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One Minute Ideas

What to Wear

You're about to dress for that important presentation. However, you don't know much about the culture of the audience or the organization. You don't want to overdress or underdress. To avoid a needless and possibly embarrassing blunder:

- **Check the** organization's culture

Achieving Potential

December 2009

In this month's edition of our monthly newsletter "Achieving Potential," we highlight attitude, self awareness and communication.

We coach individuals and organizations and help them achieve their true potential.

Optimism Versus Pessimism - Attitude

Is Your Glass Half Full or Half Empty?



Are you a glass half full or a glass half empty kind of person? Does it really make a difference? I think it makes a huge difference in your overall functioning and the quality of your life.

Optimism can lead to accomplishment. If you think something is possible, you will generally work harder to achieve it. Believing in the positive allows you to feel good about life in general. Being optimistic can lead to an overall mood of happiness and enjoyment in life. While most optimists understand that not everything works out as planned, they recognize that some good can come from the unexpected.

Pessimism can lead to defeat and despair. When you are doubtful that things will happen or be accomplished, you tend not to try as hard-which then leads to failure. Approaching everyday tasks with a negative attitude quickly leads to a negative outlook on life.

I see optimism in the faces of those with whom I work each day. I think it is this positive upbeat attitude that allows us to be productive and love the work we do with families. Oh, we feel frustrated and concerned from time to time; but we have been in this profession long enough to know that if we just stay positive and wait it out, we will either find a solution or the difficulty will pass. I truly believe that our optimistic attitude is what provides us with our sense of

before your presentation. Culture varies from audience to audience, even in the same organization. Secretaries probably know. Your contact should know. However, don't bet on it. Get a couple of opinions.

• **Visit with** your audience beforehand, if you can, and check for yourself.

Guideline: It's not important that the audience thinks you're a snappy dresser. It is important that the audience thinks you're one of them. Shed cherished self-images. Be a chameleon. Dress like your audience. If in doubt, overdress. It's easier to shed unnecessary articles "offstage" or even in the parking lot than it is to borrow a tie or scarf when you arrive.

Source: Gary Sorrell, Sorrell Associates

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fulfillment, and improves our overall quality of life.

Unfortunately, I encounter many pessimistic people in a variety of settings. It may be that some of those people are just having a bad day; but so often it is a way of life for people. We can become pessimistic about things we have no control over-like the economy and the weather. We do not have control of either; but we can determine what it is about those two things that we do have control over, and take action there. I can manage my own finances, for example, and make sure that I am spending within my means. I can also make sure that I am putting money aside in the event that something unexpected happens. In terms of the weather, I cannot control the temperature or precipitation; but I can decide how I will dress each day based on what is happening outside. If I spend all of my time focusing on and worrying about all of the things that I cannot change and do not have control over, I create an even bleaker picture; and other parts of my life begin to suffer.

We all have moments of optimism and pessimism; what it comes down to is how the scale is tipped. Is your cup half full or half empty? If you feel that you are more of a pessimist than an optimist, are you able to pin point ways you could make a change? Whether you are feeling pessimistic about many things or even just a few, try the steps below to see if you can tip the scales back in the favor of optimism.

- Make a list of all the things that you are concerned or worried about.
- Determine which of the things on your list you have control over. Cross out the items that are truthfully out of your control.
- Of the remaining items, take some time to think about what you can do to change those situations.
- Choose one or two items from the list, and begin working to improve those situations.
- Take some time every so often to reflect back on your list. Have you been able to make some changes? Are you feeling more optimistic about the items that are left? Are you ready to begin working on another item?

Taking it one step at a time, taking charge of the things you can control, and making changes can lead to a more optimistic attitude. Often times we try to take on too much at one time, which leads to failure and more pessimism. Taking it slow, and working only on the things that we have control over, brings success that leads to more optimism and a willingness to keep moving forward.

I am thankful for the many things I have, and am hopeful that the problems of today will no longer be problems tomorrow. As I sit here gazing out the window at the beautiful sunshine and lack of snow, I am hopeful that this is a sign that spring is just around the corner. It is with this optimism that I can tolerate the endless cold weather that seems to have plagued Michigan for longer than usual this year. It is this optimism that improves my mood, and gives me the hope that strengthens my overall quality of life.

About the Author: Autism specialist Erin Roon, of the Horizons Developmental Remediation Center, provides practical information and advice for families living with autism and other developmental disabilities.

Self-Awareness



The great majority of men and women have the physical skills to achieve success, but many of them don't have sufficient emotional or cognitive skills. When a person's self-esteem grows their emotional IQ or EQ and readiness to make serious changes also increases.

People who live with self-deception constantly blame others for their many problems. People fail to understand that the biggest problem they have to overcome in life is the battle with themselves. If you're not happy or successful, are you the one to blame? Below are six steps that are necessary for self-improvement. There are no shortcuts and they must be done in order. The single most valuable tool to aid individuals in leaving the old destructive behaviors behind is Manualized Cognitive Restructuring. This is capable of helping men and women overcome faulty thinking and behaviors.

One of the main psychological differences between humans and animals is that humans are capable of being self-aware. That is to say, they can step back from themselves, see and accept their faults and weaknesses.

Because of self-awareness, humans can become better and change their lives. Changing habits, thoughts, values, attitudes and behavior is a difficult thing to do. For instance, if you desire to change a hardened criminal into a law abiding citizen the change would have to come from within the criminal. Criminals would have to admit that they are responsible for their actions. As long as they stay in denial they will never improve. To be successful with criminals, you must first help them become self-aware. This "making them aware" process is called reality therapy. You cannot compel criminals to change but you can compel them to become self-aware. Self-awareness is the first step in changing criminal offenders into good citizens. Abide by these steps to make a complete change in your life. Shortcuts are non-existent.

Step 1: AWARENESS

Self-awareness is the very first step in becoming better. It is vital that you admit your weaknesses. You can't change who you are without becoming self-aware.

Step 2: DESIRE

If you don't desire to improve, you will not ever do it. You have free will and, therefore, cannot be compelled. It's up to you; it's your choice. No desire, no change.

Step 3: ATTITUDE

If you're aware of your weaknesses and desire to improve you will automatically lift your attitude. Again, it's your own choice.

Step 4: SKILL

Although they are vital, self-awareness, desire, and a good attitude aren't quite enough; developing the skills and knowledge of how to change is also imperative.

Step 5: BEHAVIOR

Perfect steps one through four and you will be prepared physically to do what's required. Do it for ninety days and it will become a habit. Do it for one year and they will become a part of you.

Step 6: SUBCONSCIOUS

When you acquire a habit, it becomes automatic. You don't even have to think about it; you've made the change. Great!

If you keep on doing what you have been doing, you will keep on getting what you have been getting. If you want to change what you have been getting, you are required to change what you've been doing. The primary step in becoming a better person is to defeat denial, bad scripting, and distorted thinking ... the only way to achieve this is through following the above six steps.

About the Author: Decades ago, Larry Lloyd founded the American Community Corrections Institute. ACCI sponsors a news blog on the topic of anger management and related issues.

Do you understand the assignment?

Handing off a task is easy enough. Ask an employee to step into your office or visit them yourself and provide instructions. When you have completed the directions conclude the conversation by asking, "Do you understand what you have to do?" Great, task delegated!

Not so fast. How many times have you included what you felt were detailed step-by-step guidance only to receive results that did not meet your expectations? When you ask the employee "Do you understand?" what is their usual response? I call it the bobble head, they always nod yes, and frequently they have no clue.

I've been caught in this trap. One memorable missed direction occurred when I asked the HR department admin to create folders for new employee orientation. A stack of folders was completed on time but bore little resemblance to what I needed. The admin had told me she understood the task at hand, but I never showed her what I wanted, and failed to factor in that she was new to HR and her last exposure to orientation had been eight years earlier when she began working for the company.

Follow these simple steps to help turn the bobble head into the results you are looking for:

Ask open ended questions to ensure understanding. Replace, "Do you

understand?" with, "What steps will you take to complete this assignment?" or, "What questions do you have about this task?"

Avoid jargon, or if you have to use it explain the terms.

Clarify the expectations with an example or demonstration.

Don't disappear, make sure the employee knows how to contact you with questions and schedule a check-in time.

A few changes in your paradigm for giving out assignments can make the difference between frustration, for you and your employees, and meeting deadlines.

About the author: Rebecca Mazin writes the HR Answer Blog. Found on AllBusiness.com. Rebecca's blog at <http://www.allbusiness.com/labor-employment/human-resources-personnel/6196922-1.html>

Motivational Quotes

"You miss 100% of the shots you never take."

- Wayne Gretzky

"It's not the will to win but the will to prepare to win that makes the difference."

- Coach Bear Bryant

"The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a person's determination."

- Tommy Lasorda

For results you can count on, contact Performance Development Strategies, LLC at 914-953-4458 or Email: grant@pdstrategies.com

Make it a GREAT day,

Grant Schneider

Performance Development Strategies, LLC