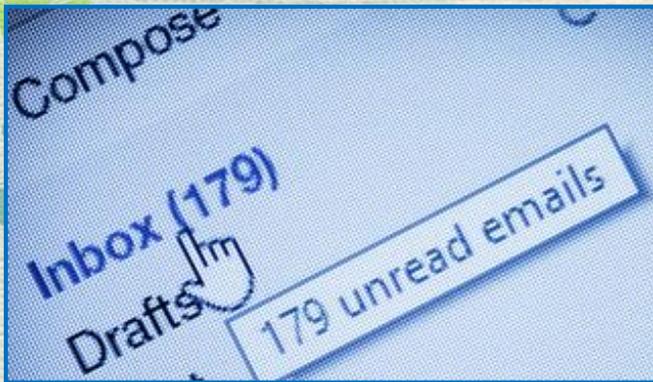


e-tips ...

to help you Live Well

## How to Deal with Inbox Dread



Do you remember being called into the principal's office to be disciplined for your bad behavior? No? Me neither. But I can imagine how it may have felt – sweaty palms, heart racing, knees shaking – preparing yourself emotionally and physically for the big reveal of bad news. At least you had time to prepare from the moment you heard the request or saw the principal herself come and get you out of class. And then there was the rush of friends rallying around you when you came back to see “what happened” and hear your cool story. *Those were the good times.*

Most of that experience has disappeared since the invention of email. Now you click on the line and BOOM - bad news just jumps at you without warning or preparation. It can catch you in the elevator, at the stoplight, in the grocery store. There's no preparation, just a rush of adrenaline as you open a supposedly friendly email only to discover it contains deadly ingredients. Recent examples in my inbox include: “Your services are no longer needed.” “What you did for me didn't work.” “Do this now – no discussion.” “You're less important than the person who just walked in my door.” No wonder opening and responding to email has become a miserable and dreaded task.

Email stress confirms my commitment to only doing email during a certain time of day, when I can gird up my loins, have Diet Coke standing by, and use all of my deep breathing skills to read and respond in a healthy, adult way. I'm also committing to not use email for crucial conversations – but to use the phone or find time to see you, face to face, where we can *actually talk* about requests or changes or anything that could be emotional. I want you to open my emails and get helpful information while feeling valued and uplifted.

Maybe I'll even send a few to myself - just to give me something to look forward to when I click on the inbox!

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Intermountain Employee Assistance Program e-tips are messages that teach, remind, and inspire in our journey to live well.

