

Using a positive attitude as a leader management essay



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Abstract

How to Develop a Positive Attitude and Self-Concept as a Leader

Attitude is a “ mental position relative to a way of thinking or being; a leaning toward that which you believe” (Purkey, 1988). A positive attitude is the inclination to generally be in an optimistic state of mind. Positive attitude, positive thinking are characteristics that will make a leader’s life more positive and increase their self worth (Purkey, 1988).

Let’s focus on how a positive mind-set can help leaders overcome life’s challenges. There are just some people in the world that cannot look past all the negative and start looking at the positive things in life (Campbell & Martinez-Perez, 1977, pp. 455-459). If you cannot get past the negative and start concentrating on the positive you cannot succeed as a great leader because your mind will be elsewhere. To accomplish a task a leader must have full concentration on the objective. Any deviations can hinder the team and objective (Campbell & Martinez-Perez, 1977, pp. 455-459).

A positive mind-set gives the leader the ambition and drive to accomplish the goals an organization has given. Everyone has goals. Some may be bigger and more advanced than others but every leader has a goal. To accomplish these goals, a leader must “ focus on putting their life out there and risking it for success” (Campbell & Martinez-Perez, 1977, pp. 455-459).

“ Your thoughts and emotions, day in and day out, affect all aspects of your life” (“ Developing a positive attitude,” 2008). A way to determine if one is thinking positively is as you are contemplating a decision or action stop

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yourself. As you stop, begin to realize if you are encouraging yourself or putting yourself down (“ Developing a positive attitude,” 2008).

Some steps to keep in mind for thinking positive are:

Recognize that you have a negative attitude

Before the process can begin, recognizing there is a problem is key. If one does not believe he or she has a problem then the problem cannot be addressed (“ Developing a positive attitude,” 2008).

Recognize that there are causes of not having a positive attitude

Causes could be problems at home, at the work place, or you are just a negative person in general (“ Developing a positive attitude,” 2008).

Act instead of reacting

If you see a situation arising that could have negative impact on your life in any way, you should act immediately. Not acting immediately could have a negative impact on more than just you. So do not be selfish and be proactive (Harness, 2006).

Learn to be grateful for what you have

It is good to have ambitions and drive, however, when these things turn into greedy and jealousy that is when there is a problem. Having ambitions is healthy because you should want to increase your capability but be thankful for what you have (Harness, 2006). The author has been told by his leaders that “ there will always be someone with a bigger house, who will drive a

better car, and have a better job than you. So be thankful for what you have.”

Seize every opportunity you can instead of regretting it

As the Dodge Ram motto goes, “ Grab life by the horns.” You have the power to improve yourself. You have to want it bad enough and fight for it

(Harness, 2006).

Believe you are in charge of your destiny

“ No one can take your dreams from you except for you.” If you fail it is your fault but if you succeed it is your success (Harness, 2006).

Also, to have a positive attitude you must have a healthy self-esteem and self confidence. “ Your self-esteem is the part of your self-concept that determines your self-worth” (Campbell & Martinez-Perez, 1977, pp. 455-459). Websters dictionary defines self-esteem as “ a confidence and satisfaction in oneself” (“ Self-esteem,” 2010).

Most professional business individuals have agreed that an organization must have leaders with high self-esteem characterized by “ tolerance and respect for others, accept responsibility for their actions, and who are self-motivated” (Reasoner, 2010). With tabloids, talk shows, and reality shows filling our children’s minds the actual term self-esteem has changed in meaning over the years. Some have defined it as just “ feeling good” about one’s self (Reasoner, 2010). An example is if life is going great then one must have high self-esteem. Many tie a high self-esteem to having a high ego and having a mind set of ‘ I’m better than you’ (Reasoner, 2010). People
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with low self-esteem are not confident in themselves. They put others down so it brings them up. Inside, they do not believe in themselves (Reasoner, 2010). People with low self-esteem use others to their advantage and try to impress their own leaders for acceptance (Reasoner, 2010).

Typical characteristics of people with low self-esteem are:

Violence Suicide

Alcoholism Teen Pregnancy

Drug Abuse Drop out of school

Eating disorders Low Academic Grades

(Reasoner, 2010)

Over the years, there have been many different definitions of self-esteem. Webster's definition is different than the National Association of Self-Esteem's (NASE). NASE's definition states " the experience of being capable of meeting life's challenges and being worthy of happiness" (Reasoner, 2010). The author is not saying either definition is wrong, just that scholars cannot agree on a general definition because self-esteem is different from one to another. The NASE believes their definition creates a clear line between healthy self-esteem and unhealthy self-esteem.

The author believes everyone is created for a special reason. We all have different talents and a way of thinking. You also have the choice on who you hang out with as well as who influences you. Not hanging around people who

have bad influences in your life will likely be the first step to having a better outlook on life. You are more likely to succeed in a leadership position if you surround yourself with supportive people (Campbell & Martinez-Perez, 1977, pp. 455-459).

The way you view yourself will be different than how other people view you. You are a leader, there to accomplish a goal (" Positive attitude," 2008). Not everyone is going to agree with you. Your research department may view you as a quiet and laid back leader. But your team mates, who see you every day may view you as upbeat, positive, and an encouraging leader. Some team mates may believe they are giving feedback but they are actually criticizing you, which is never healthy. Just keep motivating yourself and " work hard to work forward" (" Positive attitude," 2008).

A discussion in the author's Leadership class brought up the question " what benefits come with healthy self-esteem?" Some of the responses from the students were:

- Helps achieve goals
- Gives you more happiness
- Gives you more energy
- You can inspire and motivate yourself and others
- You can overcome many obstacles
- People respect you

You may be wondering how one can develop high self-esteem. Some steps to develop a more positive attitude and self-esteem are:

Consciously try to have and maintain a positive, optimistic attitude.

If you catch yourself being negative correct it and concentrate on the positive.

Realize that there are few benefits to negativity.

Holding a grudge only hurts you. Usually the person you are holding a grudge against has forgotten what they did to you. They have continued with their life and so should you. Forgive and forget.

Cultivate optimistic thoughts

“ Every time you think positive thoughts, your body, mind, and spirit respond” (Lussier & Achua, 2007, pp. 50-51). If you always think positive your life will reflect your thinking.

If you catch yourself complaining, stop and change to a positive attitude

We can always tell when we are being negative. Next time you catch yourself stop and look at the positive of the situation

Avoid negative people

Imagine being around negative people all the time. As the saying goes ‘ one rotten apple spoils the basket’. Hanging around negative people can actually influence your attitude too

Set and achieve goals

“ Set short-term goals that you can achieve.” This includes “ daily, weekly, and monthly goals” (Lussier & Achua, 2007, pp. 50-51).

Focus on your success

If you achieve two of ten goals do not dwell on the failures but think of the ones you accomplished (Lussier & Achua, 2007, pp. 50-51).

Accept compliments

When someone compliments you or tells you did an excellent job tell them thank you. Not only does it build your self-esteem but it tells them you appreciate them (Lussier & Achua, 2007, pp. 50-51).

Don't compare yourself to others

You cannot compare yourself to others because they are usually trying to accomplish a different objective (Lussier & Achua, 2007, pp. 50-51).

Think for yourself

Do not allow others to be your brain. You have your own. You should allow others input but not allow them to think for you (Lussier & Achua, 2007, pp. 50-51).

Be a positive role model

If you have a positive attitude most of the members look up to you for guidance and will have a positive attitude too. Lead by example (Lussier & Achua, 2007, pp. 50-51).

When things go wrong do something to help someone who is worse off than you

When you help someone who is worse off than you, you realize how better off you are. You also realize that what you are going through is small compared to other peoples' problems. It also gives you a sense of gratefulness that you are not in their situation

(Lussier & Achua, 2007, pp. 50-51).

Another question that is brought up is can one have too much self-esteem. The NASE does not believe so. " We do not believe that it is possible to have too much true self-esteem. However, it is certainly possible for an individual to have an over-inflated sense of self-worth or competence" (Reasoner, 2010).

To put all these steps in a practical application, pretend you are a department head in a fortune 500 company. Your boss told you to develop a new product that blows the other companies away. First, you must believe you can accomplish this goal. Secondly, choose a team that is positive and believes that the department can accomplish the goal too. Now as you are developing your product many tests will not go as planned but consider it a learning process. Throughout the process many team mates may feel they cannot accomplish the goal. It is your job to keep the positive attitude.

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Encourage them and build their self-concept. If you catch yourself thinking negatively you must immediately switch to a positive mind set. When a team member accomplishes a small goal or test, pat them on the back. Also, congratulate yourself because if one team member accomplishes a goal, you all do. And remember not to let anyone compare themselves to another member. You will find as the deadline approaches that you will most likely accomplish your goal because you kept a positive attitude and believed in yourself and team.

In conclusion, a positive mind-set not only helps a leader but has a lasting effect on the followers. It helps them grow not only in their professional life but at home too. Having a great self-concept will allow one to gain new skills and learn from your failures and triumphs. A positive mind set will teach you to control your emotions and keep you focused on your goals and objectives. People usually do not dive into the deep end without learning to swim first. As you become a better person usually the people around you follow. So not only are you influencing yourself but you are having a lasting impact on your followers. Following all of these steps will not guarantee one to be a perfect leader, but they are a start to help one succeed as a leader.