

WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

Can You Grow Your Own Optimism?

Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota says that research shows

"Optimistic people live longer than their pessimistic peers."

Really? How much longer? The difference between a moderately optimistic and a moderately pessimistic person may be **about 12 years of life!** Scientists in the 1960's administered personality tests that showed which individuals were optimistic and which were pessimistic. Years later, when following up on these same individuals, the ones who had been the most pessimistic when they were tested were found to be the individuals more likely to die at an earlier age than the optimistic group.

Research findings, such as this, are fascinating as news headlines, but I want to know: *"Can anything be done to help the person who always sees the glass half-full? The pessimist? The doubter? The scoffer? The one who sucks the positive energy right out of the room?"*

"Yes!", according to research findings of Dr. Martin Seligman, professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and consultant to the research team at Mayo's Clinic. He said that individuals who learn better coping, through interpersonal skill development, can improve their attitude. His studies indicate attitudes improve with interpersonal skill training.

I teach many "soft skills" every week.

The irony?

"Soft skills" are not "soft" at all. They are the hardest, of all skills, to learn!

They relate to our habits - and the formation of new ones that are more effective.

- **Communication Skills**
- **Listening Skills**
- **Interpersonal Skills**
- **Presentation Skills**
- **Interviewing Skills**
- **Meeting Management**
- **Change Management**

Can these make life more enjoyable for you? Can these affect your positive attitude?

Yes! When I begin a workshop, the first thing I ask is, ***"Are you open to examining your own habits?"***

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If we resist changes that actually - and eventually - make us happier, kinder, more productive --, well then, we block out our own growth.

If we're open to examining habits that lead to our pessimism - and own up to them, we might decide to replace them with ones that lead to more positive experiences.

Do people leave a workshop **really changed**? It depends. If the material is interpreted and transposed into their own workplace and their own family experiences, the answer is "Yes!" The more they create a positive habit with the material, the more positive results they see. However, if a person can't sit still, can't focus, can't absorb the material, or can't find relative value...then, there is no real lasting benefit. I always say, "Learning is not about ME or my teaching. It will always be about YOU and your application of it."

- Can we be shown ways to **increase our ability to TRUST others**?
- Can we learn ways to **become more trustworthy ourselves**? **Yes!**
- Can we learn **better ways of communicating** - so we're not offensive? **Yes!**
- Can we learn to **present our ideas** more succinctly and more clearly? **Yes!**
- Can we learn to **listen better**? **Yes!**
- Can we be taught ways **to cope with "changes"** that occur all around us? **Yes!**
- Can we be taught ways to **decrease stress**? **Yes!**

One of the **top five motivators** among workers today is to know my company is investing in my professional growth.

Am I growing MY SKILLS and LEARNING NEW THINGS?

Good question...and a fair one!

Yes, I learn new things all the time...AND enjoy doing it!

At the moment, I am learning:

1. **Axiology!** The understanding and application of values and value judgments. It's hard.
2. **Conversational Italian - Level 1.** It's fun (and hard).

Keep looking for ways to improve yourself.

The benefits seem obvious:

1. You become more interesting and more valuable to those around you. It's fun. Pick a subject you like. It keeps your mind active....steering off forgetfulness, sluggishness, boredom, pessimism.
2. According to research, **you and I will get to be friends 12 years longer!!!**

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