A re you a cooperative employee? It’s not a simple question. For example, are you able to hold back pointing out the flaw or spotting the shortcoming in a project or process and instead listen to others, join with the team, and play a crucial role in an activity at work? Right now may not be the best time to point out problems, but instead, wait for a more appropriate time. Can you check yourself, gauge the environment, see the larger purpose, and participate in an organizational effort where your work style matches the tempo of your team? If you are bright, keen on taking action, and a great organizer or leader, holding back may be difficult, but these skills in self-control are the sign of a mature employee. Skills at cooperation show others that you are also self-disciplined, empathic, self-aware, and patient. All these traits, which are linked to cooperation, help make being cooperative a highly valued soft skill for your career.

Still trying to get satisfaction with that consumer problem? Go straight to the top. The federal government keeps a list of consumer relations departments for American corporations—everything from AAMCO to Zenith. Find information at https://publications.usa.gov (Pub. 5131) Keep this web site address handy in case the product you buy fails to go “zip” when it moves or “pop” when it stops. See a ton of other help this guide offers.

Do you practice common courtesies with cubicle coworkers? Rules to consider: 1) Remember, you have neighbors. Be self-aware regarding speech topics, tone, and volume. 2) Cubicle workers often complain about disruptions. Minimize them by creating traditions that reinforce everyone’s role as a gatekeeper in maintaining an effective work environment. 3) Use staff meetings to discuss the cubicle environment and add to or amend your traditions. 4) Be sensitive to a coworker’s body language that may indicate annoyances, such as unannounced appearances at one’s cubicle to discuss issues. If in doubt, ask. Cubicle stress must be managed and has been depicted in comic strips and feature films. Ironically, the inventor of the cubicle, George Nelson, became its fiercest critic. Source: George Nelson: “The Design of Modern Design” (MIT Press).

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**Using Your Breath to Manage Stress**

Controlled deep breathing is standard in stress management training, and knowing why it works can have you doing it more often. One reason deep, slow breaths work so well is brain physiology. When you deep breathe, you use a different part of your brain to control your chest muscles instead of the part of your brain experiencing the "fight or flight" reaction to stress: the amygdala. Your awareness of what's going on with your body improves instantly. This calms you in addition to the stretching sensation in your muscles associated with the chest wall. The opposite state of stress is the relaxation response. This includes deep breathing, which is a direct intervention. This is what makes it more powerful than other relaxation methods that are often misperceived as effective, such as stress eating, smoking, plopping down in front of the TV, or drinking alcohol. Deep breathing is appropriate anytime, but especially when you notice that you are under stress. Monitor the frequency of your attempts at stress management breathing to increase the frequency of its use.

**Teen Cyberbullying Survey Insights**

A new study on teen bullying surveyed 5,600 children between the ages of 12 and 17 years old to address various forms of bullying and cyberbullying, "sexting," and dating violence. Thoughts of suicide, deviant behavior, resilience, and ability to cope were also examined. A few findings: Girls are more likely to be bullied online. Eighty-three percent of those bullied online are also likely to be bullied at school. Insight: Bullying at school is often not reported to parents. However, if you discover your child is bullied online, the chance that they are being bullied at school is very high. www.cyberbullying.org [search “2016 cyberbullying data”]

**"Stop the Bickering!"**

Bickering is the petty disputes you experience with another person, especially a loved one like a spouse, partner, or best friend. To bicker is human, but a frequent pattern that sabotages the pleasures of a relationship you both value needs a fix. Try this intervention: 1) Accept that quarreling is a problem and that you want to dramatically reduce it. (Agree to avoid bickering about who is more at fault.) 2) Participate in a 10-minute exercise together, listing as many adverse effects of bickering as possible. Include both visible effects, such as negative effects on children, and invisible effects, such as coping methods, negative self-talk, isolation, reduced intimacy, wasted time, withdrawal, recuperation time, resentment, even your reputation as the “Bickersons.” Write fast, and get it all down. 3) Practice with a behavioral change log. After the next bickering event, record the topic, how long it lasted, what you did well to end the bickering, what you can do better next time, and especially anything you learned or insights gained. After one week, share your experiences. Making major behavioral changes (new habits of communicating) will take four to six weeks. If things stay rocky, seek a counselor and bring your notes for a speedier counseling experience.

**Study: Ace a Test**

Need to recall information you studied to ace a test? A study conducted at Baylor University discovered that students who are given information and tell someone about it immediately recall the details better and longer—a strategy that could be a plus come test time. To use this technique effectively, study the material then immediately turn to another person and attempt to restate what you just read or learned. (Reading what you learned to another won’t do it.) Then study the material again. The discovery was identified in research conducted by Melanie Sekeres, Ph.D. Press Release: baylor.edu [Search: “ace a test”]