Barista's burden
The dark side of "service with a smile"

By Chris Woolston, **Knowable Magazine** (Used with the author's permission)

It takes a deft touch to draw a decent heart in latte foam, but that's not the hardest part about working as a barista. The real backbreaker: cheerfully greeting a hundred people in a row, even that one guy who hasn't left a tip in three years but always complains that his coffee isn't hot enough except for the times that it's too hot.

For baristas, salespeople, flight attendants and many other service workers, fake smiles and forced pleasantries often come with the job description. But psychologists warn that emotions can't just be flipped on like an espresso machine, and smiles aren't as easy to put on as name tags. Feigning feelings at work—what psychologists call **"emotional labor"**—can be as mentally and physically taxing as any other type of workplace stress, but few workers or employers recognize the threat, says Neal Ashkanasy, a professor of business management at Queensland University in Brisbane, Australia. "People just put expressions on their faces without any idea what kind of stress it's causing," he says.

Alicia Grandey, a psychologist at Pennsylvania State University and a leader in emotional labor research, had to put on a happy face as a barista at Starbucks before she started grad school in the 1990s. "I'm a reasonably social person, but it was exhausting," she says. "I would come home from a day of barista-ing and my face would hurt. I thought I was just being whiny." Now she knows what was really happening: The sheer effort of expressing emotions she wasn't always feeling was wearing her down, one smile at a time.

Emotional labor taxes some of the deepest parts of the psyche. As Ashkanasy explains, genuine smiles, laughs, frowns and other outward signs of true emotions mostly flow from the amygdala, a part of the brain that shapes our most fundamental impulses, from fear to lust. Putting on a fake emotion means going against the wishes of the amygdala, a piece of anatomy that's used to getting its way. "Your brain has to do a lot of work to keep that under control, and it uses physical resources to do it," Ashkanasy says.

That kind of effort is more than just tiring. Over time, it could become unhealthy. "If your feelings are different from what you're showing, you can start to get back strain, neck strain and stomachaches," Grandey says. The toll

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Greetings City Employees!

Employees often come to the EAP to talk about specific situations and stressors that impact them at work, such as conflict in their work unit or challenging work demands. However, there is another type of work stress that the EAP can address called "emotional labor" which is when workers need to put on a smile and fake having a positive attitude with those they interact with when they are feeling anything but positive. Emotional labor, as discussed in the article, *Barista's burden,* can be more long-term and cumulative in nature, and can slowly wear down an employee.

Another article written by our external EAP counselor Randy Kratz titled "Happy Boss" is featured for our Leadership Matters segment, but contains tips that can be useful for any person in the workplace, whether you are in a formal leadership role in your organization or looking for ways to build your own personal leadership skills.

~ The EAP Team

of emotional labor at work can follow people after hours, too. A 2013 study of bus drivers found that those who reported faking emotions during the day were **more likely to suffer from insomnia, anxiety and emotional exhaustion at home**. A 2014 study of hotel managers by Grandey and colleagues found that people who had to feign their feelings on the job **tended to be less helpful at home**, presumably because they were too tired to pick up a broom or dishrag. And in yet-to-be-published research, Grandey and colleagues also found that people who fake positive emotions at less-than-positive jobs tend to drink more alcohol at home, perhaps because they feel inclined to cut loose after keeping things buttoned up. Other studies have suggested **a similar lack of control with food**. "You feel like you don't have any willpower," Grandey says.

Like any other task, emotional labor is easier for some people than others, Ashkanasy says. People who are naturally cheerful will have less trouble embracing the joy of scanning groceries or refilling baskets with bread sticks. They won't have to expend as much effort putting on a brave face, which makes it easier to thrive at their work, at least for a while.

Those who aren't actually happy with their work have another option: actively creating emotions needed for a job. Like a method actor trying to get into a role, a flight attendant could convince himself that he enjoys performing safety demonstrations that nobody watches. "You can try to recall moments that connect to the emotional state that you want to be in," Ashkanasy says. You aren't standing there holding an oxygen mask for the 1,488th time, no. "You're hanging out at a great party."

> **Bosses and supervisors who expect smiles from their employees should try to promote a supportive work atmosphere.**

Once it's perfected, the acting approach can lessen much of the sting of emotional labor. After all, it doesn't take much effort to smile if you're actually happy. But if your name isn't Daniel Day-Lewis, method acting takes effort and training, something that few employers are able or willing to provide. "When I worked at Starbucks, we had two-week training that included role-playing situations with customers," Grandey says. "**They don't do that anymore.**" (Starbucks did not respond to a request for comment before publication.)

It's not just corporate culture that makes life difficult for service employees; the national culture matters, too. While Americans expect bottomless reserves of cheerfulness from service workers, customers in some other countries can be more forgiving. A 2005 study by Grandey and colleagues found that **employees in France don't suffer as many consequences** from emotional labor, partly because being rude and gruff on the job is a bit of a French tradition. "If they're smiling, it's because they want to," Grandey says. "They don't have the same requirements about 'service with a smile' as the US." Expectations in US restaurants and coffee shops aren't likely to change soon, but employers can still take steps to lessen the strain of emotional labor. Ideally, Grandey says, all service employees would have a break room outside of the public eye where they could truly be themselves, at least for a little while. Also, she says, bosses and supervisors who expect smiles from their employees should try to promote a supportive work atmosphere—fake smiles take less effort when you're not getting yelled at behind the scenes.

Employers can also help their workers by encouraging them to think about the pleasant customers they meet throughout the day, not the few bad actors, says Allison Gabriel, a business psychologist at the University of Arizona. And if the public learned more about emotional labor, perhaps they would show a little more sympathy, making jerkish encounters fewer and farther between. "When I see a service employee who is not smiling or who is not super enthusiastic, I'll stop and say, 'How is your day going?'" Gabriel says. "I remind myself that their job may look simple, but so much of their job is managing their emotions to make my experience better. We don't give them enough credit."

Knowable Magazine is an independent journalistic endeavor from Annual Reviews.

Brené Brown's Netflix Special Busts Six Vulnerability Myths

By Barbara Markway, Ph.D., **Psychology Today** (Used with the author's permission)

Vulnerability is the unsuspecting superpower we need to live a courageous life.

Brené Brown's vast and popular body of work (multiple best-selling books, wildly popular TED talks, and now a new Netflix special, *The Call to Courage*) have shown us that vulnerability is actually a good thing—the place where creativity, connection, courage, love, belonging, trust, and joy are born. Yet many people, myself included, even once convinced to give this "vulnerability thing" a try, simply aren't sure where to start. In her new Netflix special, Brown explores the myths surrounding vulnerability so people can put the unsung superpower of vulnerability into action.

Myth #1. Vulnerability is weakness

Most of us believe vulnerability equals weakness, and for some good reasons. First, the dictionary definition of vulnerability typically reads like this: the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally. That definitely sounds like weakness and something you wouldn't want to do voluntarily. Second, most of us are raised to be "brave," but only be brave in a way that doesn't involve risking rejection or failure. Brown defines vulnerability differently. Based on decades of social science research, she's found that vulnerability involves uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. Furthermore, she argues that vulnerability is a necessary precursor to courage.

During the Netflix special, she told the story of talking with members of troops in the Special Forces. She explained her definition of vulnerability and then asked if anyone could find an example of courage that did not involve vulnerability. One person, who had served three tours, raised his hand and said he could think of no examples. He agreed, "There can be no courage without vulnerability."

Putting this into practice: In her book, *Daring Greatly*, Brown lists examples in which people feel vulnerable. The list is lengthy and includes everything from saying no, saying "I love you" first, trying something new, asking for help, or sharing a piece of writing or art publicly. Take a moment to finish this sentence: "Vulnerability for me is _____."

> ## "There can be no courage without vulnerability."

Myth #2. I don't do vulnerability

Brown says this is a phrase she often hears: "I don't do vulnerability." But she goes on to explain we have two options. 1) You either "do vulnerability willingly" or 2) "vulnerability does you." What does she mean by this?

When you're in a situation that causes you to feel vulnerable, you have a couple of options. You can sit with the feelings, acknowledge that they're uncomfortable, but realize you're consciously making the decision to be brave and do what it is you've set out to do. Or, you can distract and numb yourself from the feelings. One way people do this that can cause a lot of harm in relationships is, as Brown says, to "work out their sh*t on other people."

Let's say you're feeling bad about something that happened at work. Maybe you received some unexpected negative feedback. All your shame triggers were flying ("I'm so incompetent."). You go home and find your spouse watching TV, dinner isn't started, the kids are out playing instead of doing their homework. You lash out, "Can't you do any of the work around here. I'm sick and tired of this." A fight ensues, and you both end the evening in stony silence. What would be an alternative, a way of approaching the situation that would involve some vulnerability in the best sense of the word? You could say, "I just need you to know that I had a rough day at work and I could use someone to listen to me without trying to fix everything. I also want you to know I may be crabby but it's not you…"

Putting this into practice: Think of a time when something had triggered a "shame attack" and you took it out on someone else, or maybe you took it out on yourself by overeating or drinking too much. What would it have been like if you'd tried a different approach? Can you imagine doing so in the future?

Myth #3. I can go it alone

Someone came up to talk to Brown after one of her presentations and said, "You've convinced me. I'm going to try vulnerability, but I'm going to try it by myself. I'll see how it goes and then I'll try it with other people." The crowd laughs, partly at the absurdity of this declaration, but also, because we recognize ourselves in this. We live in a culture that admires people who do it on their own. We don't want to ask for help. We don't want to ask for support. It's scary to be vulnerable with others. We could be rejected. Our hearts could break. We don't want to need others, but we do. We're biologically "wired for connection." We need other people for survival. And in addition, Brown states, "In the absence of love and belonging there is suffering."

Putting this into practice: When is it hard for you to ask for help or support? What would make it easier? Can you recall a time when you asked for help and it went well? How do you feel when others ask for support?

Myth #4. You can engineer discomfort out of vulnerability

Brown says she now spends about 70 percent or more of her time working with companies on leadership issues, many of them tech companies. She says there is always someone trying to figure out some hack or algorithm to take the discomfort out of vulnerability. She doesn't blame them; in fact, she said she spent years trying to do that herself, and if there had been a way, she would have found it. Brown says we need to train ourselves to be comfortable with discomfort and uncertainty. She says that with practice, it does get easier.

Putting this into practice: The next time you feel uncomfortable, pause, take even a few deep breaths and don't immediately go for the easy distraction. Let yourself just be with the feelings. Similarly, if someone else is expressing discomfort, don't rush in to fix it. In a way, over-over-fixing, however well-meaning on the surface, can be a sign of disrespect: you don't trust the other person enough to be able to solve their own problems (and some problems can't be fixed).

Myth #5. Trust comes before vulnerability

This myth is sort of like the chicken and the egg. Do you trust someone before you share your vulnerabilities, or does sharing your vulnerability build trust? Brown advises to start sharing little things over time to determine who earns the right to hear your story. You don't just walk up to someone you just met and share your deepest secrets. "Vulnerability minus boundaries is not vulnerability," says Brown.

Putting this into practice: Are you an "over-sharer" or an "under-sharer"? We all probably know an over-sharer (see below) as I think they tend to be more common in this era of social media. However, I tend to be an under-sharer, and not voluntarily give much personal information about myself. It's almost as if I'm afraid someone will use any personal information against me (I know this is irrational.) Take note of which direction you lean and try to nudge yourself a bit in the opposite direction. For example, If someone asks me how my weekend was, I will strive to say more than "fine."

Myth #6. Vulnerability is NOT the same as disclosure

Brown jokes that live tweeting your bikini wax is not vulnerability. Vulnerability doesn't have as much to do with the amount of disclosure, but with the quality of what is disclosed and the intention behind it.

Putting this into practice: Before sharing something publicly, Brown advises asking these questions:
• Why am I sharing this?
• What outcome am I hoping for?
• What emotions am I experiencing?
• What unmet needs might I be trying to meet?

To summarize, Brown says:

Vulnerability is scary, but it's better than getting to the end of your life and realizing that you didn't show up or be seen.

Brown covers these six myths more fully in her book **Daring Greatly**.

If you don't have Netflix, You can also hear Brené Brown talk about these issues on a recent podcast episode of **10% Happier** with Dan Harris.

De-Escalation Tip of the Day: Allow Time for Decisions

By Becky Benishek, **Crisis Prevention Institute**

Today's top CPI de-escalation tip, **allow time for decisions,** dovetails nicely with the last post about **allowing silence for reflection**. In the classic novel, *Don Quixote,* Miguel de Cervantes wrote, "Time ripens all things. No man is born wise."

I suspect that of all the top de-escalation tips we've explored, allowing time might be one of the hardest tips to implement, both in our personal lives and at work. We all feel the pressure of time—in the rush to get to the next patient, to restore focus to the classroom, or to help a loved one regain their composure—taking a few minutes to simply let somebody else think clearly feels like a luxury. I recently said to a friend of mine here at work, "I have to tell myself sometimes to stop, drop, and be mindful."

Allowing time for decisions means that we must have faith in the abilities of the person in crisis. We need to trust that our behavior will impact theirs in a positive way, and that with a few calm, clarifying moments, a person in crisis can make a decision that redirects them from their distress. We can make sure that this is possible by creating an environment for a person in crisis that supports them to think clearly with the time that we've provided. Have we removed any audience or bystanders? Is the area free of potential hazards? Are we in a *Supportive Stance,* displaying nonthreatening body language?

Finally, allowing time can be about more than just de-escalation. As the person or team leader of persons facilitating de-escalation, you should allow yourself time to debrief afterward. I would encourage you to explore this outstanding, **in-depth debriefing resource** written by my colleague Erin Harris with CPI training expert Pam Roncone. In addition to exploring the phases of escalation and supportive responses that are outlined in the **Crisis Development Model**SM, a free video presentation is included that challenges you to maximize the time you take in debriefing to prevent stressful situations from repeating themselves—because **Postvention** is one of the best methods of crisis prevention.

As President John F. Kennedy once said, "We must use time as a tool, not a couch." Our days are full and our work is challenging—investing time wisely can help prevent crises, facilitate healing, and empower individuals to make better, more rational choices. As a CPI Certified Instructor recently shared, "**Spend 5 to save 20.**" Time afforded to an individual in distress is never wasted—dare to be generous.

This information is not a substitute for Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training® offered by CPI.

DE-ESCALATION TIP 10
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Allow time for decisions.

crisisprevention.com

CPI's De-Escalation Techniques

*Due to the variety and nature of the work that many City employees do, there are times when employees may find themselves in an uncomfortable situation with a member of the public, or perhaps even another employee, who may be struggling with their mental health, has a cognitive or intellectual status different from our own, sees reality differently than we do, has a medical condition or medication imbalance, or has found themselves in an uncomfortable situation and is expressing themselves very inappropriately or perhaps even aggressively in the workplace. While we recommend calling 911 if anyone feels immediately threatened or unsafe for themselves or someone else due to the words or actions of another person in their work environment, sometimes situations do not rise to the level of contacting law enforcement, or you may find yourself in a situation where you feel uncomfortable or threatened but are unable to distance yourself from the individual making you uncomfortable, confused, afraid, or angry. Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) is a widely utilized and useful resource that teaches employees and organizations how to de-escalate disruptive and assaultive behavior in safe, non-violent, and respectful way, and they have developed a list of Top Ten De-Escalation Tips which the EAP will be providing to you in this and upcoming newsletter articles. If you have more questions on de-escalation in the workplace, you can confidentially contact the EAP at 266-6561 or you can view upcoming trainings offered by Human Resources on their **training website**.*

LEADERSHIP *Matters*

Happy Boss: 8 Tips for Mood Management

By Randall Kratz, **FEI Behavioral Health**

Have you ever found yourself stuck in a bad mood that a never-ending Winter and late arriving Summer can produce? Anyone, including a manager, can experience mood swings for any number of reasons. Frequent moodiness can originate biologically, resulting from unbalanced brain chemistry, poor diets, sleep patterns and other lifestyle habits. It can also be the result of temporary and situational triggers such as difficult employee behaviors, deadlines at work, pressure from superiors, the receipt of bad news or other personally challenging situations at home.

When two or more people are in close contact, they often take on the emotional disposition of one of the more prominent group members—or, in this case, the boss. Even in a hierarchal environment like the workplace, emotions are contagious and can serve to destabilize employees and severely impact their productivity, concentration, engagement and overall state of mind. Negative emotions at work have been shown to diminish both creativity and openness.

When employees experience the stress or mood swings of their boss, it can lead to poor performance. Because survey research has commonly confirmed most people quit their jobs due to the boss and not the company, it's vital for supervisors to be constantly aware of their emotions and how their moods can affect employees.

So, before you put everyone on performance improvement plans and then go home to fire the dog, make the following commitments to your own happiness:

Let things go. When you feel challenged or judged, let it pass. A strong and confident leader is comfortable in their own skin, accepts people for who they are and doesn't take things personally.

Be kind. Demonstrate security in your leadership by not reacting negatively to others. Remember the contagious effect of interpersonal communication: Kindness begets kindness.

Think of problems as challenges. Whether it's difficult employee behavior or a stressful event, consider what you can learn from challenging experiences. In the words of Kanye West (or maybe Nietzsche), "What doesn't kill me makes me stronger."

Practice gratitude. Is someone doing something that meets the needs of your workplace? If you communicate appreciation, that individual will be more willing to help you in the future. Saying thank you is more than good manners, it's positive karma.

Be honest and authentic. Misrepresenting yourself and the facts of a situation can compromise your integrity and the trust others have in you. As a manager, consistent honesty gives your employees something genuine to which they can react.

Accept what can't be changed. Sure, we all wish we were the smartest person in the room. We wish to be loved by everyone we work with . . . but we rarely are. As soon as you accept who you are, what you're good at and that you can't make everyone happy, you'll find some peace.

Stop before negative and faulty thinking takes over. Know your triggers and pet peeves. Help employees know what's important to you and what you need from them. Teach them about your leadership style. Misunderstandings and misperceptions can create much stress and unhappiness.

Keep in touch with your friends and family. Being a manager can be a lonely job. Bosses especially need the value personal relationships offer. It's important to keep in touch with loved ones, whether through weekly phone calls or an annual visit. Good friends also help to inspire and support happy people; take time out of your week to communicate with them.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) are awesome tools and resources for leaders to use to support their employees' well-being. Don't forget that you are also an employee who may need help from time to time as well. If your happiness levels need a tune-up, do what you tell your employees to do: Call the EAP.
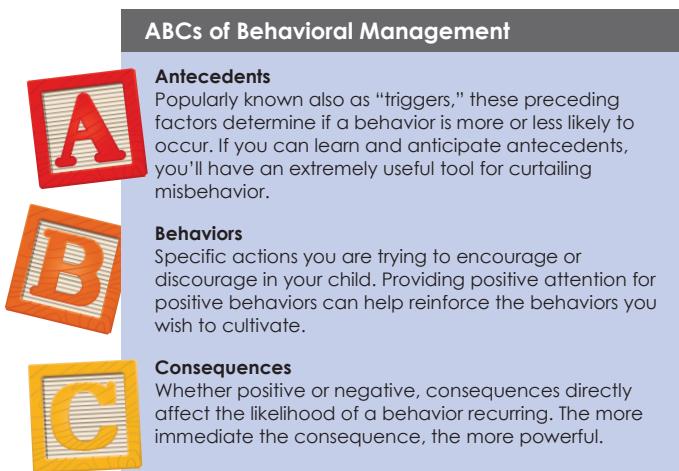
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The City's External EAP Provider

Knowing the "ABCs"
of Behavior Management

For a parent or caregiver, a misbehaving child can sometimes feel like an insurmountable challenge. You just want a little help.

Fortunately, there are several resources and techniques to help manage your child's problem behaviors. According to the Child Mind Institute, following three simple "ABCs" will go a long way when addressing behavioral issues:

ABCs of Behavioral Management

Antecedents
Popularly known also as "triggers," these preceding factors determine if a behavior is more or less likely to occur. If you can learn and anticipate antecedents, you'll have an extremely useful tool for curtailing misbehavior.

Behaviors
Specific actions you are trying to encourage or discourage in your child. Providing positive attention for positive behaviors can help reinforce the behaviors you wish to cultivate.

Consequences
Whether positive or negative, consequences directly affect the likelihood of a behavior recurring. The more immediate the consequence, the more powerful.

Need help? Your EAP can provide additional guidance and resources.

WEBINAR   07.17.19 | 11:00am CT   **REGISTER**

Raising Children in a Social Media Era
As parents who are raising children in an age of electronics, social media and peer pressure, behaviors can be different, intensified and stressful to manage. Learn about key identifiers to watch for as well as basic ways to communicate and engage with your children in order to help improve their behaviors.

Gwen Mueller
Director, Information Technology, FEI Behavioral Health

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Suicide Prevention Training in the Workplace and at Home – Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)

Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. This EAP conducted QPR training will focus on suicide prevention in the workplace and at home, and will include additional education around special populations, such as QPR with children and adolescents, older adults, military and law enforcement, and substance abuse issues.

Register now for the 3-hour training on August 21, 2019.

Thanks for reading,
we hope you found the information useful!

You can reach any of us by calling the EAP Office at (608) 266-6561

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