

## On the job... No orientation on a new job

### **Situation:**

Last Monday I started a new job and the first day was tough. They told me what I was supposed to do and didn't go into a lot of detail. There are three other people doing the same work and they're right there near me. It seemed like every few minutes something different would come up and I'd have to ask somebody a question. I really felt like I was in over my head because I didn't know all the procedures.

### **Symptoms:**

At lunchtime when I went outside I realized that I was really not feeling well. My stomach was upset, I almost felt like crying. It was as if the whole world was against me. "I can't do this. I should just go home now and call them to say I quit. I can't do that – I need the money. But I can't keep asking all those questions. Those people are going to think I'm dumb. I've got to keep this job!"

### **Solution:**

When I get worried, it's hard for me to think straight. So I got out my list of mental fitness tools and went through them one by one. By the time I was half way down the page, I started feeling better. They all seemed to fit!

Here's what I can remember telling myself: "Asking questions is uncomfortable, and I don't need to be comfortable to function." In fact, once I told myself that I realized that all the people who were answering my questions were nice about it.

I expected to know everything about the job the first day. That's the perfectionist in me. The fact is, no one knows all about any new job when they first start – especially their first day.

So I lowered my standards. I'm not wrong I'm average for asking questions. Instead of beating myself up for asking, I could be giving myself a pat on the back for asking. It takes self leadership to make the effort to ask.

Instead of thinking insecurely, thinking the people would think I was dumb for asking all the questions, I turned it around. They might be thinking that I was interested in doing well, that's why I was making sure I knew the correct procedures. I actually got a smile on my face when I thought about that.

I also remembered that you can't be comfortable in an uncomfortable situation – and the first few days on a new job are somewhat uncomfortable for most people. Knowing it was average helped.

It was easy to recognize the fear, and I decided to keep going. Then I realized the subtle angry temper I had. I was mad that they didn't give me more training or explanation. And for that: They're not wrong they're average. That statement doesn't make them right. But



it cut into the anger I was having that was contributing to my worry, my tension and my symptoms. I never knew that worry was a symptom and that it came from my thoughts.

I saw that I was lumping everything that happened that morning into one event. I made the decision that in the afternoon each time I asked a question would be a separate triviality that I could choose to work down by changing my thoughts.

***In the past:***

Before if I felt like leaving at lunchtime I probably would have. In fact I've done it in the past. Most of the time I would stay at a job for a while and end up being so anxious or depressed that I would quit. I thought I didn't have what it took to be in the work world. Now I have my mental fitness tools wherever I go. And if I'm still at the point where I have to look at the list of tools to help me out, that's OK too. I know that I am making a business of my mental health.

