

Working Life

A N E W D A W N I N G

What better way to start off the new year than with a collection of "Working Life" classics? We knew you'd agree. And remember: We said "dawning," not "yawning."

Workaholics

Head trip.... You can do it at your desk and feel better, and no one will be the wiser. We're talking about the joy touch. No, not that. This touch is an instant mini-trip to the middle of your brain.

The joy touch will relieve you of stress and will give you a sense of well-being, according to Pete Sanders. Sanders is the founder of Free Soul, a new-age organization in Sedona, Arizona, that experiments in relaxation techniques.

Sanders's technique is based on physiology: The joy center (well, that part isn't so scientific) is located in the septum pellucidum, a nerve mass above the brain's limbic system. The septum whatchamacallit is referred to by neurologists as one of the brain's pleasure centers. Long-distance running and drugs such as cocaine kick the septum pellucidum into euphoric high gear.

So, here's how you do the joy touch: Imagine that your index finger is extending gently through your forehead into the cranial gray matter (ick, yuk) to pull the neurological trigger of the joy center. Slowly squeeze the trigger. That's it. Don't forget the part about imagining that you're doing it. Of course, it takes practice to get it right.

Aaah.

From the Washington Post.

Work/Health Alert

Room With a View.... If you can't get the hang of the joy touch, insist on having an office with a window.



Timothy Cook

Employees who can occasionally look out onto the external environs are happier, healthier, and more productive, according to studies at the University of Michigan.

Gazing upon the landscape reduces directed-attention fatigue caused by too much focus on work. DAF sufferers feel frustrated and impatient.

If you don't have your own window, take breaks outside or borrow someone else's view.

From Via Fedex.

Factoids of the Month

The most popular cuisines at meetings are Italian and Mexican, according to *Meeting News*. As for booze, women prefer vodka; men like scotch.

True Tales From the Workplace

\$15,630. Fifteen thousand, six-hundred, and thirty smackeroos.

That's the tab on an expense voucher that was turned in by a marketing manager from Washington,

*The virtual reality of
brain massage.*

Working Life

D.C., on business in New Orleans, according to the (New Orleans) *Times-Picayune*.

It seems that our big spender Mike picked up the check after entertaining business clients at a club on Bourbon Street in the French Quarter. The auditors at Mike's company were not amused—especially because the receipts showed that food wasn't the main course. Mike shelled out about \$20 each for more than 700 table dances performed by "Patty," "Gina," "Laurie," and "Shonna."

A Washington newspaper that first reported the story calculated that the bill would have required that the women dance to 60 songs an hour, at three minutes a song, for 12 hours.

By the way, Mike had to pay the piper. He had to cough up the \$15,630 himself. Then he was fired.

He Said. She Said

Men and women communicate differently. Duh.

OK, so Deborah Tannen (the author of *You Just Don't Understand*) has proof in the form of research. Her new book *Talking From 9 to 5* examines men's and women's different conversational styles in the workplace.

For example, women tend to be self-effacing and play down their authority in order to put everyone in a conversation on an equal footing—a style that can be misinterpreted by men as weak and indecisive.

In her research, Tannen spoke with many women who said they've often suggested ideas at meetings, only to be ignored. Then a man would make the same suggestion and everyone would think it was a good idea.

Tannen also found that if a man and a woman talk for exactly the same amount of time in a meeting, people tend to think that the woman talked too much.

Ironically, although women's styles of management can be quite effective in getting work done, they also tend to be less effective in getting credit given where it's due.

Tannen recommends that women managers study the styles of co-workers to learn whether others are likely to respond better to direct orders or indirect approaches.

Best of the Best

Here are some workaday tips from experts, reported in *Via Fedex*.

▶ **Best way to create a positive attitude.** Remember that work is your second priority; your family comes first. *John Tesh, host of "Entertainment Tonight."*

▶ **Best cleaning tip for ballpoint-ink stains.** Put a clean cloth under the stain, blot with rubbing alcohol, and wash as usual later. *Heloise, author of All-New Hints From Heloise.*

▶ **Best way to run an office.** Hire smart, capable people whom you trust. Let them know they have your trust. Delegate, delegate, delegate. *Congresswoman Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky.*

FOR SOME REASON, A DICTATORIAL MANAGEMENT STYLE WORKS WELL WITH SALESPEOPLE

▶ **Best music while being put on hold.** Play instrumentals with no lyrics. And try to match your callers' age demographics. *John R. Jester, president, Muzak.*

▶ **Best way to avoid a career debacle.** Test a career move by comparing it with the trends. Is the company's product in demand? Will the job train you in the skills that will be needed in the future? *Faith Popcorn, founder of the BrainReserve, New York.*

▶ **Best way to save money painlessly.** Start young, save every month, take advantage of your employer's 401k or 403b plan, and eschew conservative money markets in favor of stock funds. *Bruce Carlson, senior vice-president, Dain Bosworth, St. Paul, Minnesota.*

▶ **Best exercise pick-me-up to do at your desk.** Try the following routine.

1) Start with arm and shoulder circles. Bend your elbows and rotate your shoulders forward in a circle. Then repeat the rotations in the opposite direction.

2) Raise your arms above your head and clasp your hands to extend your upper body fully.

3) Half squat next to your desk, keeping your back arched. Then rise on the balls of your feet and raise your arms. Bring your arms down and lower your heels. Repeat these moves in sequence five to 10 times. (If you're wearing high heels, take them off before doing the exercise.)

Michael Yessis, author of Body Shaping.

Another Work/Health Alert

Crossing your legs or tucking one leg under you can throw the vertebrae in your spine out of alignment, according to ergonomic experts. When sitting, distribute the weight on your buttocks evenly.

From the New York Times.

No More Mr. or Ms. Nice Guy

Kick 'em in the pants!

That's the advice of researchers at Penn State and the University of Florida. They found that even workers with low self-esteem feel compelled to react to negative feedback by trying to show that they can do better.

For some reason, the dictatorial management style seems to work especially well with salespeople.

Contributed by Diane Kirrane, Kirrane & Company, Washington, D.C.

Work/Family

Here are the nine best companies (in no particular order) for family-friendly policies and practices, according to *Working Mother Magazine*.

- ▶ AT&T
- ▶ Barnett Banks
- ▶ Corning
- ▶ Fel-Pro
- ▶ IBM
- ▶ Johnson & Johnson
- ▶ Nations Bank
- ▶ St. Paul Companies
- ▶ Xerox.

Next month, we get tired of being politically correct.

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