

# 7

## MUST HABITS

Required by All Employees to Create  
Psychologically Safe & Inclusive Teams



*The secret of my success is that I deeply respect  
and learn from my peers and customers.*

**Brendon Burchard**

# INTRODUCTION

## **How you show up matters. It impacts your and others' experiences.**

Research suggests that the average worker spends a third of their life at work, [i] and many experience depression, anxiety, and isolation because of work-related job stress.[ii]

Positive peer-to-peer interactions[iii] are among the most beneficial factors for supporting employees to have a positive experience. It cannot be overstated how vital psychologically safe and meaningful social connections are in the workplace.

EY research found in 2022 that around eight out of 10 employees (82 percent) reported they feel lonely at work. Another study found having friends in the workplace mattered to their experience. Eighty percent reported a strong sense of belonging to the organization.[iv] Being kind, respectful, and caring of other peers allows meaningful and authentic social connections[v] to develop. This program encourages ALL EMPLOYEES to be accountable for living their organizations' values, fulfill the requirements of their employee contracts, and help all employees and leaders they interact with have a positive employee experience. Employees' experiences define workplace cultures. Leaders are a protective factor and play a significant role in employees' experiences, such as peer-to-peer interactions.

Every interaction matters when creating a psychologically safe and inclusive team. For you and your members to believe you work in a team with these attributes, you must feel a sense of belonging, welcomed, and safe sharing opinions without fear of judgment or retaliation. Psychologically safe teams create a culture where all members accept that there will be disagreements, conflicts, and upsets. Members know they have a responsibility to deal with conflict respectfully.

## Time to begin the journey to master the seven employee habits

The goal of this resource is to guide workers to be mindful of how their behaviour can impact others and themselves. Every employee has a role and responsibility for creating a psychologically safe workplace. By giving you this resource, your employer is setting a minimal set of expectations for the habits they want you to master, one interaction at a time



**PURPOSE**



**SELF-CARE**



**ACCOUNTABLE**



**CARING**



**TOLERANT**



**CONNECTIONS**



**TEAM PLAYER**

## **Committing to adopting the seven must habits for creating a psychologically safe and inclusive culture**

You likely have the foundational knowledge and skills to execute the following seven must habits. Some do not always demonstrate the habits to their peers because of a choice. People who do not value or respect someone they interact with may not treat them the same as someone they value. That suggests that when one employee disrespects another, it is not a competency issue but a choice.

This is often related to emotions. If someone unaware of this choice has an unpleasant experience with a peer, they label them as X, which can automatically trigger negative thoughts and emotions when interacting.

All employees should develop their mental health and resiliency skills to cope with adversity and stress better. Stress often is not the problem; it is how people react. Emotional regulation is a learned skill to assist a person to tame their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours so they do not react negatively or do something they may regret later.

Foundational skills like emotional literacy and regulation can help you better manage unpleasant emotions. Life is challenging, and there will always be inconvenient stressors.

## FOUR KEY INTRAPERSONAL HABITS

Interpersonal skills are perhaps the most underdeveloped and focused on by adults. Why? Many people were never taught those skills that are in their control. People's thoughts and actions can improve how we interact and experience the world. These skills are like muscles. They require attention and practice to become habits. Life has many choices. However, if we are unaware of the choices within our control, we may get caught in faulty beliefs, assumptions, and less effective habits.

### PURPOSE

This habit promotes the benefits of defining and monitoring the purpose of work. Why do you get up to go to work each day? Is it just for a paycheque or to feel connected and a part of something that provides a sense of pride? Discover your why and be curious about how to advance your career opportunities if you are looking for more. What you tell yourself about your work impacts how you think, feel, and show up.



### Coaching tips for building purpose in the workplace:

- Get good at what you do and take pride in doing a good job. This will help create positive emotions and thoughts about your work. Work is much more enjoyable when you take pride in what you are doing. The role does not matter; what you tell yourself matters.
- If career advancement is important, accept that how you show up each day and the quality of your work matter. Quality rises to the top. Work hard, be patient, and be realistic when asked what you want next in your career. Most importantly, be humble.
- Pay attention to your self-talk and be grateful for what you have.

## TOLERANT

This habit promotes demonstrating humility and empathy and resisting the urge to criticize or judge others' mistakes. No one is perfect. You will have hard days and times when you will appreciate others being tolerant and giving you space to correct a mistake, take accountability, and learn. Do not assume it is about you when someone does something you find frustrating. Resist the urge to take things personally and set clear boundaries on what is acceptable.



### Coaching tips for being tolerant in the workplace:

- When someone does something inappropriate, check to see if they are OK and aware of what they have done. Pause and allow them to be accountable without feeling attacked or judged.
- Accept that mistakes will happen. Instead of making judgmental statements, ask for a solution. If someone responds rudely, set a boundary. Do not take abuse; escalate to a leader. You cannot make others accept accountability for their mistakes.
- Be patient and accept that not everyone learns the same as you or knows what you know. Just because someone has not had your experiences or opportunities does not mean they cannot learn.

## ACCOUNTABLE

This habit promotes the requirement to own your behaviour in the workplace. It requires demonstrating integrity by following through on all organizational policies and procedures, even when not being watched, and fulfilling your employee-employer contract. It means acting when it may not feel comfortable or easy, such as being an upstander and having zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment (e.g., see something, say something). It also means being accountable for mistakes, apologizing when appropriate, and fixing them. Provide confidence in reducing the risk of making the same mistake again. Being accountable requires a reasonable set of expectations that you are not perfect and could be tempted to take shortcuts. Being accountable requires self-confidence that comes from within. Self-discipline comes from setting standards, holding yourself accountable, and not blaming others for your shortcomings.



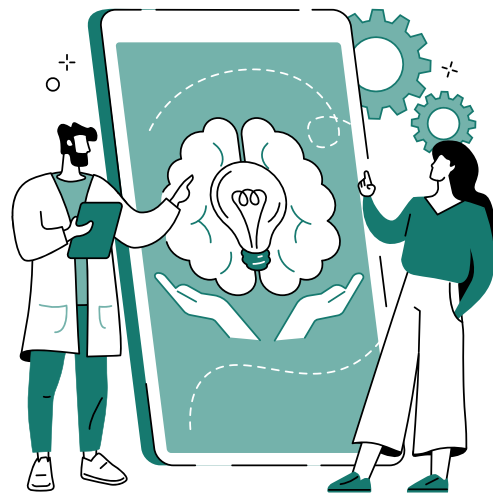
### Coaching tips for being accountable in your workplace:

- Set the foundation for self-accountability by being on time for meetings and work and maintaining a standard that you, your teammates, customers, and your manager appreciate.
- Be an upstander. Enforce workplace violence and respect for workplace policies. If you are intimidated and do not feel psychologically safe to confront a bully or harasser or report them to a manager or HR, call the whistleblower line and make an anonymous complaint.
- Own your mistakes quickly. Resist the urge to provide excuses or be defensive when you know you are wrong. Accept the consequences of your actions. Focus on the learning and how you can improve from your mistakes.



## SELF-CARE

The environment can significantly influence your mental health and resilience, meaning a supportive team and manager matter. Coming to work well-rested, hydrated, and fueled by good nutrition also matter. Thriving in life and work requires caring for your physical and mental health. You cannot keep a car on the road without ensuring it has air in the tires, proper fluids in the motor, and gas to run it.



Many employees struggle because they are tired. Fatigue can be a form of impairment that increases the risk of mistakes and accidents. Taking care of your mental and physical health is a critical habit for creating a positive experience for yourself and others. There will always be stress. Habits that protect your mental health through daily practices like mental fitness are protective factors for your peers, customers, and families.

### Coaching tips for self-care in your workplace:

- Discover and understand all your benefits programs and support resources. Learn how programs work and how to access them. The wrong time to prepare for a crisis is when you are in it.
- Develop a mental fitness plan that supports physical health, positive emotions, and thoughts and encourages developing a healthy relationship with yourself. Accept how helpful acts of kindness can support others' mental health and well-being.
- Complete your annual physical check-ups (e.g., cancer screenings) with your MD to reduce risks to your health.

# THREE KEY INTERPERSONAL HABITS

The following three habits will support your and others' employee experience. Interpersonal habits refer to how you can positively or negatively impact others' experiences. Feeling connected and getting along well in the workplace also positively impacts you.

## CONNECTIONS

This habit promotes the value of developing meaningful and psychologically safe connections where you understand the other person's point of view without judgment and build trust and rapport. Building and maintaining workplace relationships helps you feel welcomed, valued, and respected. Be open to allowing others to get to know you.



### Coaching tips for building relationships in the workplace:

- Expand your social network at work by meeting new people within or outside your group and helping connect new people by introducing them to people you know.
- When meeting new people at work, be curious about what they like and their strengths by asking questions and listening carefully to demonstrate you are interested in them.
- Many employees' most significant energy drains are social isolation and feeling isolated in the workplace. Notice how others are connecting. Differences like introversion, age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation can be barriers in workplaces that are not inclusive and welcoming. Helping others feel connected helps them, and you feel good.

## TEAM PLAYER

This habit requires being open to others' ideas. Commit to achieving your team's goals. Be flexible and agile to support its success and bring a positive attitude to the workplace. Team players are competitive and want to win, but not at the expense of their teammates. They take credit only for what they do and never self-promote or take credit for work they have not done. They do not

talk negatively or gossip about teammates behind their backs. Team players live the organization's values by role modelling and holding teammates accountable to expectations and standards. Team players are OK with conflict and understand that teammates will disagree and may have different points of view. Out of respect, they sit and work out differences calmly and professionally. Team players respect others' workloads and do not leave things to their teammates (e.g., leave things in a mess for the next shift to clean up).



### Coaching tips for being a team player in the workplace:

- Honour commitments to follow through and do what you say. Check in with teammates on your brand by doing what you say you will do.
- Give credit where credit is due; celebrate and acknowledge peers' accomplishments.
- Deal with conflict when it arises. Conflict is not bad but requires dealing with it head-on so it does not escalate. If unsure how to deal with conflict, take training. It is a valuable life skill to have at work and home.

## CARING

This habit promotes the value of being open, approachable, and demonstrating a genuine interest in others' successes and experiences. Caring is about putting more humanity into the workplace. It begins by treating everyone with the same respect so they feel valued when you interact with them through simple acts that take little energy or effort, such as saying hello or asking how they are doing. Small gestures can help customers and peers feel welcomed and comfortable in your presence and demonstrate you value them.



It is not just for those you like. This mindset can be applied to everyone in your group and teams. Caring is pitching in to help team members, checking how they are doing, and being someone safe to ask for support. In times of stress or concern for a peer, peer support is where you step up and ask, "How are you doing? I am here if you need me, and I am not going anywhere." Other ways to think about caring are treating others as you would like to be treated, understanding what someone needs, and demonstrating a willingness to help. Caring is also being honest with a person, and when they are not doing what is expected, letting them know so they can take accountability and improve.

## **Coaching tips to demonstrate caring in the workplace**

- Check in with people and notice what is good before correcting. Many things in the workplace can be improved, and many are done well. Caring about others means holding them accountable and helping them focus on what is working.
- Check in on people when your gut picks up that something is wrong. Do not push help onto others. Just make it clear you are checking in on how they are doing and let them know you are there if they need anything.
- Pay attention to your body language, which represents much of your communication. You do not demonstrate caring if you walk around closed and are unmindful of how your body language could impact others. Humans can affect others' emotions through mirror neurons without saying a word. Care about the energy you send off and focus on projecting positive energy. When having a bad day, let others know you are not feeling your usual self, and it has nothing to do with them if you seem a bit off.

## **Developing new habits is a process, not an event.**

- It can take 18 to 254 days to develop any of the above into a new habit. It typically takes 66 days for a new behaviour to become automatic.[VI]
- Check out the [Coaching Tips for Developing New Habits](#) link.

## REFERENCES

- [i] Fotinatos-Ventouratos R., Cooper C. (2015). The economic crisis and occupational stress. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- [ii] Health and Safety Executive. (2018). Work related stress depression or anxiety statistics in Great Britain, 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf>
- [iii] Nappo N. Job stress and interpersonal relationships cross country evidence from the EU15: a correlation analysis. BMC Public Health. 2020 Jul 20;20(1):1143.
- [iv] <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/pages/employees-around-the-globe-feel-lonely-crave-a-sense-of-belonging.aspx>
- [v] <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/all-things-work/pages/lonely-at-work.aspx#:~:text=Even%20employees%20who%20regularly%20work,conducted%20by%20consulting%20firm%20EY.>
- [i] <https://www.healthline.com/health/how-long-does-it-take-to-form-a-habit#takeaway>