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NEXT STEP

5 THINGS TO UNLEARN FROM SCHOOL

You spent a lot of years in school. You learned a lot. Some of what you learned you need to unlearn as soon as possible. Here are five key attitudes you should adopt instead.

1. IF YOU ONLY DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD, YOU'LL EXCEL

I know. School was hard. But not *that* hard. If you did what you were told--go to class, do the reading, turn in assignments on time, etc.--you could get As. Initiative was not required and, in fact, was often frowned on.

Now--whether you work for someone else or run your own business--doing what you're told makes you average. Not superior, not excellent... just average. To be above average, or to achieve better than average results, you must do two things: Do what others are willing to do and do it better, and do what others *aren't* willing to do. Otherwise, you're just average.

2. BEING MICRO-MANAGED IS TO BE EXPECTED

Sure, you felt overly-controlled in school: Dates, timelines,



rules... not to mention the seemingly arbitrary policies and nonsensical assignments. You saw graduation as the day you would finally have more freedom. Nope. In school you paid people to criticise, direct, and at times micro-manage you. Now you're the one getting paid... yet you somehow don't feel it's fair that investors, partners, or customers can dictate what you do, sometimes down to the smallest detail?

Don't expect someone to trust you to perform a task or service--and give you money to perform that service--until you've proven you can be trusted to perform that service.

Then, once you've proven your skills, if you still feel micro-managed it's your responsibility to change the situation. Communicate before you are communicated to. Answer questions before questions are asked. Demonstrate your value before you are asked to prove your value.

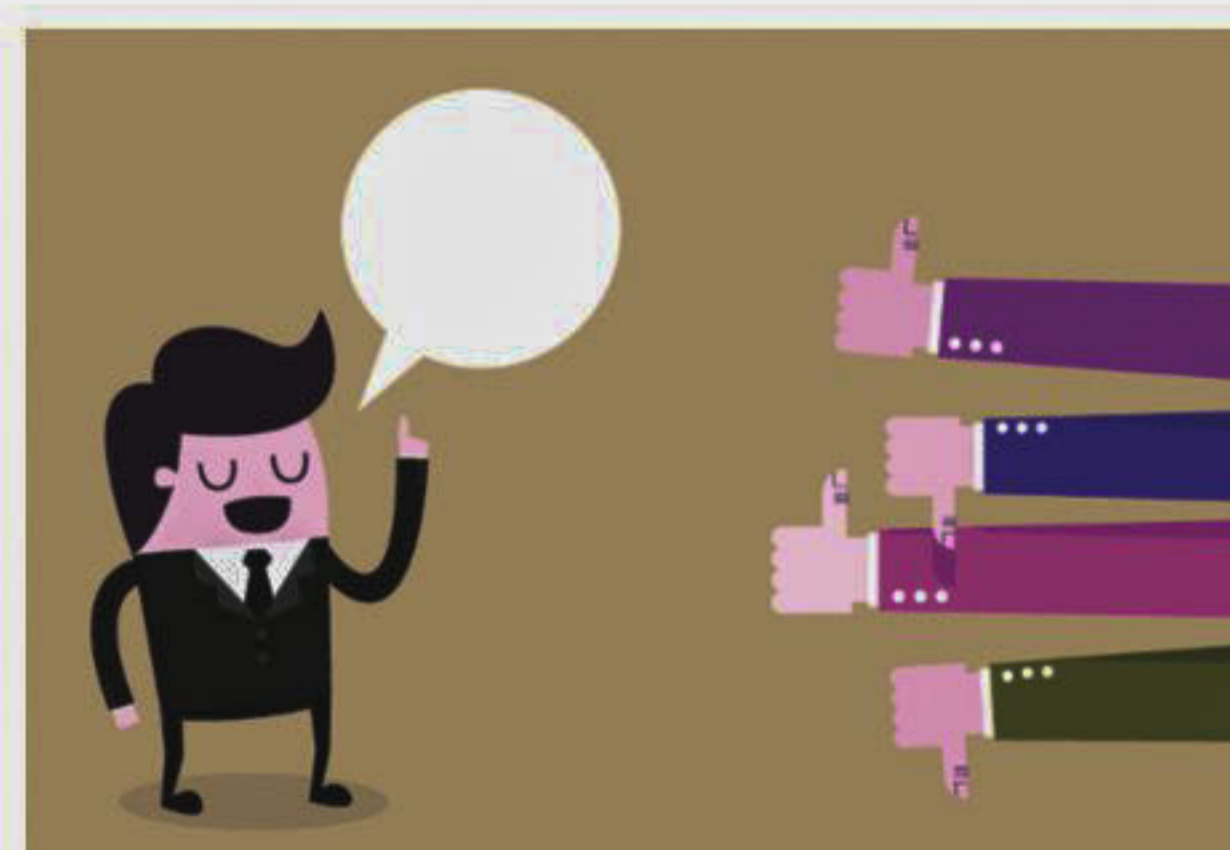
No one wants to micro-manage you. They have better things to do with their time. If you're being micro-managed it might be because you need to be.

3. YOUR TIME OFF IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR

You may have forgotten your mum's birthday, but I'll bet you knew the exact day every semester ended and the start and end of spring break. And you lived for rainy days.

So it only makes sense to see weekends and vacations as the highlight of your working year, right? Actually, no: If you feel you endure the workweek just to get to the payoff of the weekend, you're in the wrong business. Find work you enjoy; then you won't see time off as a chance to finally do *something* fun but as a chance to do *something else* fun.

While you'll never love everything you do in your



professional life, you should enjoy the majority of it. Otherwise you're not living--you're just working.

4. GETTING CRITICISED MEANS YOU FAILED

Here's another pay/paid dichotomy. In university you basically paid professors to critique your work. So now that you are the one getting paid, why is it unfair for someone--like a client, colleague, boss or key partner--to critique your work?

It's not. When you get negative feedback, see it as an opportunity. Think, "Wow, I didn't realise I wasn't doing that right. I didn't realise I wasn't doing that as well as I could."

Criticism is a chance to learn--and this time you're getting paid to learn. Never complain when someone pays you to learn.

5. SUCCESS IS BASED ON TOEING THE LINE

Say you disagreed with a professor's point of view on a particular point. You may even have been right... but the only way to get an A in the class was to parrot the professor's take on the subject. Except in rare cases, confirming and following the rules was everything.

In business or the workplace, conforming only ensures that you will achieve the same results as other people. If you want to achieve different results you'll have to think and act differently. Do your homework, think critically, and don't be afraid to create your own path.

But don't be different just for the sake of being different. Be different because it's who you are and what you believe... and because it will get you where you want to go, with your integrity and your sense of self intact.

THE NEW OFFICE ETIQUETTE

Gone are the days when office etiquette was clearly defined. In today's relaxed professional environment, conduct is more casual, which means it's often difficult to know what is OK and what isn't. Fortunately, some rules of workplace etiquette are universal.

These 12 tips can help you adjust to a new office or clean up your behaviour in a place you've worked for years.

1. **Avoid social media.** Unless your job requires you to peruse social networking sites all day, avoid them while you're on the clock. Though surfing Facebook or Twitter might be tempting, it can be detrimental to your work performance and productivity, not to mention the way your boss perceives your enthusiasm -- or lack thereof -- for your job.

2. **Take that phone call elsewhere.** Everyone has a cellphone these days, so getting personal calls at work is pretty much unavoidable. But don't assume that just because your phone rings, it's OK to take it right there at your desk. If you get a personal call, excuse yourself and answer it in private. The last thing you want to do is air your personal business.

3. **Gossip: The big no-no.** Who hasn't been tempted to speculate on the lives of their co-workers? It's especially tempting when everyone else in the office is doing it. But remember that gossip says more about you than it does about the person you're discussing. Don't talk about others, and keep your personal life private to discourage water-cooler talk about you.

4. **Keep emails formal.** Email seems pretty casual, doesn't it? It isn't like correspondence on letterhead that requires careful composition and proofreading -- right? Contrary to popular belief, work emails should be held to the same formal standards that you would hold any other office correspondence. So toss the slang, get the punctuation right and proofread before you hit send.

5. **Watch your language.** No matter how comfortable you are with your co-workers, or how casual your office may seem, blurting out a curse word can get you noticed for all the wrong reasons. You don't want that accidental f-bomb to overshadow your work, so keep the language clean.

6. **Stay tuned in to the world around you.** Want to plug in your headphones and jam while you finish that report? Go ahead (if your office allows it), but don't make them a constant fixture on your head. In the workplace, having headphones on all day can come off as antisocial. Need to focus on a project? Sneak away to a conference room for a while.

7. **Knock before entering.** Sometimes an informal office atmosphere can go too far. That's especially true when people start drifting from one cubicle or office to the next, without bothering to knock or otherwise announce their presence. Treat others as though they are in the midst of serious business -- even if they aren't -- and knock before you enter their personal space.

8. **Stay home if you're sick.** It seems like an obvious rule, but when you're stuck in the rat race, dropping out for a few days of the flu can seem detrimental to your career. However, going to work sick does more harm than good. Not only does it make you feel worse and potentially spread your germs to others, when you're under the weather your productivity most likely suffers. Make life easier on everyone and use those sick days.

9. **Remember that scents travel.** Do you have an allergy to perfume or cologne? Do you get a headache when you smell spicy food? Some of your colleagues might. Keep those potent lunches away from your desk, and don't overdo it on the fragrances. Those around you will be grateful.

10. **Dress like the rest.** There are many places where expressing your unique style is a fantastic thing to do. The office is not one of them. To make sure you're dressing the part, use your boss's attire as an example. If you want to appeal to management, dress just a notch above the office norm.

11. **Save the job search for home.** Looking for a new job? Don't do it on company time. Not only might someone get wind of your search (and feed that information into the gossip mill), but taking time away from your current employer to look for a new one is just plain rude.

12. **Remember that everyone has a life.** Show respect for everyone's down-time by avoiding late-night emails, phone calls or anything else that might require someone from the office to respond after hours. Save those for the next business day. Leaving the office behind when you walk out the door is important for everyone -- so honour business hours, but make sure you honour your time off, too.

Whether you're in a high-stress office or a relaxed small business, etiquette matters. Brush up on it now to continue making a great impression on your boss, co-workers and clients.



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Course overview

Meeting high-pressure challenges is an opportunity for you to excel and build your reputation as someone who can be counted on. Although meeting the challenge of high pressure situations is a different experience for everyone, one thing is constant: you need an attitude that leads to effective and efficient goal-oriented action. You won't always be able to control the external events that lead to pressure, but you can control your reaction. This course explains how you can understand your reaction to pressure, and how excessive stress can impair your performance. It also covers the principles for managing your attitude so you stay in control and maintain a success-oriented mentality.