

# FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

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Continuum

## How to Deal With Empty Nest Syndrome

Even people who look forward to the last child going out on their own can have a tough time dealing with the nest that is suddenly empty. With college on the horizon for many students this month, many parents are going to feel the pangs of empty nest syndrome—feelings of depression, sadness and grief when children leave their childhood homes. The feelings brought on by the departure of college-age children are similar to the feelings of depression of empty nest syndrome, when children grow up and leave home completely. For many parents, raising children has become life's main preoccupation. Feelings of sadness are normal at this time. It is also normal to spend time in the absent child's bedroom to feel closer to him/her. If you are experiencing empty nest syndrome, you can talk to an EAP counselor face-to-face, by e-mail, or on the phone.



## Boost Creativity with a Positive Mood

If you feel like you're lacking in the creativity department, it could be because of your mood. Research suggests that being in a positive mood can increase creativity, which frequently leads to creative problem solving and innovative ideas. Changing your mood is not as difficult or time consuming as you may think. Listen to upbeat music, watch a funny video, talk to a cheery coworker, or go to lunch at your favorite restaurant near work. When you achieve a brighter outlook, return to the task that requires your creative touch. Source: [tiny.cc/positive-mood](http://tiny.cc/positive-mood)



## Positive Anticipation Helps Manage Stress

No matter how much you love your job, everyone needs healthy work-life balance to reduce stress. One way to achieve this balance is always having a nonwork-related activity planned that you are looking forward to. Sure, this could be a weeklong vacation to an exotic locale, but most of the time, this will probably mean penciling in outings close to home. The key is "positive anticipation." These activities should be fun and meaningful. So schedule your next break and watch your attitude improve.



## Find the Chunks in Your Chores

Chunking is something you do every time you dial or memorize a telephone number — for example, 688-555-7402 is memorized like this: "688," "555," "7402." It's simply easier than memorizing like this: "6885557402." You can do this with chores, as well, especially chores at home or work you especially dislike. Find the chunks in your chores and tackle them one at a time. Is the clutter in your garage about to explode? Tackle only the workbench, then the lawn tools later, and move the boxes last. One reason to put off tasks is their perceived size. To become a productivity machine and do more, chunk your chores.



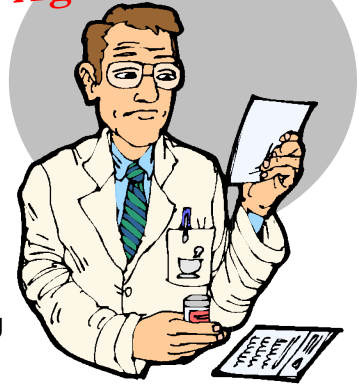
## Be Competitive, But Stay Healthy

**D**o you view yourself as competitive? Competitive employees have enthusiasm, energy, and motivation to get a job done. They can be prized assets of an organization because they want to succeed. Opportunity to compete makes them work harder. Caution: 1) Don't be competitive for competition's sake. Use competitiveness to help you focus on producing something positive for the company or your co-workers. 2) Manage stress, and avoid the stress of competition that can adversely affect personal relationships, especially at home, or your physical and mental health. 3) Celebrate the success of coworkers with whom you compete. The true value in competition is bettering yourself, reaching your next goal, and winning for your employer. It's not about beating others.



## Painkiller Addiction: Signs You May Have It

Again?



**A**ccording to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, there were 7 million abusers of prescription drugs in 2009. If you answer yes to even one of the following questions, meet with a qualified counselor or medical doctor, preferably one who specializes in addiction medicine. Do you doctor shop? (Doctor shopping is seeking out doctors who will prescribe what you want and refusing to see those who won't, and preventing any one doctor from learning about the others.) Do you take risks with your personal safety by going to places or seeing dangerous persons to acquire pills? If you do not have pills, do borrow prescription medication from others or accept alcohol if drugs aren't available. Have you pawned items in your home for cash in order to purchase pills? Do you postpone the idea of getting help, even after frightening experiences, falls, blackouts, or car accidents?

## The Science of Gratitude

**P**racticing an attitude of gratitude appears to have a scientifically measurable positive impact for improving mood and facilitating resolution of a variety of life problems. If you have participated in a 12-step group or know someone who has, have visited with a mental health professional, or have taken advice from a self-help book, it's likely that you have heard about or practiced the simple principle of "having an attitude of gratitude." Those who practice gratitude tend to be more optimistic. And research shows this can contribute to improved health and maybe even longer life. Gratitude is a two-way street in the workplace. It benefits the person expressing gratitude as much as it does the recipient. Social scientists believe this may extend to improving productivity when gratitude is practiced between managers and employees; the payoff is more job satisfaction for both. This may lead to other outcomes such as loyalty, a desire to become more engaged with the organization, reduced absenteeism, and even a healthier bottom line. Source: <http://tiny.cc/gratitude-yes>



## Scheduling "Me" Time

**F**inding private time each day for a healthy activity that helps you unwind is a powerful stress management and productivity enhancement technique. You may feel a little guilty at the thought of scheduling "me" time, but being "self-attentive" in this manner can reap huge rewards for you and others who love and depend on you. Whether you take a quiet bath or simply detach to read a favorite book for 15 to 30 minutes, you will rejuvenate yourself, find more creativity, gain motivation, and most importantly, dump that "I'm trapped" feeling. Find a healthy way to unwind and plan it into your day just like a business appointment. You'll feel good about finding balance, and you'll look forward to your next "me" time appointment.

