

## Smart Strategies

Solutions for Workplace Challenges



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Dear Reader,

The legend is that the phoenix arises from its ashes. We didn't crash and burn, mostly faded away as life got busy. So a more accurate metaphor would be pulling an old dusty book off the shelf, blowing away the dust and seeing if there are still stories to tell. I think I've got a few more in me. Let me know what you think.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alan'.

Alan Krieger

## It's Holiday Season... Who's got the time?

I've been presenting a number of time management programs this fall. People seem even more stressed than usual, and I've developed a few essential strategies that really work! I'll roll out one strategy each issue.

The tip below is one of the **three keys to solving procrastination**.

## Personal Life Balance: De-Stress/ Re-invigorate

Many people, myself included, struggle with work/life balance and stress. Each issue we'll share some tips and I hope you'll share yours as well.

My wife is a poet and artist and frequently points out the beauty all around. Mindfulness is the new buzz word and it really works... when I remember to engage it.

So take a moment on your way into work to look at the sky, see the trees (even in their bare, brown winter beauty) against the sky, and note how much all is well with the world.

Sure, there's plenty wrong with the world, but there's lots of good stuff and let's focus on that.

Take a deep breath and breathe in the healing energy of the world, breathe out slowly letting worry, fear and anger leave with the exhale. Take a walk at lunch and repeat this and again as you leave work.

Try it now... I hope you feel better already! Use this to keep a balance during the holiday season - savor the good times with family and breathe through all the chaos!

**Use your bio-rhythm** to increase efficiency. Are you a morning person? Does your brain engage later in the day? Each of us has a natural energy cycle that is fairly constant. By "energy" I mean your mental ability to focus, get things done, stay on track, and do more complex analysis.

Keep a log at work - rate your energy first thing when you come in and then periodically throughout the day. Note your high energy times - that's when you want to tackle your most important, complex work and/or the work you've been putting off - your least satisfying work.

The key to making this work is having your work environment be conducive to concentration at your high energy times. If you have an office with a door or can escape to a small conference room, you can control your environment... sort of - people may still barge in, along with emails, phone calls and texts - we'll address them in a future issue.

For now, try hard to find a quiet space to concentrate during your high energy times and ask/beg your colleagues and boss to save their interruptions for other times of the day. Use your low energy times for routine work, work you enjoy, socializing, going to meetings, making/taking phone calls and reading your email. I'm about out of time... so if you'd like to know more about this, especially if you're a procrastinator, [click here to go to our time management blog](#) for the other two keys to solving procrastination.

In our next newsletter issue we'll address how to master your to do list!

Happy Holidays!

### Shameless Commerce Division

(with thanks to Car Talk)



It's the holiday season, my wife is an artist, so I thought I'd offer you a link to some unique and low cost holiday gifts.

My wife produces a beautiful wall calendar with photos of nature, note cards with beautiful pictures, and matted photos.

Check them out on her website: [www.spiritwindstudio.net](http://www.spiritwindstudio.net)

You can also follow her on [Facebook](#).

## How to Deal with Difficult People

Along with time management, another popular class I teach is dealing effectively with difficult people. This is also a big topic, and we'll tackle it in stages.

Think about your difficult people. When I ask class participants to state what makes people difficult, they go off on a long rant about:

- rude, critical know-it-alls, who don't cooperate
- aggressive shouters who intimidate with volume and negativity
- chatty socializers who waste time and gossip
- story tellers/comedians who create distractions

I'm sure you know some of these and probably a few others.

The key is to focus on why these behaviors cause you a problem, not getting to the root cause of the behavior. Difficult people act in ways that make it difficult for you to get your work done, and/or create an environment that is uncomfortable/unsafe.

Many people come to my class to learn how to get rid of their difficult people or give them an attitude transplant. Those are difficult to do successfully.

Instead, focus on reducing the negative impact of their behavior. It's much more likely to succeed, and if you do, presto! They stop becoming difficult, even if they don't change their behavior.

Abraham Lincoln once said: *"Do I not eliminate my enemies when I make them my friends?"*

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You may also reprint any of these articles as long as you include the following in the reprint and send a copy to me at [alan@krsol.com](mailto:alan@krsol.com):

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[www.kriegersolutions.com](http://www.kriegersolutions.com)"*

We don't need to become friends with these difficult people, but when we eliminate the negative impact, we eliminate difficult people. For example, we can learn to reinterpret their behavior, not take it personally (it's usually not meant as a personal attack), and learn to respond to them in ways they prefer. They'll keep doing their difficult thing, but by reframing and changing our response, we can greatly reduce the negative impact of their behaviors.

While it's hard to develop a thick skin and redirect people who talk too much, turns out that it's much easier than trying to change the other person!

Start by identifying the actual behaviors of the difficult people. What is it that they do and say? Don't talk about their attitudes or intentions - you're not a mind reader. Talk about what you know and can observe directly - their behavior.

Then [check out our difficult people blog](#) for strategies on how to constructively confront and manage difficult people.

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