What it takes to be a workplace winner

When you hear the words, “teamwork,” “coach” and “goals,” what comes to mind? Sports, right? But it’s also possible they remind you of things you hear at work. Using sport-related lingo at work can sometimes make it feel like you’re on a team where the only objective is to win. But just like in any game, having a good strategy for an ultimate win can be the first step to achieving your goals. And in today’s world, where the rules of the game keep changing, having a winning mentality from the get-go can make things easier for you. Here are a few pointers to help you improve your game.

Think of yourself as a business. Know your strengths and how to use them to fulfill a need at work. Use your entrepreneurial spirit to become a team player who seeks opportunities. Think about your salary expectations and where you see yourself in five years. Work on developing the skills that will help you get there.

Take stock of your skills and accomplishments. Be humble about your experience, but proud of the skills you develop and that make you a great asset for your team. Know your weaknesses and make a plan to turn them into growth opportunities. The skills you build today can help you succeed tomorrow.

Do your job well. Practice can help you become an expert at what you do. That experience can help when it’s time for your next job. Know your goals and be proactive about achieving them. Start by asking your boss and co-workers for feedback so you know what you’re doing well and what you need to work on.

Grow your network. Having a strong team around can help you. Get to know the people around you at work. Look for a mentor who can teach you skills and ways to handle work politics. Try joining a workgroup or volunteer opportunity with other members of your team. Skills are important, but getting to know more people in your field will give you more chances to grow and work more comfortably with your team.

Practice good sportsmanship. When the buzzer goes off during the last second of a game, it’s the whole team who wins or loses the game. That’s also true at work; it takes a team to complete a project. So be fair to your teammates by showing your support and helping them when they need it. Gossip and rumors may put you in awkward situations at work so avoid it. If you build a reputation as a team player, that reputation is likely to follow you wherever you go.

Get ready for the unknown. There is no way to know what tomorrow might bring. But there are things you can do to be ready for different situations at work. One of those things is to stay positive and open to change. Learn to see change as your chance to grow new skills.

Own your professional choices. You are the only one responsible for the career moves you make. Take ownership of your actions so you can feel comfortable with your decisions.

Enjoying what you do can be the key to a more fulfilling career. You already spend most of your weekdays at work. So think about the things that make you happy when you’re there.

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Don't let the blues hang around: depression in older adults

Feeling a little sad every now and then is a part of life. But when the things that used to make you smile don't give you the joy they used to, you might be feeling more than a little blue. Clinical depression is an illness that can change the way you think and feel. And as you get older, learning to see the signs of depression can help you deal with it before it turns into something more serious. If you're feeling tired most of the time, get angry without a reason or little things start to bother you, it might be a good idea to talk to a health professional about depression. Here are some basic things you should know about depression.

What causes depression?
It's different for everyone and can happen when you least expect it. Things like a death in the family, stress or a serious illness are common triggers for the illness. It can also happen to people who already live with other conditions such as cancer, diabetes or heart disease.

Spotting the signs
Aging affects people differently. And dealing with things like retirement, being sick or feeling alone are moments in life that can lead to depression. Here's a list of the possible signs of depression. Talk to your doctor if, for more than two weeks, you or a loved one is:
- Having ongoing sadness and anxiety.
- Tired all the time and lacking energy.
- Losing interest in everyday activities.
- Not able to sleep or sleeping too much.
- Eating more or less than usual.
- Crying too often.
- Feeling aches and pains that don't go away when treated.
- Having a hard time focusing or remembering.
- Feeling guilty and hopeless.
- Mad a lot or in a bad temper.
- Thinking about death or suicide.

If you are a family member, friend or caretaker of an older person, watch for clues. Depression can hide behind a smiling face. Don't ignore the warning signs. If left untreated, serious depression can lead to suicide. Listen carefully if someone close to you talks about feeling like there's no one who cares about him or her. That could be a person reaching out for help. If you feel like it's an emergency situation, visit your nearest emergency department or call 9-1-1.

Getting help
Depression, like any illness, needs to be treated early before it leads to something more serious. Some people are not comfortable talking about the illness or may see it as a sign of weakness. Someone who's depressed can't just "snap out of it." It needs to be taken seriously and treated by a health care professional. A doctor can help you figure out if there's a medical reason for your depression or another reason, such as it being a side effect of a medicine you take. Here's a great starting spot:

1. Talk to your family doctor about getting a wellness exam.
2. After you get your results, be open to your doctor's suggestions, especially if your doctor recommends seeing a social worker, mental health counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist.
3. Don't let the cost get in the way of your good health. There are many options to get the care you need. Find out if your benefits cover your treatment. Ask if your local community health center offers a low-cost option.
4. Find the doctor who "gets you." Not all family doctors are trained to know about aging and depression. If you feel like you need a second opinion, get one. Doctors trained to treat depression in older people are called geriatric psychiatrists.
5. Talk to your loved ones about depression. Having open and honest conversations about how you feel can help you find a helping hand in those who know you best. Ask for help when you need it.
Treating depression

Depression affects people in different ways. So treatment has to be different for every person. There are many therapies and drugs out there to treat depression. And your doctor can help you find the right one for you. Your doctor may suggest you think about:

- Support groups to help you develop coping skills or give you the social support you need when dealing with a sudden change in your life.
- Talk therapies that create a safe space for you to express your feelings.
- Positive reinforcement activities to help you see the bright side of things.
- Ways to deal with sad things in your life that make you feel depressed.
- Things you can do to improve relationships with others.
- Medicines to treat your depression — some drugs can help improve mood, sleep, appetite and concentration.

A little help from your family and friends

Having the support of your loved ones during depression can make a big difference during treatment. Reach out to those who care about you. If there’s a time when you need help, this is it. And if there’s someone close to you who asks for your help, be there for him or her, too. There are many things you can do, like helping make appointments, going to see the doctor or joining a support group to learn new ways to help your loved one.

Preventing depression

There’s no way of knowing when you’ll experience depression, but you can recognize the signs and deal with them as soon as they happen:

- Get ready for major changes in your life, like retirement or moving away from your home.
- Stay close to the people who matter in your life.
- Reach out to your loved ones if you feel sad or alone.
- Find something you like to do and make it a regular hobby.
- Exercise and keep an active lifestyle.
- Keep a healthy and balanced diet.

When you’re not going home for the holidays

The holiday season is a time full of joy and happiness, but sometimes, money, work or other commitments can keep you from going home to visit family or friends you haven’t seen all year. If you’re feeling sad, stressed or alone, take some time to understand those feelings and emotions so they don’t bring you down during the holidays. Here are some ideas to celebrate in different ways:

- Come up with a brand new “holiday” to celebrate with your loved ones.
- Try to have things in your house that remind you of home.
- What about joining the party through video chat? Try to use technology and social media to stay connected with those back home.
- Make plans with friends in the area who may be going through the same thing.
- Do an activity you always wanted to do, but didn’t have the time for during the year.
- Check out local events.
- Find out how you can volunteer and help out those less fortunate.

One of the best things about the holiday season is that it happens every year! So don’t feel too sad if you’ve missed it this year. Do something new and start planning for next year.

Be an active family

It's never too early to develop a healthy habit. Being active from a young age can help kids stay at a healthy weight, build their muscles, have strong bones and lower their risk of developing a chronic disease when they get older. Try these fitness-friendly ideas:

- Limit TV and screen time to less than two hours a day.
- Make a rule at home so that there's a physical activity after 60 minutes of down time.
- Don’t put a TV in your child’s bedroom. Unplug technology in bedrooms or make them technology-free rooms.
- Be involved in your kid’s child care environment or school so you know what physical activities they do throughout the day and reinforce those at home.

You are your child’s best role model. Lead by example:

Four things that can help you find out your kid’s activity level

If you can usually answer yes to these statements, your child is probably getting enough active play.

1. My child plays outside several times a day or inside where he or she is free to move. ___Yes ___No
2. I make sure my child’s TV and screen time is less than two hours a day. ___Yes ___No
3. I make sure my child is actively moving for at least 60 minutes a day. ___Yes ___No
4. When actively playing, my child breathes quickly or sweats. ___Yes ___No

If you answer no, today is the perfect time to start. Try to include active play into your kid’s daily routine. Give your child a chance to find out what his or her favorite activity is and teach him or her how to be responsible about health habits.


Indoor play

- Act out a story.
- Turn up the music and dance.
- Walk inside a shopping mall.
- Play games, such as duck-duck-goose, hide and seek, follow the leader, Simon says.

Outdoor play

- Take a family walk after dinner.
- Play catch.
- Take a nature hike.
- Play games in the garden or park.
- Kick a ball.