



# CARING

A service of your *Caring for the Mind* and  
Employee Assistance Programs

## Learning From Our Mistakes

*All of us make mistakes, and we feel terrible about it. Our society has taught us that mistakes are bad, that we should be able to “get it right the first time.” The overall message is that if you make a mistake you will be punished, and quite often we’re made to feel incompetent and stupid.*

So, it’s no wonder that we often try to waffle, wiggle or worm our way out of taking responsibility for the mistake.

But, isn’t it refreshing when somebody says, “I made a mistake, and this is what I’m going to do to correct it?”

Wouldn’t it be great if we could foster a climate in our own homes and workplaces where mistakes are considered learning opportunities? We can do it and here’s how:

**Step One:** When you make a mistake, acknowledge it immediately using clear, simple words. Avoid saying “A mistake was made.” Instead say, “I made a mistake.”

**Step Two:** Figure out what caused the problem. Find the weaknesses

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in your procedure or thinking. Avoid finger pointing and shifting blame.

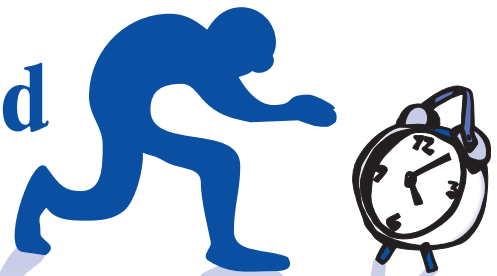
**Step Three:** Ask yourself, “How can I prevent this from happening again?” If others were involved, get input from them.

**Step Four:** Forgive yourself. Remember, you learn far more from your mistakes than you do from your successes.

**Consider too:**

- If you can admit you made a mistake, it gives others the freedom to do so as well, creating a more honest environment and allowing mistakes to be corrected earlier.
- When you have enough self confidence to admit a mistake, others gain confidence in you.
- Others are more likely to support you if they see that you are flexible and can back off when you’re wrong.
- Being upfront about your own blunders will give you the reputation as someone who is unafraid to face the truth.
- Be honest with yourself when you make a mistake. Avoid self deception.

## Five Time Gobblers and How to Control Them



1. **Multi-tasking.** Despite all the positive hoopla given to multi-tasking – doing more than one thing at the same time - the latest studies say that it may not be such a great idea. Switching from one task to another takes time, lowering productivity and the quality of the work. It’s better to set priorities. Take the single most important task, set a goal and get to work. Do not go on to the second task until the first one is completed.
2. **Trying to do everything yourself.** Learn to delegate. Ask for help. (One little communication tip, women – if you want a man to do something, always say “Would you ...?”)
3. **Say “no” and mean it.** Decide what you want to do and how much you can realistically do, then say “no” to everything else.
4. **Phone calls.** Screen your calls.
5. **Putting things off.** Use the energy you expend putting off an unpleasant task to get it done and off your mind. Divide large tasks into smaller ones. Reward yourself when you accomplish a task.

# What is a Parent's Job?

Ask that question in the break room and you'll probably be overwhelmed by the responses. Some parents feel that their obligation to their children is to provide food, clothing and shelter to age 18. Others will feel their obligation includes those things but that they are also responsible for nurturing the child, teaching values, providing a good education, and creating as many opportunities for mental, social, emotional, spiritual and physical growth as possible.

Ask the question and see what you get.

## Choice

Fame or integrity: which is more important?  
Money or happiness: which is more valuable?  
Success or failure: which is more destructive?

If you look to others for fulfillment,  
You will never truly be fulfilled.

If your happiness depends on money,  
You will never be happy with yourself.

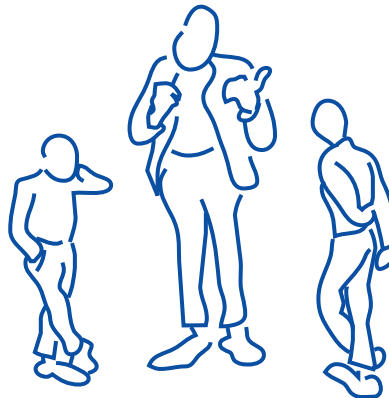
Be content with what you have;

Rejoice in the way things are.

When you realize that nothing is lacking,  
The whole world belongs to you!

—Lao Tzu  
Chinese Philosopher

# Conversations with Kids



*Adults usually do not have any difficulty communicating with children when it simply involves giving directions (how to use scissors) or explaining things (why cars are dangerous). But they sometimes have difficulty communicating when feelings are involved—either the child's or their own.*

Talking to your children (and grandchildren) about feelings is one of the most important things you can do to help them grow into warm, empathetic and caring people. You can help them understand their anger, sadness, joyfulness, uneasiness, etc., and give them the tools they'll need to deal with those issues when they arise.

You can help them understand how the world works and how to navigate it. You can talk about your family history and the values (honesty, integrity, reverence, etc.) your family holds. You can explore topics together. Your presence with them and the fact that you care what they think and feel will go a long way in molding them into responsible adults.

Good communication leads to warm relationships, cooperation and feelings of worth. Poor communication leads to kids who “turn off” adults, conflict and bickering and feelings of worthlessness.

You also want to find out what your children value at the current time in their lives. One suggestion is to use the “Survivor” strategy. Ask them, “If you were stranded on an island somewhere and could only take five items with you, what would they be and why?” Or, “If you were stranded on an island somewhere and could take only two other people with you, who would you take and why?”

Can you guess what your kids would answer?



## About CARING

CARING is a quarterly publication of the Business Resource Center of the Pastoral Institute. It is designed as a resource to help you cope with the challenges of daily living at home and at work. Your *Caring for the Mind* and Employee Assistance Programs provide counseling for you and your family when you face personal and family concerns. To make an appointment in Columbus, call (706) 649-6500. In Lanett, AL, call (334) 644-1172. In other areas, call (800) 649-6446 to get a referral to a counselor in your area.

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