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One Minute Ideas

Achieving Potential

October 2009

In this month's edition of our monthly newsletter "Achieving Potential," we highlight leadership and time management tips which can help you in your personal or business life.

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

Attitude Drives Altitude

Your attitude drives your altitude-in business and in life.

You can't change someone else's attitude for them. But this powerful adage is a great reminder that you can put in front of anyone who requires an attitude adjustment. I want to discuss a few of the many ways each of us can develop a winning attitude each day. It's what leaders do.

Marcus Aurelius, the great philosopher who ruled the Roman Empire, said it simply: "Our life is what our thoughts make it."

Dale Carnegie, speaking to that quote said: "Yes, if we think happy thoughts, we will be happy. If we think miserable thoughts, we will be miserable. If we think fear thoughts, we will be fearful. If we think sickly thoughts we probably will be ill. If we think failure, we will certainly fail. If we wallow in self-pity, everyone will want to shun us and avoid us."

Am I advocating a Pollyanna attitude toward all our problems? No. Life isn't that simple. But I am advocating-in the strongest terms-that we take on a positive attitude instead of a negative one.

Mental attitude-the power we hold in our heads. Real life can be changed dramatically by a single thought. In nutrition the adage is you are what you eat. In terms of leadership, it's more likely you are what you think. Counter to what people want to believe, outside influences don't usually drive your happiness or success, rather it is how we react to those influences-good or bad. So how do



Three Steps To Agreement

To reach agreement with other people about anything, try this 3-step "triangle" process:

- 1) **YOU.** First address the other person's interests.
- 2) **US.** Then relate their interests to what you have in common with them.
- 3) **ME.** Then discuss how that relates to your needs. By starting with the other people's interests, they tend to be more open to hearing what you have to say, and this allows further things to develop.

Source: Kare Anderson, *Getting What You Want: How to Resolve Conflict and Win Agreement Every Time.*

Respect

Studies over the past 60 years have regularly shown that employees covet respect almost as much as money-and sometimes they even rate respect higher than cash. These consistent results should be more than enough to make this point: You'll breed loyalty if you respect employees as individuals and recognize them for what they contribute to the organization.

you alter your reactions to those outside forces?

Make how you react a conscious priority, which means practice daily.

Humor is vital. When things are going south, keep everything in perspective and relax. I laugh. Others throw up their hands. Whole industries get very cynical.

Positive self-confident feelings not only help you get more; they also make others want to be associated with you. People are drawn to others who have an energetic outlook, who have a can-do attitude. Constant nay sayers don't collect an easy following.

One of a leader's most important jobs is to set a positive and self-confident tone, show the attitude that failure is not an option. A positive attitude is the cornerstone of leadership. It's the same confidence that a quarterback, a golfer, or a gymnast projects every time they come out of the locker room.

To obtain strength from the positive and not be sapped by the negative, here are a few ideas:

- Focus on the 90% of your team who will run with your outlook and your plan-don't let the "negative nellys" drown you or contaminate your team.
- Tap your spiritual essence at work too-use your spirit and your heart to guide you and your work forward.
- Break the negative energy cycle-if you see yourself spiraling down or in a rut, mix it up, break up the routine and do something fast that lifts you up. When you see one of your staff members in a rut of unproductive or unprofessional behavior fix it, don't let it fester.
- Active listening-takes time. Work at it to hear what your staff wants. Many times just by being heard, problems can go away and people really make a big turnaround.
- You must be the emotional manager of your office-not your assistant, not the new young blood you just hired. In a family, parents must be the emotional managers or chaos rules the home. In your business, you must manage it, albeit reluctantly at times. It's part of your leadership duty and power. Refine it, as well as your attitude to external events, and you'll see the culture around you shift to the positive.
- Jim Collins points out in *Good to Great*: "When in doubt, don't hire-keep looking. You can't grow revenues consistently faster than your ability to get enough of the right people to implement that growth and still become a fabulous company. So unless candidates for the open position have that can-do attitude and are a strong fit for your company in who they are-don't hire them. The skills can be taught; the over the top positive attitude cannot."
- Someone put it recently: "The prerequisite is attitude. Attitude is the one thing we can't change in employees. You've got a good attitude or you don't. Given adequate ability and desire to learn, everything else can be taught to employees with good attitudes. I have tried many times to teach good attitudes and have come to the conclusion it is about as easy as making a mud fence."

Short version: Treat them as partners, not hired hands.

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- A negative attitude will drag you down and with it your professional results. A positive attitude will pull you over the rough spots and energize you to lift your results to new heights-to match your vision. Whether you need an attitude adjustment a million times a day, once a week, or only once in a while, never forget that your attitude determines your altitude. Don't let outside people or events bring yours down.

About the Author: Todd Gaster is a Master Practitioner and Trainer of NLP, and Hypnosis, a Master Coach of NLP and a Brian Tracy Business Coach.

Five Barriers to Team Success

Highly effective teams can achieve extraordinary results for the organizations that they serve. Achieving success for the organization leads to greater personal success and achievement. Yet in truth, team success is not guaranteed. So, here are five common barriers to team success and what you can do to avoid them.



1. Fuzzy outcomes

If a team is to prosper and deliver results, it needs to be crystal clear about the expected results or outcomes. Too often, teams set outcomes that are fuzzy and vague, which unsurprisingly leads to little in terms of results. Make the outcomes specific and measurable. For example, reduce waste from product X by 10 percent by December 31, 2010 is both specific and measurable.

2. Unproductive conflict

All successful teams need to have challenge and conflict, otherwise it all becomes too cozy. On the other hand, it is important to ensure that conflict is productive rather than destructive or unproductive. Lively and heated debate that actually results in a better outcome or solution is an example of productive conflict. Challenge that focuses on all of the negatives without offering any alternatives is unproductive.

3. Playing it safe

Making a step change in performance or turning things around requires teams and team members to take some risk and step outside of their comfort zone. This will only happen if the culture within the organization supports and rewards this type of innovative and balanced risk taking approach. For example, if the culture is to look for scapegoats when things go wrong, people will keep within the safety boundaries rather than take a chance.

4. Individual agendas

If a team is to prosper, all members need to sign up to and be committed to the team goals first and foremost. For many, this is particularly challenging. As in business, we are used to being concerned about our own individual

situation. Creating a reward system that relies on the group can be a useful stepping-stone to encouraging teams to focus on the team agenda.

5. Leadership

As with any team, someone must take on the role of the leader. A team without a leader is like a ship without a captain. The team might select a leader, or as the team develops someone may emerge who is the natural leader. However, any successful team needs a leader.

Bottom Line - Teams can achieve great results, but it is essential that the barriers to team success are identified and addressed. So what barriers are getting in the way of your team's success?

About the Author: Duncan Brodie of Goals and Achievements (G&A) works with individuals, teams and organizations to develop their management and leadership capability. With 25 years business experience in a range of sectors, he understands first hand the real challenges of managing and leading in the demanding business world.

"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success." - Henry Ford

The Silent Side Of Communicating

Whether negotiating the biggest deal of your career, coaching your team, or describing a project, keep your ears open. Otherwise, you may talk yourself right out of the room.

To be a better listener:

- Try not to judge. Even if you disagree with what's being said or the way it's presented, resist planning a rebuttal. Focus on understanding the message, not critiquing the messenger.
- Commit your full attention as soon as the other person starts to speak, not just when you hear a word or phrase that interests you.
- Do whatever it takes to limit distractions.

Examples: Suspend incoming phone calls, remove unnecessary papers from your desktop, or meet in a neutral area, such as a conference room.

Tip: If you're entering a room, ask the speaker to wait until you're both comfortable to start the conversation. In addition, extend the same courtesy when someone comes to your office.

Source: Negotiate Like the Pros, by John Patrick Dolan, Berkley Publishing Group, New York, NY 10016.

Motivational Quotes

"You cannot build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end, each of us must work for (our) own improvement."

- Marie Curie

"Success is how high you bounce when you've hit bottom."

- General George Patton

"Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after another."

- Walter Elliot

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

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