Avoidance Doesn’t Work: Express Yourself
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You may feel tiptoeing around your personal and professional problems (whatever the hurt, resentment, or worry is) will make it go away. You are wrong. You may feel avoiding the problem will be a means to an end. Rethink it.

Avoiding your problems and not stepping into the difficult conversation only makes the problem worse. Plain and simple, avoidance does not work!

You may be thinking, “Sure, that is easy for you to say. Look at where you ARE!”

Absolutely, I am where I am because I have stepped into a large number of uncomfortable, difficult conversations in my life and career. I have chosen to face my doubts, stood up for myself, done the research, and made the commitment to personal and professional growth, again and again.

For example, when working at a veterinary hospital in rural Colorado in the 1990s, I felt unfairly paid. My husband, at the time, explained I was due to receive overtime for all hours worked over 40 hours per week. I was on salary (not tallying the hours at all) and needed to be placed on an hourly tracking system outlined by the Colorado Department of Labor.

I did my homework, mustered up my courage, and went to my veterinarian owner with a request for hourly tracking and overtime. He was not inclined to make the changes stating, “This is how we have always done it [paid veterinary technicians].”

This was not the answer I wanted. I did want to keep my job because I LOVED what I did and worked at this veterinary hospital for many years. I simply wanted to be paid appropriately.

In the Denver newspaper, I read a column for citizens to send a letter to the paper, and a lawyer would respond with a trustworthy answer. That is precisely what I did, and I wrote a letter to the Colorado Bar Association (CBA) describing what you have just read.

I was happy with their response.

“The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires an employer to pay overtime to employees covered under the Act at the rate of 1 ½ times the employee’s regular rate for hours worked in any one week. It may be helpful for you to keep a schedule of the
actual hours worked on a workweek basis so you can calculate any hours over 40 for which overtime compensation is due."

In 1997 I was 21 years of age. I proceeded to inform my veterinarian owner of the CBA letter. From that point forward, I kept track of my hours and was paid appropriately. You can bet that was a difficult conversation. I am happy I made myself endure!

What difficult conversation are you not having? What is not working for you? I challenge you to stop avoiding difficult, uncomfortable conversations. You are encouraged to fully define your needs and wants, personally and professionally. Then take action! 24 years ago, I was on my own. Today, there are resources you can tap into. You are no longer alone!

You must express yourself fully and professionally. Simply, avoidance does not work.