

WORKING LIFE

Shell Shock

You'd have to be nuts to work there.

By Haidee E. Allerton

True Tales From the Workplace

A worker in a Suffolk, Virginia peanut plant fell off a catwalk into tons of peanuts recently and lived to tell the tale. He was missing for an hour before other employees discovered he was buried under 12 feet of peanuts. Fortunately, the man had pulled a dust mask over his face. Otherwise, he could have easily Suffolk-ated!



Do You Have a True Tale From the Workplace?

Tell us actual stories that happen at your work, and we'll mention you as a contributor to Working Life (or grant you anonymity, if you prefer).

Just email Haidee Allerton at worklife@astd.org or write to me at *T+D*, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.

Fame can be yours!—or a place in the Working Life witness protection program.



Stay in School

(or become a news anchor)

- The typical American male with a bachelor's degree makes \$66,810.
- With only a high school diploma, \$30,414.

Exception: Peter Jennings, who did not graduate from college.

Cruel and Unusual Punishment

A woman was sentenced to do her own housework as punishment for keeping a teenager from Africa as an unpaid servant and nanny. The female prosecutor objected that the three years' probation of housework wasn't a sentence. "I have to do my own cleaning and take care of my kids," she said as she stormed out of the courtroom.

Ten Stress Busters

From *Self*:

1. Make your job work for you. Set aside time for socializing one to two times a week, and stick to those plans as you would a work project.
2. Do lunch. Your body will break down under pressure if you skip meals or don't have proper nutrition.
3. Take mini timeouts. Tension builds, so every hour or two relax for a few minutes by walking, chatting with a co-worker, or taking deep breaths.
4. Try a change of scenery. During your lunch break, visit a park, flower shop, or pet store.
5. Remind yourself of who you are outside of your job. Decorate your office with family photos, postcards, or souvenirs from your vacations.
6. Learn to say no. Don't take on more work than you can handle, set realistic deadlines, and don't answer emails or phone calls after 4:30 p.m.
7. Ask for help. Delegating will save you time and stress from overload. If you're heading up a project, outline people's responsibilities, set deadlines, and schedule periodic updates.
8. Work smarter, not harder. Streamline the tasks that stress you the most. As much as feasible, vow to leave the office every day by a certain time.
9. Make plans to leave work. Stop working 30 minutes before you leave the office, and use that time to organize your desk, go over what you accomplished that day, and create a to-do list for the next day.
10. Don't strive for perfection. Be willing to let a project go at some point. If it's 85 percent right, it may not be worth the time and effort to try to improve on that.

◀ Sources/Susie Mantell, stress relief expert; Priscilla Marotta, author of *Power & Wisdom: The New Path for Women*