

EmployeeCare News



Joe Hammann

Reason and Emotion – Staying in Balance

By Joe Hammann, LPC, Counselor



The American popular culture has taught men and women about the place of reason and emotion in their lives. Conventional thinking in the past has led men to use reason more than emotion. Women, on the other hand, have had to battle those who say being feminine means using one's emotional side instead of logic and reason.

Experience, however, has taught both sexes that depending more on one way of viewing life without tapping the healthy parts of the other side can be hazardous to our mental health.

Resolving grief is an excellent example. If a person loses someone with whom they were close, relying on logic alone will not lead to effective healing. Simply saying that time will heal and I can turn my attention to other things, will not address all the underlying heartache. Rather, feeling grief, crying and experiencing the pain of loss is also needed in order to experience renewed emotional health.

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In other circumstances, listening only to our emotions can aggravate rather than relieve stress. For instance, when our 5-year-old child says he/she hates us when they are not getting what they want, it can send chills through us. "Oh my goodness" we say to ourselves, "my child at this early age feels that badly toward me?" Here we can call on reason to step in so we do not get carried away. Reason tells us our child is really saying they hate not getting what they want. Reason tells us teaching our children to delay gratification is what is best for their futures. Their "momentary" lapse of a feeling of love will only last a short time. Children shortly discover that not getting to stay up another hour is not the end of the world and they will want to be in our arms five minutes later.

What about spiritual matters in our lives?

Science (discovery by way of observation) in the last 400 years has chipped away at some closely held emotional beliefs: e.g. the earth may not be the center of the universe. This finding and other scientific discoveries like it could lead a person to think "reason" is the master brain function and all other experiences fall beneath it.

What about imagination, wonder and vitality?

Are not these emotions and experiences equally important in feeling alive and do they not add meaning and energy to our lives? Is not art at times as important as science and vice versa? With all of science's discoveries, there exist only theories to

describe the tiniest specs of matter or to clarify how vast the universe is. Passion continues to be an important companion to the scientist when searching for new truths and perspectives.

Ah yes, passion! Is there an absence of it in your life?

Maybe one can use reason to figure out why this might be so and use reason to discover passion again. What past experiences were passionate? What forces or experiences led passion (for something or someone) to dry up? How did it happen that past passion was experienced in the first place? How can one get emotions and enthusiasm flowing again?

Using reason can help identify past life-sapping situations. Then new plans can be formed to combat the present states of boredom and inactivity. Reason can be used to develop experiments to see if a creative spark can be recaptured. Sometimes just bathing oneself in the emotions of a musical group or symphony can awaken desire. Or attending a church service or a controversial lecture will awaken one's creative juices and inspire. Or taking a hike or a short trip out in nature: something new, not tried before. Life does have limitless options.

Passion can get the organized, planning part of ourselves going again just as reason and analysis can be a pathway to finding a passion for life again. One without the other will not likely yield the best results.

At EmployeeCare, the counselors are trained to discover whether one's responses to life are overly emotional or overly analytical. An overly emotional life can feel out of control and an overly analytical approach to life can feel dead. Come on in to EmployeeCare if one of these two out-of-balance views sounds familiar. Come see if the other half of you can be rediscovered to get you moving again.

Call 208-6626 or (800) 628-9343 for an appointment.



Check Us Out on the Web!

Do you want to know more details about your Employee Assistance Program?
Do you want more information about each counselor?

Go to www.mvh.org/EmployeeCare

How Do I Tell My Friend They Need Help?

By Marcia Zelman, Counselor



“I’m worried about a friend’s behavior. How can I talk to them about it?”

It’s not uncommon for an individual to seek assistance from EmployeeCare when they are stressed by a family member, friend or work associate whose behavior is suddenly out of character or has been worsening over a period of time. This might be a situation you have dealt with in the past or perhaps you are currently struggling with feelings of sadness, fear or anger over another’s attitude, mood or over-the-top behaviors. If you feel an emotional closeness to the other person, and if you trust them to understand and respect your concern, then you might be comfortable directly expressing yourself.

There can be a variety of reasons keeping us from speaking to the person about whom we are concerned. In our mind we will predict the outcome in one or more of these fear-based reasons for avoiding the issue:

- “They’ll tell me to mind my own business and walk away”
- “They’ll get defensive and angry and yell at me”
- “I’m afraid I’ll hurt their feelings. They might cry and then I’ll feel guilty”
- “They’ll completely shut down and their (questionable) behavior will worsen”
- “They won’t care or they won’t understand my reasons for bringing this up”
- “I don’t like confrontations”

The common denominator in all of these reasons is fear. If you can be less afraid, then you are likely to feel more confident to express your feelings. In

these situations, the other person’s behavior has become a problem for you. You want to decrease your stress. Theoretically, if the other person starts doing more favorable behaviors, then you will feel relieved and your stress about them will be reduced.

Preparation Tips

- Think of your interaction with the other person as a conversation rather than a confrontation. This reframing can reduce your anxiety.
- Take some time to reflect on the person and their behavior; write down some notes to help you identify the problem and determine how you are affected by their behavior.
- Use the assertive behavior style by making “I feel” and “I would like” statements. This approach helps the other person be less defensive when you speak to them; it helps to clarify how you feel about them and what you want from them.
- Use your intuition about the timing of your conversation. Don’t “ambush” them; rather schedule a time to talk when the other person is most likely to be alert, sober and receptive to a serious conversation with you.

Some sample problem behaviors and how you might initiate the conversation:

- “I’ve been worried about you lately because I’ve noticed that you don’t seem to be yourself. You seem depressed, withdrawn and at times on edge and this saddens me. I’d like to suggest that you consider talking to a professional. I would be willing to help you find a counselor.”

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EmployeeCare

Keeping you informed from EmployeeCare, your employee assistance program, a benefit extended by your organization to all employees and their household members. Some exceptions related to the terms of each individual company contract may apply.

Located: 409 E. Monument St.
Suite 201
Dayton, Ohio 45402

We have satellite offices in Eaton, Springboro, Troy, Greenville and on the Good Samaritan Hospital campus

Hours: 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday – Thursday
8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Friday

All counselors provide evening appointment times

Phone: (937) 208-6626 or (800) 628-9343
(24-hour, toll free)

Services Include:

- Voluntary, confidential assessments. Short-term counseling and referral services for employees and household members covering a wide range of issues. Services are free and number of accesses unlimited.
- Substance Abuse and Wellness Education Groups
- In-service for sexual harassment, diversity, violence in the workplace
- Workplace wellness
- 24-Hour Crisis phone service
- Substance Abuse trainings that meet state and Bureau of Worker Compensation requirements for drug free workplaces

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This approach could be appropriate for someone appearing emotionally distraught and whose behavior has not been directly harmful to you (other than concern). The following approach is often a situation between significant others or family members.

- “I feel nervous talking with you about this but I can’t hold back any longer. I am worried about your drinking habits because it seems like you don’t know when to stop. I would like you to get some help. I have a list of counselors you could call for an appointment.”

As a substance abuse situation worsens, or if you simply avoided dealing with the situation out of fear, the behavior of the drinker (or drug abuser) might have escalated into extremes of aggressiveness. To continue being fully honest with this person you might also add the following:

- “I also feel disrespected and angry with you because of the hurtful name-calling remarks you make to me when you are drinking/using. I feel afraid of you when you raise your voice. Sometimes I don’t feel safe with you because you seem like you are getting out of control. I want you to get professional help. Here are some numbers you can call for an appointment.”

Please keep in mind there are no “cookie cutter” scripts for your situation, but hopefully these examples and suggestions can serve as basic guidelines as you prepare to have these very important conversations. Remember to get past your fear and speak from your heart. Keep in mind that a confidential consultation with one of our EmployeeCare counselors can assist you with customizing a script to fit your specific situation.

The Region's Leader

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Suite 201
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