



EAP EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER

April 2023



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QUICK IDEAS TO REUSE AND RECYCLE

No matter how you live, work, and play, everyone produces waste. We can control this waste by reducing, reusing, and recycling it.

While many people already recycle products at home, waste reduction opportunities exist anywhere we have waste. Recycling is one way to reduce waste; reusing products is another. Products that can be reused and recycled are countless, and include everything from paper to clothing to worn-out electronics. Some examples of the many items we can reuse include clothing, school supplies, and sports and electronic equipment. The items we most commonly recycle are paper, aluminum, glass, steel, cardboard, and yard waste.

Most waste reduction efforts save money, energy, and natural resources, and can teach children and young adults how solid waste affects their lives and their environment.

The Benefits of Waste Reduction

The economic and environmental benefits of waste reduction (which includes preventing waste, reusing, and recycling) accrue both locally and globally. These activities can:

- Prevent pollution created by manufacturing new products or products made from virgin materials.
- Save energy in manufacturing, transportation, and disposal of products.
- Decrease greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global climate change.
- Conserve natural resources such as timber, water, metals, and fossil fuels.
- Reduce the need for land-filling and incineration, which are expensive to operate and maintain.
- Protect and expand U.S. manufacturing jobs and increase U.S. competitiveness.
- Help sustain the environment for future generations.

Recycling Ideas

Paper: If you collect paper for recycling, be sure you are collecting it properly. Contact your municipal solid waste management agency or your local recycling center, and follow their specific guidelines on collecting and sorting. Your diligence in sorting will ensure that the paper is not only recyclable but also marketable to companies that can turn it into recycled-content products.



Glass: Regardless of color, most glass food and beverage containers are 100 percent recyclable and can be reused an infinite amount of times. Some glass products, such as windows, mirrors, drinking glasses, dishes, and light bulbs, cannot be recycled. Be sure to find out if your local recycling center has any restrictions regarding separation of colors before you start collecting glass for recycling. Also check with the center about metal tops and rings.

Metals: Different metals require different recycling processes. Two of the most common metals that are recyclable from schools are aluminum cans and steel (actually tin-coated steel) cans. An easy way for students to separate steel from aluminum is to hold a magnet to them. Magnets won't stick to aluminum. If you plan to collect mixed metals, you might be able to borrow magnetic sorting tables from a can recycling company. Check with your local recycling center or solid waste agency.

Plastics: Different types of plastic are chemically different and are, therefore, recycled differently. Schools commonly generate two types of recyclable plastic: polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and high-density

polyethylene (HDPE). Check with your local recycling center or solid waste agency to find out which types of plastic are accepted.

Reuse Ideas

Books: Instead of tossing your old books, consider establishing a book swap in your school or community. Or, take up a collection and donate used books to a library, nursing home, or other organization that might want them.

Art Supplies: Organize a collection of art supplies to use at school, to swap among interested students, or to donate to a needy organization such as a homeless shelter for families and children. These materials can be hazardous if sent to landfills or incinerators, so encourage complete use or donation of unused supplies.

Sports Equipment: You can collect unwanted or unused sports equipment to swap within a school, for reuse in different schools, or to raise money for charities.

Special Occasion Items: Consider an annual prom dress swap or donation drive. Collect once-worn dresses and donate them to other interested schools and organizations.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2003, July). In Reuse + recycling = Waste reduction: A guide for schools and groups (EPA 530-K-03-001). Retrieved October 25, 2016, from <http://www.epa.gov>

HOW TO CHOOSE A TAX RETURN PREPARER

If you choose to have someone prepare your tax return, choose that preparer wisely. A paid tax return preparer is primarily responsible for the overall substantive accuracy of your return and, by law, is required to sign the return and include their preparer tax identification number (PTIN) on it. Although the tax return preparer always signs the return, you're ultimately responsible for the accuracy of every item reported on your return. Anyone paid to prepare tax returns for others should have a thorough understanding of tax matters and is required to have a PTIN. You may want to ask friends, coworkers, or your employer for help in selecting a competent tax return preparer.



Choose a tax return preparer you'll be able to contact in case the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) examines your return and has questions regarding how your return was prepared. You can designate your paid tax return preparer or another third-party to speak to the IRS concerning the preparation of your return, payment or refund issues, and mathematical errors. The third-party authorization checkbox on IRS tax forms gives the designated party the authority to receive and inspect returns and return information for one year from the original due date of your return (without regard to extensions).

Exception: The third-party authorization checkbox for Form 709 expires three years from the date of filing. See Topic No. 312 for information on how to extend the authority to receive and inspect returns and return information to a third party using Form 8821, Tax Information Authorization: <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc312>.

Steps You Should Take to Find a Tax Return Preparer

Most tax return preparers are professional, honest, and provide excellent service to their clients. However, dishonest and unscrupulous tax return preparers who file false income tax returns do exist. See "Make a Complaint About a Tax Return Preparer" (Link opens in a new window <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/make-a-complaint-about-a-tax-return-preparer>) if you have been financially impacted by a tax return preparer's misconduct or improper tax preparation practices. You should always check your return for errors to avoid potential financial and legal problems.

The following points will assist you when selecting a tax return preparer:

- Be wary of tax return preparers who claim they can obtain larger refunds than others can.
- Avoid tax return preparers who base their fees on a percentage of the refund or who offer to deposit all or part of your refund into their financial accounts.
- Ensure you use a preparer with a PTIN. Paid tax return preparers must have a PTIN to prepare all or substantially all of a tax return.
- Use a reputable tax professional who enters their PTIN on the tax return, signs the tax return, and provides you a copy of the return (as required).
- Consider whether the individual or firm will be around for months or years after filing the return to answer questions about the preparation of the tax return.
- Never sign a blank tax form.



- Check the person's credentials. Only attorneys, certified public accountants (CPAs), and enrolled agents can represent taxpayers before the IRS in all matters, including audits, collections, and appeals. Other tax return preparers who participate in the IRS Annual Filing Season Program have limited practice rights to represent taxpayers for audits of returns they prepared and signed. (See "Annual Filing Season Program" for more information: <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/annual-filing-season-program>.)

Source: U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). (Reviewed 2021, September 27). Tax topic number 254: How to choose a tax return preparer. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.irs.gov>

GETTING THE RESPECT YOU DESERVE

How to Change Other People's Behavior by Changing Your Own

If you wrote down the names of all the living people you respect, who'd be on your list? Would there be coworkers, religious leaders, the president, or maybe sports stars? Would you be on your list? Respect—high regard, esteem, or honor—isn't reserved for the brave and famous. Everyone needs respect. It provides people with a deep sense of value about who they are.

Some people find that respecting others comes to them easily, by virtue of their manner and way of relating—but others find respect hard to come by. They seem cursed with a tendency to attract mean, insensitive people. If you are one of these people, you might have a boss who treats you like a child, friends who don't take you seriously, or children who ignore your parental authority.

You want to be treated with respect, you may have even tried to make other people stop their disrespectful behavior, but it keeps happening. What's going on?

You may be familiar with the idea that you must first respect yourself before you can expect others to respect you. If you find that people in your life frequently mistreat you, perhaps they're simply doing what you ask. You may not consciously be telling people that you want mistreatment, but your behavior may be saying just that.



Here are some things that you can do to change the situation:

- Listen to your negative self-talk.
- Root out the lies.
- Confront disrespectful behavior.

Listen to your negative self-talk.

Carla arrived at a counseling session with a cup of coffee she bought on her way. As she sat down, the plastic lid on her cup popped off, sloshing coffee on the counselor's sofa. The first words out of her mouth were, "How stupid of me. I'm so sorry." The counselor assured Carla that it was no big deal and thanked her for being concerned.

But Carla continued, "I can't believe how clumsy I am sometimes. I promise not to bring any other beverages with me to sessions." Seeing that she wasn't going to easily let herself off the hook, the counselor decided to use the situation in a therapeutic way.

"Carla, why are you being so hard on yourself? It was a mistake," the counselor said. "And I'm not angry with you."

"I know," she said, "but I do a lot of stupid things." Carla wasn't just saying her mistake was stupid, but that she was stupid. She felt compelled to convince the counselor to agree with her view of herself as inept. She was unconsciously inviting the counselor to put her down. Had the counselor done so, she would have felt it was deserved.

Carla was engaging in negative self-talk—putting herself down in her own mind. This is apparent when she says, in effect, "I'm stupid. Don't you agree?"

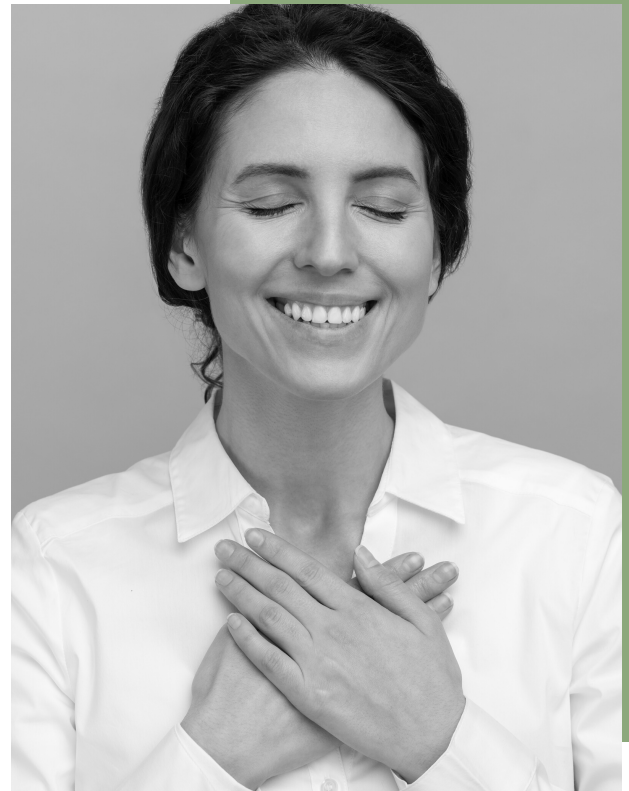
But the truth is she's quite intelligent. Carla is like many people who give off beacon signals saying, "I don't like myself very much, and neither should you."

People like Carla berate themselves for mistakes they make, they try hard to be perfect and they go to great lengths to please others. If you are one of these people, take heart. You can end any misperceptions that you are perpetuating with your negative self-talk.

Root out the lies.

Over time, people's self-talk is shaped by important relationships and circumstances. If you've been exposed to a lot of criticism, rejection, or abuse, you'll most likely have a low opinion of yourself. It doesn't mean you think of yourself as worthless—but that you lack confidence, you're prone to self-doubt, and you find it difficult to ask for what you need. These are symptoms of the lies that are embedded in your negative self-talk. You have to root out these lies. It isn't easy, but with deliberate effort, it's possible.

The best way to start is by listening to what you say. When you make a mistake or disappoint someone, can you acknowledge it, forgive yourself, and move on? Or do you apologize repeatedly? Do you find yourself searching for some type of penance as a way of making up for it? Do you put yourself down, call yourself derogatory names, or use self-deprecating humor?



If you follow a mistake with repeated apologies or self-criticism, tune into how you do this. Write down the phrases you hear yourself saying. Alongside each negative phrase you write, jot down a way you could have said it differently so as not to put yourself down.

Practice these new approaches in everyday conversations. It will feel unnatural at first, but that's only because you're rewiring your mental circuits. Give it time, and you'll start to believe that the worth you're attaching to yourself truly belongs to you.

Confront disrespectful behavior.

So what do you do with all those people in your life who are accustomed to treating you like a doormat? Train them to treat you differently. Start by refusing to speak about yourself in negative terms as you normally would. When other people revert to customary behaviors of disrespect, call them on it. Extend respect to them by helping them understand that you are working on valuing yourself more. Tell them how you'd like to be treated differently.

"One counseling client, Debbie, did this well with her best friend. Debbie decided she needed to confront her friend about her friend's sarcastic putdowns. The next time her friend made a demeaning remark, Debbie said, "I'd appreciate if you don't talk to me that way anymore. It hurts me when you put me down."

"I was just joking," her friend said, misunderstanding. "It never seemed to bother you before."

"But it did bother me," Debbie replied. "I just never spoke up for myself. Now I'm trying to change—to value myself more. You can help me by not putting me down." It took time, but Debbie's friend eventually got the message, and their relationship grew closer.

By asking for what you need from these people, you are validating your worth in a powerful way. It reinforces positive self-talk and clearly communicates that you want others to treat you similarly.

Unfortunately, not everyone is going to comply with your wishes. They may oppose you by intensifying their disrespect. Many of your friends, coworkers, and possibly even family members may not understand the change in you.

This was the case with Tom, who was raised in an unhealthy family. He hated going to family gatherings because his three siblings teased him mercilessly, just as they did when he was a child. He left these events feeling lousy about himself.

Tom asked them several times to stop the teasing, but his pleas only provided ammunition for more taunting. Finally, he decided to write each sibling a letter explaining why this behavior hurt him, and how he wanted to have a different relationship with each of them now that they were all adults.



None of his siblings responded to, or even acknowledged, Tom's letter. It seemed that his siblings were determined to live by the old patterns that Tom wanted to break. So, he decided to skip family gatherings until they stopped denying him the respect he deserved.

Some people are simply toxic to be around. If your efforts to help them understand what you need go unheard or unheeded, sometimes the best route is to spend little or no time with them. A relationship can't grow when it's built on disrespect.

Don't become sidetracked by trying to change these people. The focus of your work is to catch and root out self-talk lies that undermine your worth. Stay the course in this process.

Over time, those who truly care for you will extend respect to you. These will be the relationships that become the most precious because they reflect the truth—that you deserve respect. And the reason you'll get it from others is because you first gave it to yourself.

Source: Gilles, G. (Revised 2022). *Getting the respect you deserve*. Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.