

# Interpersonal skills

## - and human relations

### 5. Showing a positive attitude

#### Introduction

If we want to improve our productivity, working ourselves to exhaustion and stress might not be the answer. Instead, a better choice would be to explore a new science-backed perspective that could take our performance to the next level, the role of positivity and productivity.

It's not a question of faith anymore, science has proven that positivity increases your productivity and makes you more efficient at creative problem-solving. There's a whole field of positive psychology that focuses on optimizing your mindset so that it enables you to become the best possible version of yourself.

Positive psychology research has proven that a positive mindset makes us more efficient in problem-solving. Participants, in the research, who were exposed to positive imagery were able to think of significantly more solutions than the rest of the participants. This proves that positive thinking to a great extent increases the problem-solving capacity and makes us more creative and much more productive.

*"The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions", Barbara Fredrickson, 2004.*

It's not just perceiving more potential solutions that make people with positive mindsets more productive. Positive thinking motivates us to succeed, and motivation is a huge factor in productivity. Simply expressed, motivation fuels willpower. Without it, people tend to passively accept what happens to them. They simply react rather than taking a proactive stance and taking control of their lives.

It's simple, if we don't believe that we can succeed, we won't even try, and if we don't even try, we'll never score. As Michael Jordan once said: *"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take"*. Even if we take a shot and miss, that's not where our journey ends.

(Michael Jordan, born 1963, an American businessman and former professional basketball player.)

Whether we "score" or "miss" when we take a shot, doesn't matter. It matters only that we stay on the positivity track and try harder each time... even when we score. Even then, we should strive to radiate more and more positivity because it's not likely to backfire and also because it simply feels good.

Staying optimistic is a form of mental hygiene and it takes discipline to practice it. However, our productivity levels skyrocket if we maintain a positive attitude, so it pays off.

#### Notes

## Positivity and success

Many people think that success leads to positivity, but actually it's the other way around. The research in positive psychology and neuroscience has found that positivity is the precursor to success, not the result. Research with corporations has also proven that positivity and optimism actually fuel performance and achievement, giving companies an important competitive edge.

The advantage grows from the fact that positivity, or positive emotions, has a direct causal relationship with the productivity and success. Positivity includes gratitude and appreciation for others as well as favorable self-regard, and can be fostered both by thoughts and by purposeful activity, such as exercise and use of personal strengths. Its benefits include:

- 3 times more creativity
- 31% higher productivity
- 37% greater sales
- 10 times more engagement

"The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect", Sonja Lyubomirsky, Laura King, Ed Diener, *Psychological Bulletin*, 2005

Even short bursts of positivity have been shown to increase and provide a serious competitive edge.

## Positive people are productive

Successful people don't just analyze problems and complain about how hard life is. They look for solutions instead. Faith in their potential to impact their surroundings is what distinguishes them from the rest. Believing in ourselves is what gives us the power to make the change we wish to see happening in our lives.

People who are brave enough to defy the negative inner critic enjoy what they do more than those who focus on the negative aspects of their actions. That's the way optimistic individuals create a loop of positivity wherein they're successful because they enjoy what they do and vice versa - they enjoy what they do because they're successful.

One of the most important lessons we'll ever learn is to pay attention only to that which we can improve. Things that we can't change, we accept and focus on their positive aspects. Things that we can change, we change.

By being only 1% better in what we do each day, in 1 year, we'll increase our productivity levels by 37,78% by the end of it, right?

We need to understand that being productive is not necessarily achieved the hard way. We need to take care of our emotions and attitudes as well to finalize the big picture of personal development.

## Notes

Positivity creates productivity. So, what can we do to make our meetings being more positive and hence more productive.?

Some tips for creating a more open and positive environment.

How can we help each other to show an even more positive attitude in our work?

Notes

## Improving relationships by thinking and acting positively

## Notes

*Glass half full. Keep on the sunny side. Think positive. Look on the bright side.*

There is so much advice urging us to accentuate the positive that it has become clichéd and easy to skip past, but let's explore why it is so common. The reasoning behind it is that what we look at becomes our world. How could it not be so? Our world is what we look at, so by looking at positive things, we literally live in a different world.

We develop patterns of how we interpret life's events and our interactions with others. These then become the frame from which we filter our experiences, and that point of view is often determined by habit and conditioning.

As a consequence, we often see what we expect and not what we don't. So it is with many things, they can be right in front of us, yet we miss them because of preconceived expectations and projections.

Why is being positive so difficult? It's because, historically, survival has needed us to always be on the alert for dangers that might be lurking, waiting to spring out and eat us. It's been a matter of life and death. Is that a pretty tree or a place where lions lie in wait? But life is less dangerous these days, and **such** caution can be a handicap.

This applies in our relationships, too. When we react to the faults of our colleagues and business partners by sighing heavily, rolling our eyes and making snide comments, we invite conflict and alienation, and we have to work on the relationship to repair the damage done. Instead of seeing the faults of other people and reacting to them, what would it be like if we were to look at their positive aspects and appreciate them?

If we make the effort to look at other people with eyes that are seeking something good, if we look at strengths and not failings, behaviors that uplift us rather than annoy or upset us, it will drastically change the character of our interactions.

When we change what we see and we express that to another person, a very different dynamic occurs. We have changed what happens inside us and that shift will change those we interact with as well. Positive feedback and acknowledgment are powerful things. The other person will feel warm and supported. It is like taking a deep breath of a wonderful scent. They may end up seeing themselves in a different light.



Their reactions will be different, and those reactions will affect us and a positive feedback loop is set up. Those initial small changes can have large results. By changing how we look at the world, we have literally changed our world.

## Developing a more positive attitude

Sometimes it may feel easier to be a grumpy person, who has the energy to get upset about everything all the time.

But we have to ask ourselves, how exhausting is it when we are around someone else who is constantly negative and complaining? It sucks, doesn't it? Nobody wants to be around a negative person that zap everyone's energy. So, the question becomes: Do we want to be the kind of person who drains energy or who supplies it? If we want to be an energy producer, we can start by developing a more positive attitude.

Of course, turning off the negative stream of consciousness and developing a positive attitude takes effort. But when we do so, people are more likely to want to be around us, which can make us happier, which makes us even easier to be around, and even happier, an upward spiral of positive emotions that fuel both well-being and efficiency.

Below are some simple ways to develop a more positive attitude.

### Strengthen the Positive Neural Pathways in the brain

One way to get started strengthening the positive pathways in our brain is to spend more time thinking about positive things, for example by memorizing and recalling lists of positive words. When we force our brains to work with positive information, we activate these regions of our brains and make this information accessible in our daily lives. So later, when we're trying to have a positive attitude, we may be able to generate positive thoughts, memories, and emotions more easily.

### Look for the upside of a situation

People with a positive attitude can always find an upside in any circumstances. So, if we want to be able to find a more positive perspective of a situation we have to look for the good in it. To start, anytime we are down about anything we should try to find at least one benefit. We should ask ourselves: What can I learn? What can I appreciate about this? What opportunities may arise? Then we should use these questions to get ourselves to start finding the good things instead of focusing on the bad things

### Practice kindness

We don't have to be generous and caring every moment, we're not aiming for perfection. But if we want to develop a positive attitude, we do have to make an effort to be kind. Sometimes it's easy to be kind, for example, when we feel like others deserve it, and sometimes it's harder. So, start with easy kindness and go from there. An act of kindness could be anything from telling a colleague you like her necklace, to congratulating a business partner on an important achievement. Such acts show that we care, a significant part of what it means to be a positive person.

### Stay present and engaged

Being more aware of our actions and our lives will make us feel positive. When we simply go through the motions of our lives like robots, we will likely forget to find the joy in everyday things. By being aware of our surroundings, our choices, and our daily activities, we can gain greater control of our lives and our engagement.

## Notes

## Positive leadership

Great leadership comes in many forms, with a positive leadership style focusing on positive behavior. Positive leadership is a leadership style that borrows ideas from positive psychology. It focuses on positive behavior and inclusive techniques to encourage, support, and lead. While some leadership styles focus on authoritative methods or control to manage people, positive leadership, by contrast, is about empowerment and is shown to have an upward effect on morale, job satisfaction, engagement, and confidence.

Positive leadership encompasses many leadership styles. These styles generally focus on encouraging and inspiring rather than focusing on what not to do. When we adopt a positive leadership style, we encourage others through positive emotions. This includes modeling positive behavior and using techniques to enhance positivity to bring about self-awareness, optimism, motivation, and change.

### Traits of a positive leader

Positive leadership comes with certain traits that define the style and put people at the center. Let's take a look at some in more detail.

#### Care and support

As positive leaders, we stand up for people we are working with. We know we have to care about their well-being and how we can assist them. We should look for root causes and support people in any challenges they face especially if results fall short.

#### Empowerment

Empowering people is an essential part of positive leadership. It's not just about supporting people but inspiring and motivating them to achieve their potential. We can do this by creating a supportive environment where people can solve problems, learn from mistakes, and use their strengths.

#### Passion

Part of positive leadership is having passion and commitment to our vision and leading by example. Passion and dedication inspire others and encourage people to want to contribute to and achieve the vision we've mapped out.

#### Authenticity

Our authentic self is vital in positive leadership. It involves being open, transparent, and someone people can relate to, feel safe with, and be supported by. Being authentic also means crediting others where credit is due and recognizing the individual contributions others make.

#### Confidence

As good leaders, we are confident in ourselves, our approach and our abilities and contributions. Our decisions inspire confidence in others, who, in turn, can trust us as a leader.

#### Self-awareness

Self-awareness is important for positive leaders. It allows us to quickly identify our strengths and weaknesses, address them, ask for feedback, and use it to improve.

## Notes

How can we make our feedback to be more positive and consequently more accepted?

These are some words that have a positive impact on us.

Which of the traits of a positive leader, listed on the previous page, do we most of all have to improve?

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