



## How to Be an “Outside the Box” Problem Solver

A solution to a seemingly impossible problem at work may appear by thinking “outside the box.” This is a learned skill anyone can master, not a mysterious attribute of brilliant minds and cutting-edge companies. To be an outside-the-box problem solver, master these three principles. Principle #1: Free the Brain. This means stop thinking about the problem and get some breathing room by participating in a completely unrelated activity—fishing, jogging, showering, or walking on the beach. This detachment frees your brain from the stress being created to find a solution. Principle #2: Eliminate Roadblocks. You won’t find solutions with inhibitions, your ego, close-mindedness, fears, and negativity getting in your way. Let loose, and give yourself permission to “get sloppy” and “get messy”—allow discovery to take place without restrictions and prohibitions. Principle #3: Be a “Resource and Inputs” Hound. Reading books, studying solutions to similar problems, thinking backward, drawing the problem on paper, and brainstorming with others—all these tactics supply you with informational “inputs” that can speed the way to your solution.

## Secrets to Gaining Influence at Work

You have an impressive résumé and tons of experience—why aren’t you being sought at work for your expertise? The answer is initiative. Initiative takers are seen as leaders, and your résumé is secondary to how you are perceived by your actions in the workplace.

Initiative takers naturally expand their own influence and value by being willing to take on new things. When they do this appropriately without elbowing or appearing overzealous, managers and peers seek them for their opinions and solutions. Speed your ascent to becoming the perceived “resident expert” by taking more initiative.

## Diabetes Tips for Life

Over 29 million Americans have diabetes, and eight million don’t know it. Just under half of these Americans are over age 65. And 80 million Americans have pre-diabetes and are at risk of becoming diabetic. Diabetes leads to chronic, debilitating health problems. If you’re at risk, learn more and start with a simple tip to help you lose weight: Drink a glass of water before each meal. It could help save your life by reducing your risk for diabetes. It has been proven in many studies that drinking water before each meal can help with weight loss. *Source: National Institutes of Health, National Diabetes Education Program.* *Source: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) (Search bar: “What we eat in America.”)*

## Depression in College: What Parents Should Know

Most young people heading off to college are eager to experience all that it offers, but some will also experience clinical depression, a treatable mental illness that affects over 10 million adults with about 9% being between the ages of 18 and 25. Spotting the disease early can make for more successful treatment. If you’re a parent, be aware of any family history of depression that increases the risk, but you should also guard against misconceptions about depression. Symptoms of loneliness, stress, being disorganized, disappointment with classes, or the breakup of a former high school romance are all stresses and cause sadness, but are not root contributors to major depression, which is more of a disease. To intervene sooner, be aware of any period of two weeks or longer during which there is either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in school, and undesirable changes in sleep patterns, eating, energy level, concentration, and self-image.

Mental health counseling is available on college campuses, and depression is a key complaint. Don't allow stigma to delay a referral to effective, professional help. Source: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov> [search: "college depression"].

## Coping with Loss in Divorce

If you are facing divorce, you'll experience a variety of emotions and stresses, but one of the most underestimated feelings is loss. Even amicable divorces can be affected by loss—loss of financial security, experiences and routines, possessions, and a shared vision of the future. Time with children and identity as a couple are also subject to loss. Loss is not just giving up something tangible like a house; it also encompasses things that are part of you and your daily experience. You may not give much attention to things like a routine, an expectation, or a pleasant view out a window, but all are at risk of loss. With a divorce, a lot of losses can hit you at once. With awareness, you can master challenges in your life, but remember that big changes often require investing time and attention to recovery, and divorce is one of these big changes. Get support or see a loss counselor, especially if you experience anger, anxiety, and fear as a result of loss.

## Caffeine Powder: FDA Says Stay Away!

The FDA is warning about powdered pure caffeine being marketed to consumers and recommends avoiding this product, which has led to at least one teenage death. Of particular concern is the fact that bags of caffeine powder are being sold on the Internet. A single teaspoon of pure caffeine equates to about 25 cups of coffee, and even very small amounts of the powder can cause accidental overdose or death. Parents should be aware that these products may be attractive to young people. Overdose is signified by rapid, erratic heartbeat, seizures, and possible death. Source: [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) [Search: caffeine powder].

## Subtler Signs of Teen Drug Use

Rolling papers, Visine®, and the smell of pot on clothes—they're signs of probable marijuana use, but subtler signs and symptoms also exist. These include increased willingness to do errands in the evening (as a reason to meet friends and smoke pot) and unqualified requests for more money/allowance, sudden allegiance to friends you don't know, and discarded seeds in pants pockets

or a trash can. The following behavioral symptoms may also point to depression, but also potential marijuana use: Sudden rejection of family activities once valued and enjoyed, having low energy, demonstrating apathy about poor grades in school, and experiencing loss of ambition, goals, or interests, often accompanied by isolation in the bedroom. Source: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/>.

## August Is National Immunization Month

We all need vaccinations or immunizations to help protect us from serious diseases. Immunizations are not just for children. There are many for adults and special ones for adolescents. Dozens of changes have been made in the last couple of decades in the recommended vaccines that people should get, so it can all be a bit confusing. Do you know what vaccines you need or which ones you're missing? The following link will lead you to immunization schedules for children, teens, and adults. Talk with your health professional if you have questions to make sure that everyone in your family gets the shots they need. Immunization Schedule and information link:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/>.

***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 work/life services on-line at: [Employee Request for Services](#)***

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

***"There was no lag time between my first call and my appointment with a therapist. Very prompt! I could tell their first priority was helping me, and nothing else."***

***"I have learned so much through one-on-one counseling services. Having other paths to consider has been the best aspect."***

***"Constructive real world advice on how to be an overall happier human being."***

**CONCERN: EAP**

**800-344-4222**

**[www.concern-eap.com](http://www.concern-eap.com)**