



It's a done deal



KEVIN JOHNSON/Colby Free Press

Todd Stramel, left, organizing efforts for a new youth center; Ben and Elsie Keller, donating land for the project; and Jada Tubbs, board member and granddaughter of the Kellers, reviewed paperwork in the land transfer. The youth center, known as the Multipurpose Activity Center, will be located south on Franklin Avenue by Amber Waves Apartments.

Stressed out on the job

Dear Dr. Brothers: I just started a new job at a small startup company, which gives me a lot more responsibility and is much more time-intensive than my previous job. The extra work, in addition to the difficulty of starting at a new company, has made me so stressed out that I can barely function. I'm in a bad mood almost all the time, and I find my temper flaring up at the smallest provocation. Will the stress decrease as I go along? Is there anything else I can do to calm myself down? I want to keep my new job, but not if this is the price I have to pay! -- M.S.

Dear M.S.: The good news is that you've recognized that your bad mood and temper flare-ups are caused by stress from work. Because you've recognized this, you can take steps to de-stress. Since you want to keep your job, you should try healthy ways of reducing stress, which can include reading, listening to music, socializing with friends, exercising or praying/religious practice. High levels of stress also can lead to health problems, so reducing your stress level not only will improve your mood and personal relationships, but also your physical and psychological well-being.

You are not alone in this increase in stress level. According to a national survey done by the American Psychological Association this year, one-third of Americans are living with extreme stress, and almost half of Americans believe their stress level has increased in the past five years. Money and work are the leading causes of stress for Americans. A little bit of stress can be a positive influence at work, but it sounds like your job is causing you too much stress to be good for you.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I started a new job a few months ago, and I've gotten along well with all of my co-workers, except for one other woman. This woman seems to dislike me, and talks and whispers to others in the office about me. Because my company is small and we share common working areas, I can overhear her talking about me behind my back. I don't think I've done anything wrong. Should



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

I confront her about it, or just try to have a thicker skin? -- C.L.

Dear C.L.: First, it's important to find out whether this woman thinks that you have wronged her in some way. As a new employee entering into an office with an established professional -- and social -- hierarchy, it's possible that you disrupted this ladder without realizing it. It could be that this woman wanted to offer the job to a friend of hers, or that she simply likes the location of your desk better than hers. There's no way to find out unless you ask.

Once you've determined whether she has any basis to dislike or resent you, you can talk to her about how you feel. It might be tempting to just wait and see, hoping that she will stop her immature behavior if she sees that it doesn't affect you. This could be the case, but if her "mean girl" tactics are making you uncomfortable and unhappy, you should confront her. Since you get along well with your other co-workers,

don't hesitate to ask for their help. They've probably noticed that she is the only one creating a negative environment for you in the office, and would be happy to back you up. The best thing you can do is get her to talk to you, instead of about you.

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