

## Achieving Balance in Life and Work: The Human Condition

### The human condition: avoiding guilt

The greatest inhibitor of performance, enjoyment, and freedom that I know of is guilt. Guilt is virtually entirely self-imposed, in that despite the actions and words of others, only you can invoke your own guilt.

### The best ways to avoid and/or confront guilt:

1. Don't insist on perfection, but simply do your best to succeed against clearly-defined goals. I once heard a professional speaker say that "fine isn't good enough, I have to be great." That's not a burden I want to carry.
2. Examine the "shoulds" we all carry around. Is it really a crime not to call your mother every week, to allow the kids to do their homework by themselves, and to forego contributing to the United Way Campaign because money is tight?
3. Find a reliable sounding board. Tell your spouse, friend, or significant other that you're beginning to feel guilty about something, and let them help you analyze it.
4. Separate your feelings from your actions. Acknowledge that you might be feeling guilty about something, but don't necessarily act on it. We tend to get into trouble when we act strictly on our emotions without allowing logic to creep in.
5. Get over it. Excuse yourself. Allow yourself the same grace you would allow someone else. If you broke a friend's favorite old record, apologize and offer to make amends. Search the Internet for a replacement or buy something equally sentimental. But don't beat yourself up. Accidents, poor judgment, and sloppiness happen. It won't be the last time. There's great drama on the television law shows when the jury is asked to read a verdict which is "guilty" or "innocent." You are your own jury. Cut a deal with the prosecutor before the jury reconvenes.

by Alan Weiss, Ph.D.

## What Sport Should Your Child Play?

Dr. Warren Scott, Chief of Sports Medicine with Kaiser Permanente in Santa Clara says, "Children should play when they want to. Sometimes parents say there's this sport and you have to play. What parents should do is ask kids if they want to play. Then let them choose."

Just because a child excels in individual sports doesn't mean she won't do well in team sports. Limiting a child's choice in his or her athletic interest is like saying because a child is good at art he or she won't do well in math. In fact that child might do very well. Boys and girls should have equal opportunities and be encouraged to try as many different sports as possible.

It's important to avoid advancing a child too quickly. In one recent study, 90 percent of the children said they would rather play on a losing team than sit on the bench of a winning one.

Most children don't need encouragement to be physically active because their interest in sports is a natural part of their development. Moving into team sports grows out of group play.

Parents need to be careful about pushing their children too hard. Some parents look at winning or losing as success or failure. Never encourage your child to believe that not win-

ning is failing. One key difference between pushing and encouraging is that it should not be your choice but your child's choice to play in the first place. Some children will never be interested in sports, however, and they need to know that the way they are is OK too.

Physical activity is something families can do together. All parents need to do is learn a few basic skills and work with their kids on having fun.

by Partners in Health/Kaiser Permanente





## Leprechauns and How To Find Them

The Leprechaun is an Irish fairy. Full grown leprechauns are reported to be about 2 feet tall. They will frequently be clothed in the garb of a shoemaker, with a cocked hat and a leather apron. Frequently scowling, leprechauns are said to resemble small, grumpy old men.

According to legend, leprechauns are unfriendly and live alone. They spend a great deal of their time making shoes. Most importantly, each and every leprechaun possesses a hidden pot of gold.

Treasure hunters should listen for the sound of a shoemaker's hammer, when looking for leprechauns. If caught, the leprechaun must reveal the whereabouts of his pot of gold. But be careful! Keep your eyes on the tricky leprechaun every second. He will try to trick you into looking away, and if you do...PooF! He vanishes and all hopes of finding the treasure are lost.

from Enigma Communications 2004

## Develop Your Compassion

Nothing helps us build our perspective more than developing compassion for others. Compassion is a sympathetic feeling. It involves the willingness to put yourself in someone's else's shoes, to take the focus off yourself and to imagine what it's like to be in someone else's predicament, and simultaneously, to feel love for that person. It's the recognition that other people's problems, their pain and frustrations, are every bit as real as our own--often far worse. In recognizing this fact and trying to offer some assistance, we open our own hearts and greatly enhance our sense of gratitude. Compassion is something you can develop with practice. It involves two things: intention and action. Intention simply means you remember to open your heart to others; you expand what and who matters, from yourself to other people. Action is simply the "what you do about it." You might donate a little money or time (or both) on a regular basis to a cause near to your heart. Or perhaps you'll offer a beautiful smile and genuine "hello" to the people you meet on the street. It's not so important what you do, just that you do something. As Mother Teresa reminds us, "We cannot do great things on this earth. We can only do small things with great love."

(Borrowed from "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff")

## Drug Abuse Prevention: Risk Factors and Protective Factors

### Risk Factors:

Risk factors increase an individual's risk of taking drugs. The World Drug Report lists various contributing risk factors:

- family risk factors (family disruption, criminality and drug abuse in the family, ineffective supervision)
- peer networks (friends and peers are important in providing opportunities for drug use and supporting this behavior)
- social factors (poor school attendance, poor school performance, early drop-out) environmental influences (availability of drugs, social rules, values and norms regarding tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use)
- Individual factors (low self-esteem, poor self-control, inadequate social coping skills, sensation seeking, depression, anxiety and stressful life events)

### Protective Factors:

Protective factors are those characteristic of individuals or their environment which reduce the likelihood of experimentation with drugs:

- family factors (bonding and positive relationships with at least one caregiver outside the immediate family, high and constant parental supervision)
- educational factors (high education aspirations, good teacher-student relationships)
- individual characteristics ( high self-esteem, low impulsivity, high degree of motivation)
- personal and social competence (feeling in control of one's life, optimism, willingness to seek support)

Source: UNDCP: *World Drug Report. 2000*

*Watch for future articles on how to develop protection skills for the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse.*

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