

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

The impact of a positive attitude on your team

What is the most important qualification of a good leader—extensive education, an impressive resume, plenty of charisma or a handful of certifications? Surprisingly, all of these qualities, while significant, pale in comparison to the one thing no leader should be without—a positive attitude.

Keeping your motivation at 100 percent all day, every day is impossible, but negativity is a virus that will spread misery throughout the workplace. By understanding how important your mood and your reaction to workplace challenges are, and by taking steps to remain an upbeat leader, you can propel your team on a positive path to success.

Set the Tone

Your attitude has the power to not only lift you up or drag you down, but can also do the same for your team. Attitudes cause a chain reaction. As a people leader, your optimism affects your employees, your employees' attitudes affect your customers or stakeholders, and this ultimately impacts your business and bottom line.

Take a long, hard look at your behaviour. Do you complain about the never-ending workweek or your suffocating workload? Do you find yourself making comments about your own boss' incompetence or your long and stressful commute? Although no one appreciates an obnoxiously positive person, you need to find a happy medium and set an example. How can you expect your employees to be positive team members if you aren't?

Push Through Tough Times

From budget cuts, to relocations, to layoffs: your organization's quest to be the most competitive or have a healthy bottom line can throw situations at you that can knock down even the most positive of people. As a manager *you* set the example and employees will look to you for clues on how to react. You're naturally going to have your own concerns and areas of resistance, but try to acknowledge them and then let them go so you can help your employees cope.

Lead by example, remain positive, upbeat and enthusiastic and find fun ways to motivate your team. Your attitude will be contagious, so if you find something great about the challenging new computer system, or discover an interesting restaurant near your new work location, share the news. If you do hit bumps along the way, be open and talk to you team about it. Don't wallow in defeat and instead focus everyone's attention on the next step and the big picture.

Accentuate the Positive…

Although there will be days where your positive power seems like a distant memory, there are ways to encourage yourself to stay upbeat. To help you find your inner optimist (even when you don't feel very positive) try to:

Tune into self-talk. Our internal chatter is often what makes it so hard to stay positive. If you find yourself saying, "this is too hard," or "I can't do it," tell yourself that it isn't and you can. Our brains are like computers and respond to commands—replace negative programming with positive thoughts.

Reward yourself. A team who has fun together will work harder together. Keep the whole team's morale up by rewarding yourselves for a job well done. Plan regular team outings, join sports leagues, and celebrate personal and professional milestones. Getting to know each other better, and having some fun will breathe some much-needed life and positive energy into your workplace.

Highlight the good. When faced with a big challenge at work, it becomes even harder to be a positive leader—particularly if you don't fully agree with the change or event. If you're feeling low, make a list of the things you're thankful for. This can be your impressive title, reliable employees or even things you're proud of in your personal life. Although it may sound trivial, this will help you gain perspective and can be a handy list to pull out when you are in need of a pick- me-up.

Don't complain. Another great method to help you become more naturally positive is to vow to stop complaining. Try to not whine for one whole day, then two, then three. People only complain when they don't want to fix things. If you despise a part of your role, consider a solution. Maybe moving to a location by the window, playing some music or recruiting a colleague for help will make that painful job a little bit better.

Stay healthy. It's impossible to have a positive attitude when you're completely drained. Make sure you get enough sleep, eat healthy, drink lots of water and stay active. This will do wonders not only for your physical health, but also your mental well-being and inner optimism. Better still, recruit your colleagues to become part of your healthy living regime. Create a lunch time walking group, sports team or start up a monthly "Fresh Friday" potluck where the name of the game is good company and good eats!

You can encourage an upbeat attitude in the workplace, but it will take time, effort and the occasional struggle. A positive leader keeps morale high, increases productivity and encourages growth by their energy, interest and, most importantly, their actions. Make it a priority to be the positive force that leads the way and watch your teams' enthusiasm for the tasks at hand blossom.

If you require support to deal with a sensitive employee situation, contact LifeWorks to find out more about the consultation and training services your Employee Assistance Program provides.

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