Reviewing a proposal or ... and [Grant-Writing-Proposals.com | Learn how to write and improve Grant ...](#)

[grant-writing-proposals.com/Cached](#)

We are the one-stop website about grant and proposal writing for **grant writing** professionals in all fields—education, health care, **government**, public **services**,

...

- [Foundation Center: Research Grant Programs & Fundraising](#)

[foundationcenter.org/](#)

- [Cached](#)

- [Similar](#)

PRODUCTS · **Foundation Directory Online** · **Foundation Grants** to Individuals Online · **Philanthropy In/Sight** · **Marketplace** · **HELP** · **Online Librarian** · **Customer ...**

[Foundation Directory Online - Foundation Finder - 990 Finder - Training](#)

Grammar Issues Related to Filler Words:

- [Toastmasters International - Cutting Out Filler Words](#)

[www.toastmasters.org > Home > Past Issues > 2011 > February](#)

- [Cached](#)

- [Similar](#)

Her performance was almost universally disparaged, in part because her speech was cluttered with **filler words** – “ums,” “ahs” and “you knows.” One listener ...

- [How to Stop Saying Um, Uh, and Other Filler Words - Six Minutes](#)
- sixminutes.dlugan.com/stop-um-uh-filler-words/

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

by Andrew Dlugan - in 105 Google+ circles

Sep 23, 2012 - **Filler words** — including um and uh — are never written into a speech, and add ... Do you have a strategy that helps to omit **filler words**?

- [Filler words: How to get rid of them - Speaking about Presenting](#)

www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/delivery/obama-eliminate-ums/

- [Similar](#)
- [Speech disfluency - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speech_disfluency

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

These include false starts, i.e. **words** and sentences that are cut off ... usually expressed as pauses such as **uh**, **like** and er, but also extending to repairs ("He ... According to one commentator, Americans use pauses such as "**um**" or "**uh**," the ...

- [What to call words like uh, um, uh-huh, hmm - WordReference Forums](#)

forum.wordreference.com ›

- [Slang - How to Speak and Write Correctly - SEPO](#)

www.sepo.net › [How to Speak and Write Correctly](#)

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

Essentials of English Grammar with tips on how **to write** better English. ... in some cases, **slang** has become so useful that it has far outstripped classic **speech** and ... It may be correct, according to the **rules** of grammar, but it is not universal; it is We should avoid **the use of slang** as much as possible, even when it serves to ...

- [Grammar Girl : Writing with Slang :: Quick and Dirty Tips™](#)

www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/writing-with-slang

- [Cached](#)

Jun 27, 2008 - Get Grammar Girl's take on **writing** with **slang**. ... **Slang** is made of informal words and phrases that originate in **speech**, and often includes substitutions for formal ... and modern dentistry has wiped out **the use of** “head

rails” for teeth (3). ... Now that you understand **slang**, remember the quick and dirty **rule** ...

- [Internet slang - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_slang

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

The primary motivation behind **using** a **slang** unique to the Internet is to ease communication. ... **the use of slang** in traditional face-to-face **speech** or **written** language, **slang** on ... Grammatical punctuation **rules** are also relaxed on the Internet.

- [Using Slang – When Is It Appropriate? - English Fun Zone](#)

www.englishfunzone.com/using-slang

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

Slang is by definition, **the use of** informal words and expressions in **speech** or **writing** ... **Slang** does not necessarily follow **rules** of grammar and syntax and may use ... **Slang** can indicate a certain familiarity between the **speaker/writer** and their ...

- [Texting Slang - English Grammar Rules & Usage - YourDictionary](#)

grammar.yourdictionary.com/slang/texting-slang.html

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

This texting **slang** dictionary can help you quickly find all the most common ... Texting involves **using** a phone, or other device, to send a text message to another mobile device. ... if you don't know them all you might think someone is **speaking** a foreign language! W/B **Write** back; WB Welcome back; WBU What about you?

- [Speech Lesson 5 – Speech Problem of Buzzwords and Slang](#)

sbinfoCanada.about.com > ... > [Speak For Success Course](#)

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

The fifth **speech** lesson of the **Speak** For Success course deals with the **speech** ... Another problem with **using slang** to attempt to communicate is that many of us ... and **using** a set of initials rather than **writing** or saying several words saves effort. ... To make it easier on yourself, set up and follow a **rule** never to use acronyms ...

Resources on Dialect:

- [Dialect - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialect

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

Jump to **Dialect or language** - [edit]. There is no universally accepted criterion for distinguishing a **language** from a **dialect**. A number of rough ...

List of dialects of the English - Norwegian dialects - Danish language - Accent

- [List of dialects of the English language - Wikipedia, the free ...](#)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dialects_of_the_English_language

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

- [List of dialects of the English language - Wikipedia, the free ...](#)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dialects_of_the_English_language

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

This is a list of dialects of the English language. Dialects are linguistic varieties ...

Yinglish - Chicano English - Inland Northern American - Pacific Northwest English

- [Digital Dialects language learning games](#)

www.digitaldialects.com/

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

Language learning games - free to use and fun online games for learning 60 **languages**, including Chinese, English/ESL French, German, Japanese, Spanish ...

French language - Spanish language - German Language - Japanese Language

- [Language and Linguistics: Dialects - National Science Foundation](#)

www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/linguistics/dialects.jsp

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

What They Are. Different **language** communities have certain ways of talking that set them apart from others. Those differences may be thought of as **dialects** ...

- [HLW: Introduction: Dialects and Languages - Indiana University](#)

www.indiana.edu/~hlw/Introduction/dialects.html

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

How **Language** Works: the Cognitive Science of Linguistics. Edition 3.0. An introductory course in linguistics. Freely available for downloading and mirroring.

- [What is a dialect? - English Dialects - e Learn English Language](#)

www.elearnenglishlanguage.com/dialects/dialects.html

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

by Laura K. Lawless - in 1,082 Google+ circles

Speakers of any given **language** sometimes get offended when their particular **language** style is called a **dialect**. To avoid any confusion, I would therefore like to ...

- [dialect - definition of dialect by the Free Online Dictionary ...](#)

www.thefreedictionary.com/dialect

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

Here are some good sources for minute taking/transcribing...

Transcription Guidelines

www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/L560/Transcription_guidelines_FAAV.pdf

○ [Cached](#)

Annotators should take care to transcribe exactly ... should transcribe what is heard: they are, not and so on. (The speaker takes an audible breath.) {CG}.

1. Dictation and Transcription Tips | Type-thing Services

www.type-thing.com/tips.html

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

Why not **use** computer dictation, speech-to-text programs? ... Two or more, allow some people to be heard well while others are barely **audible** or not **audible** at all. Typically it can **take** from two to six times the length of the audio to **transcribe**.

1. Transcription Guide When you transcribe a tape-recorded interview ...

www.ucaonline.org/docs/TranscriptionGuide.pdf

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

Feb 26, 2003 - researchers may **use** your work over many years. ... **Transcribe** all of the words spoken in the order in which they were said, ... **audible** sound.

How to Transcribe Notes | eHow

www.ehow.com › [Careers & Work](#)

- [Cached](#)
- [Similar](#)

How to **Transcribe Notes**. Some professions, including medical transcription, secretarial work, and court or news reporting, require transcription skills and fast ...

- CWMainstyleguide - CastingWords

<http://turkerdocs.castingwords.com/documentation/styleguide/Mainstyleguide.html>

- [Cached](#)

Main style guide for **transcribing** and editing: the basics ... c **Use** only square **brackets**, [], around tags, never **parentheses**, (), curly **brackets**, {}, angle **brackets**, <> ...

How To Write Effective Meeting Minutes | Wild Apricot Membership ...

<http://www.wildapricot.com/membership-articles/how-to-write-effective-meeting-minutes>

TAKING MINUTES OF MEETINGS (CREATING SUCCESS) by Joanna Gutman, and THE COMPLETE IDIOTS GUIDE TO ROBERTS RULES by Nancy Sylvester

Here are some good medical references and information dealing with privacy and security, as these relate to protection of sensitive information...

National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) and Their Affiliates, Inc. at <http://www.nbcc.org/>, Spiritual Guidance at

<http://intuition2vishnu.homestead.com/FindingSpiritualGuidance.html>,

Association of Clergy International (AOCI) at <http://aoci.info/>, and the American Medical Association at <http://www.ama-assn.org>.

Everyday Health at http://www.everydayhealth.com/health-report/new-year-guide/how-to-be-a-better-you.aspx?xid=salesnl_6768_20130208 and

<http://www.everydayhealth.com>

Health insurance Portability and Accounting Act (HIPA) – from Health and Human Services

<http://www.hhs.gov/>

Health Information Technology for the Economic and Health (HITECH) Act
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HITECH_ACT

Protected Health Information (PHI) – from Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

<http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit/toolbox/HealthITAdoptiontoolbox/PrivacyandSecurity/underhipaa.html>

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personally_identifiable_information

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

<http://www.nist.gov/>

Social Engineering

http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/S/social_engineering.html

Here are some very useful websites to get you started with career and financial planning...

Careers.com at <http://www.careers.com>, JobSearchInfo at

<http://www.jobsearchinfo.com>, Financial Planning 101 at

<http://www.learnfinancialplanning.com>, and Institute for Financial literacy at <http://www.financiallit.org>.

Here are some articles dealing with personality/managerial styles.....

https://personality-insights.com/DISC_overview.pdf

and [HTTP://LEADERSINHEELS.COM/CAREER/6-MANAGEMENT-STYLES-AND-WHEN-BEST-TO-USE-THEM-THE-LEADERS-TOOL-KIT/.](http://LEADERSINHEELS.COM/CAREER/6-MANAGEMENT-STYLES-AND-WHEN-BEST-TO-USE-THEM-THE-LEADERS-TOOL-KIT/))

Here are a few links to get you started in dealing with blindness related work issues....

American Council of the Blind (ACB) at <http://www.acb.org>, National Federation of the Blind (NFB) at <http://www.nfb.org>, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) at <http://www.fta.dot.gov>, Social Security Administration (SSA) at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov>, American Printing House for the Blind (APH) at <http://www.aph.org>, Freedom Scientific (FS) at <http://www.freedom scientific.com>, National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) at <http://www.ndrn.org>, Independent Living Aids (ILA) at <http://www.independentliving.com>, Cardinal Sound and Communications Inc. (special earphones for those using speech packages) at <http://www.cardinalproaudio.com>, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at <http://www.ada.gov>, Vision aware at <http://www.visionaware.org>, and Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at <http://www.askjan.org>.

While the above information is useful, it is by no means an exhaustive list. Hopefully, it can at least get you started in dealing with writing issues.

All of the above references and all information in this manual are only the beginning of making yourself whole. Please do pursue, not only the information provided here, but all other useful resources—whether these are in books, videos, online, talking and fellowship with others, various forms of constructive therapy, and seminars. Just like my website of Ginger's Resources (a group of resources compiled to help us all in life), at <http://www.gingerresources.com>, this manual, to, tries to be as unbiased as possible and still give a sort of "one-stop shopping approach" for addressing employment and life issues.