

A New Year, A Fresh Start!

The December newsletter focused on the troubling trend of workplace incivility. Many employees covered by the Employee Assistance Program acknowledged that this was a concern but asked, "What can I do to make my workplace a friendlier, more enjoyable environment?" Some answers may be found in a recent book entitled *The Rules of Life, Expanded Edition: A Personal Code for Living a Better, Happier, More Successful Life* (FT Press) (<http://www.ftpress.com/rules>)

Here are just a few of the suggestions offered by the author, Richard Templar:

Rule 44: Maintain Good Manners in All Things:

Many of us feel "entitled" to shout or complain when we feel offended by the actions of another, particularly in the workplace where teamwork is essential. But hostility invites hostility and we all might pause to consider the author's sage advice: "No matter how many interactions with people you have each day, don't let the manners slip. They cost nothing and yet can generate so much goodwill and make everyone's life that much more pleasant."

Rule 44 may be easier to adhere to if we remember Rule 3.

Rule 3: Accept What is Done is Done: Most of us have a long memory when a co-worker mistreats or embarrasses us. But dwelling on such unpleasant memories and refusing to let them go is "like some emotional acid making you ill, resentful and stuck." Better to put it behind us, learn from the experience and keep moving forward.

And mastering Rule 3 will help us abide by Rule 11.

Rule 11: Be the Last to Raise Your Voice: Some of us definitely have the "shout gene" and rarely miss an opportunity to get heard, get attention and make a point. But is this really the most effective way to change others? "Dysfunctional? Yes. Noisy? Yes. Helpful? Probably not."



As you may have noticed, many of the *Rules of Life* involve fundamentally changing the way we perceive others around us. For example, Rule 89.

Rule 89: It Doesn't Hurt to be Helpful: Even when we encounter a genuinely rude and obnoxious person (or co-worker), consider that "Perhaps no one has been kind to him today. Perhaps no one has been kind to him for a very long time." You can reverse his/her negative dynamic by displaying warmth, concern and friendliness.

And particularly in today's economy, Rule 99 takes on added meaning:

Rule 99: Be Good at Your Job: "Treat your job as important and do it to the very best of your ability" But also, "Enjoy what you do. Have a passion for your work. Have fun!"

ESI wishes you a peaceful and productive 2011. But should challenges or adversity come your way, remember that your EAP professionals are just a phone call away and are dedicated to helping you.