



### Keeping the Love in Your Life

It's only human to sometimes take your partner for granted, but you can increase your closeness by taking purposeful action. Start by evaluating your current inaction, especially missed opportunities for supplying your partner with the most important relationship enhancers: thoughtfulness, appreciation, respect, supportiveness, and affirmation (this means reassurance and validation). You may be a champ at one or two but haven't considered all five. Together they add up to a "Five Star" relationship! What do each of these things mean for your relationship? Only you know for sure. Devise strategies and tactics to support these facets and you'll elevate your relationship, possibly overnight. You're only human, so keep the list handy as a memory jogger.

### Gender Equity in Math Capability

Bury the myth. Girls around the world are not worse at math than boys, even though boys may be more confident in their math abilities. Girls from countries where gender equity is more prevalent are more likely to perform better at mathematics, according to a new analysis of international research. The analysis of data represented nearly 500,000 students in 69 countries. The critical factors that will support more girls excelling in math are female role models excelling in math, positive messages about capability, perceived expectations, and the right educational tools. Source: American Psychological Association, Jan. 5, 2010.

### Detachment Cure for Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is a growing problem, with technology being the worst culprit. "Just stop it" may not be that easy. You may benefit from learning the art of "detachment." Detachment does not mean indifference or laziness. Detachment is refusal to respond to an external stimulus (ringing phone or text buzz) and "letting go" in favor of remaining calm, in control, and safe. Proclaim your independence from the "Oh my, I must take this call!" experience. Learn to detach.

### Don't Underestimate Sleep Disorders

It's frustrating dozing off at work. Could you be suffering from a sleep disorder? The most common disorders are sleep apnea; narcolepsy; and restless leg syndrome, or RLS. Sleep problems take a big hit on health and workplace productivity. Inadequate sleep has been linked to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and depression. Sleep problems are also associated with accidents, absenteeism, lost time on the job, leaving work early to sleep, oversleeping on break and missing work, and tardiness. If you're falling asleep at work, stop pinching yourself awake. Talk to your doctor to find out about sleep study/assessment programs (often part of university medical research programs) and other appropriate treatment. Find more information about sleep disorders at <https://concern-eap.personaladvantage.com/content?cat=10000006&sub=10000247> and <https://concern-eap.personaladvantage.com/content?cat=10000006&sub=10001077&cnt=10022746>

### Are You Enabling an Alcoholic?

There is no need to feel embarrassed or shameful about enabling an alcoholic. It is both the result of and a natural adaptation to the alcoholic's behavior in your relationship. Enabling helps you cope (go along) with the disease rather than confront it. Many experts would argue that enabling it is almost inescapable because of the human need to avoid conflict or risk distress in the relationship. Enabling does have a cost, however—it makes it easier for an alcoholic to get sicker. That's because the alcoholic is able to avoid or evade awareness of a problem and consequences that result directly or indirectly from the drinking behavior. Knowing this, you may eventually decide to intervene or motivate

your loved one or friend to accept help. Where do you start? You are more likely to succeed if you first take the golden step of understanding and intervening with your enabling pattern. Change that and you will begin to heal yourself from the effects of the alcoholic relationship, and you will change the nature of the relationship dramatically and powerfully. CONCERN counseling is available to help you and your loved one. And many people use self-help groups to tackle such a challenge. Al-Anon is the oldest form of such help. For links to Al-Anon and other available resources, go to the CONCERN website at <https://concern-eap.personaladvantage.com/alcohol>.

### **Avoid Mistakes at the Gym**

If you're using gym equipment to help create a "new you" in 2010, follow a few simple rules to keep yourself safe. Start with an OK from your doctor, and get expert advice on using gym equipment. The American Council on Exercise says the following mistakes are commonly made by new gym-goers: 1) not warming up prior to training (muscles need time to adjust to demands before you start); 2) lifting too much weight (gradual and progressive resistance is much better); 3) not cooling down after exercise (this lowers your heart rate and boosts flexibility); 4) not doing enough stretching after an exercise (this can help you prevent injuries); and 5) consuming energy bars and sports drinks during moderate workouts (unless you are working out for two hours a day or more, you're piling on calories you don't need). Source: American Council on Exercise.

### **Care and Feeding of Workplace Relationships**

Exercising your ability to influence others; feeling in control of your work; and getting opportunities to demonstrate your skills, especially to top management, make work satisfying. Earning trust in the organization is a door through which you must pass to maximize these experiences. Knowing how to manage work relationships is key. All good relationships are created and managed. This doesn't mean control and manipulation. It means awareness and an understanding of what you must do to improve them and help them thrive. Think of it as like maintaining a garden—a little fertilizing, weeding, and waiting. If you find yourself wondering why your job isn't more exciting or why others get the opportunities that seem to elude you, the answer may lie in how you manage relationships. Consider talking to your employee assistance representative about the care and feeding of your workplace relationships.

### **Don't Forget About MRSA**

Swine flu virus has made headlines, but other contagious and dangerous bugs exist. One bacteria getting increasing attention is Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA. MRSA (staph) infections include painful boils and can be fatal. Only one or two antibiotics can stop such an infection. Staph has long been a problem for hospitals and nursing facilities, but it has been detected more frequently in communities. Staph germs are common. Oddly, some people can be carriers without becoming infected, but a person with a weakened immune system is very vulnerable to it. Body contact with an infected person or sharing towels and athletic equipment can also dramatically increase risk of infection. Wash your hands, wipe down equipment, and read more about MRSA to protect yourself and family members. Source: [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com).

**Remember: employees and eligible dependents can request CONCERN counseling and work/life services by phoning our 800 number, answered live 24/7. You can request CONCERN: EAP services on-line at:**

<https://www.concern-eap.com/Employees/bRequestforServicesb/tabid/87/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

**Here are some recent quotes from employees who used CONCERN: EAP explaining what they liked best about the services:**

*"It was very easy to start right away. This is a great program to offer to employees."*

*"CONCERN is very helpful. It's nice to have a place to call for help about a lot of topics."*

*"It was great for my daughter to hear input from the counselor (someone other than Mom!)."*

**CONCERN: EAP**  
**800-344-4222**  
**[www.concern-eap.com](http://www.concern-eap.com)**