



HEALTH TIPS

Do stretching exercises when you wake up to boost circulation and digestion, and ease back pain



Blueberries, strawberries and raspberries contain plant nutrients anthocyanidins, that are powerful antioxidants

EMOTIONAL CREATURE

Carrying a frown to work may not be so bad. An expert discusses how to use emotions to your advantage

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Could being a little down at office be a good thing? It all depends on the task at hand, says David R Caruso. The co-founder of the EI Skills Group and co-author of the *Mayer, Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test* (MSCEIT), says different emotions help us attend to different tasks at hand, which is why just because you've swiped in your card at the office door, doesn't mean you need to be as emotionless as a rock.

Caruso, who was in Mumbai yesterday to deliver a talk on emotional intelligence at Vikhroli's Godrej Culture Lab, says emotional intelligence can be defined as simply reading emotions. "When we ask, 'how are you?' we want the real answer since how you feel influences how you think," says Caruso.

MATCHING MOOD TO TASK

He has on hand what he calls the Mood Meter. It's a graph that charts how you are feeling on the X axis and energy levels on the Y axis, on a scale of 0- 10 (0 indicating low energy levels with unpleasant feelings and 10 representing a burst of energy and happiness). Caruso suggests you map your emotions on a similar graph before making an important work call.

Being high on the emotional intelligence scale means you are in tune with your own emotions, too. These are the questions you should be asking yourself: How do I feel? (perception); how do these feelings influence my thinking? (making use of this perception); why do I feel this way?

(understanding how they may be clouding your judgment about a certain issue); how can I manage these feelings? (being able to manage your emotions). Caruso explains, "You need to know how emotions influence decisions you make. And honest answers to the above questions help give you a true picture, leading to accurate choices."

The role that energy plays is significant because it impacts your creativity and ability to think analytically. "People with high energy and pleasant feelings often act creatively, understanding connections between concepts," he thinks

If happy, you may miss errors. The unhappy could have sharpened analytical skills. The key to leadership is to match mood to task

SACHIN HARKAR



— DAVID R CARUSO

However, feeling low at work may not always be a bad thing. "It doesn't always pay to be happy at work. People who rate 2 on the energy and feeling grid, are more likely to find errors in production, mistakes in proofing. Research has found that if you are feeling happy, you may miss errors. The unhappy could have sharpened analytical skills meant for spotting errors. The key to leadership is to match the mood to the task," he adds.

For instance, when readying for a brain storming session, it's important you feel happy because your creativity will be on test. "But say, a manager calls a meeting to get to the root cause of a problem, he may need to down energy levels of the team under control to focus and analyse the hurdle."

IMPROVING YOUR EI

Caruso trains corporates in reading emotions because emotions contain data, and data is a successful manager's best tool.

But not everyone has the ability to manage emotions.

Caruso says it's unethical to encourage people to be open to their emotions if they don't have the skill to manage them. It exposes them to anxiety. For that, there are preventive strategies. A preventive strategy is the ability of a person to prevent an unwanted emotion. "For instance, if you have been asked to work in a committee with members you don't like, decrease your stressors by requesting seniors for a group shuffle, he suggests.

Responsive strategies

APPLYING EI TO EMAILS

Don't be impulsive in case of a reaction. Write a mail but delete the name of the person you want to send it to. Let it remain for a while. "Almost always, people reported going back to the mail and changing the message," says Caruso.

refer to simple tricks — deep breathing, standing up and walking around, shaking your head, pausing and self talk — to employ when faced with a problem.

Research has found that the single most important responsive strategy is seeking social support. Having a network — not too large; one workplace friend is enough — helps thrash issues out or vent. "Let's just have a cup of tea together' is the best way to unwind," advises Caruso.



ASK THE SEXPERT

DR MAHINDER WATSA



1 I am 18 years old and started masturbating recently. Initially, I would wake up easily by setting an alarm. Now, I find it difficult. When I do, I am dizzy. This happens every day. Can masturbation be the reason for this?

There's no connection between masturbation and your alarm. I suggest you put off your alarm and have a worry-free sleep.

2 Is there a virginity test? My girlfriend's parents are pressuring her to visit a doctor for a test that confirms if she is a virgin, or not. Her hymen is broken since we've been intimate.

Obviously, they are suspicious of you. There is no reliable test for virginity.

3 I got married recently and

don't wish to have a baby for three years. What birth control measures should we take? What days are safe to have intercourse?

Please visit a gynaecologist, who can advise both of you. There are several birth control options available. The safest, of course, is the condom.

4 I got intimate with my friend. Though he had his

clothes on, I was ovulating at the time. I've heard that sperm can travel through clothes. I'm worried about getting pregnant. Should I be? Not if you had your clothes on.

SEND YOUR QUERIES TO: Ask the Sexpert, Mumbai Mirror, Times Of India Building, Dr D N Road, Mumbai 400001 or email at drwatsa@timesgroup.com. Contact Dr Watsa, send an email to mcwatsa@hotmail.com