

THE



PEAK OF SUCCESS

NEWSLETTER

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“Mental Health is okay to say”

By Amy Remmele

January is traditionally a time for new beginnings. We all like to believe that we can leave behind bad habits and start new ones. Personally, I believe that it would be a great 2010 if we could leave behind the bad habit of attaching stigma to the words “mental health.” I had lunch with a group the other day and one of the women was talking about a type of work she did. She ended the title with “coaching,” explaining that she did not want to use the word “counseling” because people associated that word with problems. It stopped me in my tracks. What is wrong with having problems and seeking help for them?

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I have always found it funny that we spend so much time labeling things as “emotional intelligence” and “personal; growth” rather than as mental health. Every person and business that I know that is not meeting their goals has problems. Every family that is not happy or is not

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communicating has problems. In fact, everyone that I know has problems. It seems to me that the ones who succeed in solving their problems and moving on are the ones that admit to the problems and then seek the right kind of help. What happens if you have a frozen or clogged pipe and ignore it? Eventually, it backs up or bursts.

The first step to any problem solving is to admit that there is a problem. Many times this step is not addressed because the person or people involved do not believe that there is a solution. It is important to understand that solutions are not usually even thought of until after the “admission of the problem” stage. When you are walking on a path, you can only see so far ahead, especially if there are any hills. The walking forward to the next horizon is what gives you the view of the one after that. Fire never would have been tamed and put to use if someone hadn’t admitted that they were cold or that they did not like the dark. There was probably a gap between the time of acknowledging the problems of cold and dark and the time of harnessing fire. Yes, this gap can cause uncertainty; it is the time of the frightening “leap of faith.” But having the faith that the solution is there can be the difference between just sticking your head deeper into the sand and starting the search for and the “walk” toward a solution. And when you finally bring your head out of the

sand, the chances are much greater that the problem will have grown than that it will have disappeared.

The second step to problem solving is to decide whether you can tackle the problem yourself or whether you need help. You may even need a bit of input to make this decision. You may want to consult someone who knows you well and who genuinely cares about you. Go back to that pipe problem. If you are handy, you may want to go ahead and fix it. But for many of us, this situation would be a no brainer in the other direction, and we would call for help quickly. For some, it may be one of those times to contemplate and assess – “Looks like a small problem. I will try it,” or “I can see that this is out of my league so I will call for help.” Be cautious when assessing. Sometimes problems that are self-tackled but should have been professional-tackled just get messier.

Once you admit that you need help, call the professional. There is no shame in needing help. And there is definitely no shame in having problems in the emotional or mental health realm. It seems to the contrary that those who should be embarrassed are the ones who perpetually ignore their problems until they get out of hand. Most people have dental check-ups twice a year. Why not get a “mental check-up” every once in a while? The world would be a better place if mental health was as popular as dental health.

PEAK TIP

When you think that you need help, you probably do. We all need support at times. Go ahead and reach out.

At times we encounter problems that really do not seem to have a solution. It is just as important to seek help at these times as it is when your intention is to work on a solution. Having a trained ear, objectivity and professional advice can be crucial to

weathering storms that are bound to come. Battening down our hatches and keeping our “wits” can be trying and support may be the difference between just surviving and thriving. It is better to talk and get empathy and compassion than to suffer alone. Research is clear in showing that even in natural disasters where there is irreversible damage and no immediate solution, people who have or obtain adequate support develop far fewer physical, emotional and post-traumatic issues than those who “tough it out” alone.

So, repeat after me: “It is more than okay to view mental health the same way we view physical health. When there is an issue, I will be willing to talk to my support system and to reach out to professionals. This way, I can be proactive in my mental health. I can be proud of taking action to achieve and maintain mental health.”

One further idea: The greatest gift you can give the people you love is your own mental health.

Amy Remmele is a personal and professional consultant, working with people who want to overcome the roadblocks to success. She has her formal education and degree in Psychology. Amy authored the book, Chief Life Officer: Your Life Is The Most Important Business You'll Ever Own and co-authored Re-Phrase It: Adding Empathy and Emotional Intelligence to Your Everyday Life, and the relationship workbook, Empathy, Communication and Conflict Resolution Home Study Program with her husband and business partner, Dr. Kent Bath. Amy and Kent provide assessments, seminars, counseling and consultation to individuals and businesses. Amy can be reached at 716-626-5977 or visiting her website at www.peakofsuccess.com.

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