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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

Handicapping Habits That Can Cripple Your Career

Who doesn't want to kick off 2016 on the right foot? The good news is that January offers each of us a fresh start if we choose to accept it. Perhaps the wisest thing you can do this month is put your behavior patterns—your habits—under a microscope and see what conclusions you draw. Which of **your habits** aren't serving you and the folks in your sphere? Countless studies show that personal behaviors even more than educational credentials and hard skills determine success at work. So it's worth a look.

All of us can think of someone who runs late for everything: Every appointment, every meeting, every conference call, every event. It's annoying, isn't it? Over time we grow tired of the list of excuses. Chronic lateness, an irritating habit, is a large part of some people's M.O. Imagine what could happen if it wasn't.



My feature article below

identifies and briefly discusses ten habits that can hold you back from attaining optimal job performance, landing a promotion, and advancing in your overall career. As a new year begins, you're smart to release your handicap(s).

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FEATURE ARTICLE

10 Habits That Kill Careers

We all have habits that get in the way of optimal job performance, productive relationships, and general career success. It's part of being human. However, at the dawn of a new year you may want to lasso and manage the one that causes you and others the biggest problems. Where do you see yourself in the list below?

1. **Inflating your competence:** Letting colleagues believe that you have skills and experience you really don't have sooner or later comes back to bite you. It won't take long for people to see the truth, and your reputation suffers.
2. **Accumulating clutter:** A messy work space creates confusion. As you frantically try to find reports, memos, and other documents, you waste time that could be invested in something more important.
3. **Focusing on history:** Constantly reminding people about how things were done in the past keeps everybody stuck. Real progress occurs when you consider new ideas that have not yet been tried.
4. **Hanging out with email and social media:** Both have a place in your daily schedule, but not every five or ten minutes. Concentrate on your professional goals and view email, Linked In, and Facebook as supports.
5. **Interrupting conversations:** Cutting people off, talking over them, or finishing their sentences demonstrates disrespect for your team mates, employees, stakeholders, and boss. Let folks communicate what they started to say before you jump in.
6. **Dodging problems:** True professionals contribute to solving problems, not running away from them. If you're making yourself scarce and allowing everybody else to do the heavy lifting, don't expect to be valued long term.
7. **Communicating poorly:** Inadequate, ineffective communication (both written and verbal) is the king of all negative habits at work. Processes break down, deadlines get missed, misunderstandings occur. Reread your next email message before you hit "send". Is the content clear, comprehensive, and easy to grasp?
8. **Expecting perfection:** Although nothing in life is perfect, some folks still strive for this unattainable state of being. Start the new year by expecting excellence instead—from yourself and your staff—and notice how everybody's frustration level goes down.
9. **Assuming people have necessary information:** Does your supervisor actually have all of the details related to the major project you led last month, or are you just assuming she can speak off the cuff about it to her

Board? Assumptions can be dangerous. They affect outcomes, relationships, and reputations.

10. **Exaggerating facts:** This is a form of misrepresentation that can cause serious strategy errors and undermine trust. There's a difference between telling your CEO that Tom is *unwilling* to do something and that he doesn't know *how* to do it.

Remember: Your negative habits have a ripple effect at work. Those ripples often have a wider reach than you may imagine.

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What Clients Say

Sylvia—Thank you for your recent holiday gift of the teleseminar recording entitled: “Overloaded and Overwhelmed? 10 Strategies for Gaining Control.” I thoroughly enjoyed the content. It included some excellent reminders for me and prompted me to begin to take control of my life. I especially appreciate the empowerment to not be accessible 24/7! As you aware, funding is tight and demands are great in the non-for-profit world. I very much appreciate your periodic gifts that you so graciously share with the world.

- Robert Visscher II, Executive Director, Mission Central

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Offers and Opportunities

Need a Business Journey That Actually Yields Success?

On January 27, 2016 Sylvia and three local colleagues are teaming up to facilitate an intentional, highly strategic day entitled “Your Business Journey: a Day of Awareness, Action, and Accountability for Women”. If you are tired of the same old conferences, workshops, and seminars, this opportunity is for YOU. Only 77 participants will be admitted into this event. Register now:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/your-business-journey-a-day-of-awareness-action-accountability-for-women-tickets-19116386627>

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RESOURCES

A Classic Revisited

Stephen R. Covey's masterful classic, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, is still one of the finest resources for any professional, regardless of industry. You can cut out a lot of management/top notch job performance literature by simply reading this book. If you are not familiar with it or you haven't looked at it in a long time, check out the 2008 updated edition on Amazon.com for about \$15.

Another consideration may be Bill Brown's brand new book: *10 Habits of Highly Successful People*. The foundational principle of his message is that successful professionals plan their success. They don't depend on luck. The Kindle edition is available on Amazon.com for only \$2.99.

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TIP

Here's something people forget: Before you can successfully give up a habit and replace it with another, you must take time to understand the purpose and the role of the original negative behavior. If you skip this step, the old habit tends to creep back in. For example, when you decide to stop routinely complimenting others falsely, you must first figure out what triggers your inclination to do this. Is it a strong desire to be liked? Is it a need to call attention to yourself? Is it a fear of not fitting into a certain group? Once you identify the root cause of such behavior and the role it has played in your life, then you are ready to cultivate the habit of delivering only genuine compliments. As you alter the quality of your compliments, observe the changes in your relationships. You may be pleasantly surprised.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On January 6, 2016 Sylvia provided a thirty minute presentation about the main themes of her 2015 book, *Learning Leadership Through Loss*, to members of the Central Pennsylvania Association for Female Executives during their regular monthly meeting in Camp Hill.

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About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional

background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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