



Create The Positive and Productive Workplace That You Desire and Deserve!

Monthly Quote

"No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself or get all the credit for doing it."

— Andrew Carnegie

The Power of Appreciation

A university professor began reflecting on the people who'd had a positive impact on his life. In particular he remembered a schoolteacher who'd gone out of her way to instill in him a love of poetry. He hadn't seen or spoken to her in many years, but he located her address and sent her a letter of thanks. A short time later, he received this reply:

"My dear Willie,

"I cannot tell you how much your note meant to me. I am in my eighties, living alone in a small room, cooking my own meals, lonely, and, like the last leaf of autumn, lingering behind. You will be interested to know that I taught school for 50 years and yours is the first note of appreciation I ever received. It came on a blue-cold morning, and it cheered me as nothing has in many years."

The teacher's note brought the professor to tears—and then he began searching for others who'd shaped his life, just to say thanks.

End With A Smile

"One of the things that keeps me motivated to stay in the teaching profession is all the humorous moments I encounter through the day. When my workday comes to an end, I reflect on all the funny stuff. Then I laugh and end my day with a huge smile on my face and I bring home a smile and share my humorous moments with my family so they can all end their day with a smile." – Teacher

Wow! What a great thing -- to end your day with, a smile. Not utter exhaustion and stress limits pushed to the max, but a smile to relish in and share with our loved ones. Smiles and laughter - two things that children naturally share and pass on to others. And boy, don't we love it when they do?!

We also possess the ability to relish in a smile and have a few laughs at the end of the day. And as leaders, we also have the ability to help our team members end their day with a smile, have a few laughs, and even more important -- return with a smile. How fabulous would that be? Stress levels would be reduced, work would become more fun, team members would be more positive and look forward to coming to work, team members would connect with each other through sharing a few laughs, and overall - your entire team would enjoy being a part of the child care profession.

So what are some strategies you can implement to help your team end their day with a smile? Well, the key is simple! Help your team focus on the humorous moments that have occurred throughout the day. Here are 3 ideas -



- 1) In the bathroom or staff lounge create a place (a poster, white board, etc.) where team members can write down their most humorous moments for others to read. Perhaps they'll share a story about how a child, while eating breakfast, got a raisin stuck between his/her eyes and didn't even know it.
- 2) Create a "Share the Funny" box and place in a convenient location for staff to share their most humorous moment through writing it down and depositing it in the box. Then, before your next staff meeting read through the stories and pick out the top 5 or so to share at your staff meeting. If your time is limited -- create a "funny stuff" task force that select staff can be on. Their mission - find the funny!
- 3) Create a book filled with funny stories. Joanne shared with me how one child actually brought a live kitty to school. The teachers thought the child was joking until they heard "meow". The child opened her bag, and sure enough, she was not joking. After the situation was dealt with appropriately, their team shared a laugh and ended up creating a book based on a little girl who brought her kitty to school.

What is Delegation?

What is delegation? Author, Dr. Donna Genett, shared with me the following about delegation during a recent interview.

"Delegation is about is engaging with people effectively and in a way that contributes to your mutual success - regardless of what the result is you're looking for.

I've seen what happens when this occurs and it's a beautiful thing. It sounds silly, but it really is a beautiful thing. As I said, it brings out the best in everyone. Everyone shines. Everyone experiences success. How great is that?"

The starting point for effective delegation and letting go is to clearly understand the results that you're looking for. Before you delegate a task or a project, sit down with a piece of paper and write out the responses to the following 3 questions.

3 Questions To Ask Yourself Before You Delegate!

What will success look like? How will I measure it? What are the criteria I'll use for measuring it?

Next, it's critical to clearly articulate what the results look like and to make sure the person who you're delegating a task to understands the big picture of what you're working to accomplish. After you communicate the outcome, ask the person who you're delegating the task to, to repeat it back to you.

A key to feeling less anxiety during the process of letting go and delegating effectively is to facilitate checkpoint meetings. These are meetings where you get together with the person who you delegate a task to, allowing time to check in and see how things are progressing before the deadline. Discussions during the meetings center around what they're delivering and how that matches up with what you asked for.

Enabling Destructive Behavior

(A case scenario for you, the leader)

Sally is your team's self-designated spokesperson. She is the member of your staff who has no qualms about bringing minor issues to you, as well as complaints and gossip. She has no problem speaking on someone else's behalf.

Sally recently shared with you that Sue is unhappy about a comment that Margaret made to her. She also passed along the fact that Stephanie and Rob have cultural differences that cannot be worked out. Oh yes -- and let's not forget about Robyn. Robyn is very shy and relies on Sally to communicate all issues for her. Recently, Sally spoke to a parent about an issue Robyn had, something about bringing in an extra set of dry clothes for little Bobby. Anyways, it was clearly an issue that Robyn should have handled.

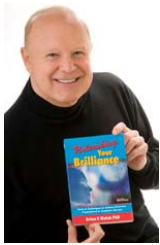
Much of Sally's time is spent listening to her co-workers' complaints, and then passing them along to you. What Sally doesn't realize is that she is being destructive - and at the same time - she is enabling her co-workers to be destructive as well. Sally has told you many times: I'm just trying to help -- or -- I thought it would help you to know... Her intentions are good and she feels that she is helping her co-workers through speaking up for them.

The reality is: Sally's behavior is destructive because she is neglecting her responsibilities or at least not doing as great of a job as she can be doing because she's too busy focusing on other staff member's issues.

Sally's actions enable other team members to be destructive as well. Team members don't have to speak up for themselves - thanks to Sally. Team members don't have to build the skills to handle conflicts directly - thanks to Sally. She does it for them. Team members look forward to "hearing the latest" gossip from Sally - - keeping their minds drenched in negativity. All in all, team members are not growing professionally. Issues are not being dealt with directly and they are definitely not getting resolved. Team members do not speak up at staff meetings or at any other time you present them with an opportunity to do so.

What can you do to help Sally and other team members become more constructive in the workplace?

1. Help Sally understand how her actions keep the entire team stuck. Draw a picture or diagram if you need to, but help her gain insight. Help her see that confidence levels are low because staff members are not speaking up for themselves and perhaps team members won't be able to advance professionally because they are not asserting themselves as they should be. Help her see how the gossip that she passes around negatively impacts the working environment. A team cannot be high functioning if gossip and other destructive communication patterns persist. Help her understand how her actions impact the children and the parents.
2. Set firm boundaries for yourself with Sally. Let her know that you will no longer listen to the gossip, complaints, or third party information that she passes along to you. Nor is it acceptable for her to discuss her co-workers' business with other co-workers.
3. Define very specifically for your entire team what issues they should come to you with, and what issues you expect them to resolve on their own. There is often much confusion about this.



Julie's Expert Interview:

Dealing With Staff Members Who Just Don't Get It!

Do you ever feel like certain staff members just don't get it? Perhaps you've explained your policies and procedures hundreds of times and still... they just don't get it. Perhaps you've shared with them specifically how things should be done over and over again and still... they just don't get it.

Today you can listen to this audio program at www.MotivateTeachers.com and discover why your staff may not be getting what you're trying to communicate with them, and new approaches for helping them learn and "get" what you're trying to share with them. Dr. Brian Walsh reveals his valuable insights about 3 different learning styles that make up how each one of us learns. They include audio, visual and kinesthetic.

Dr. Walsh is dedicated to personal growth and enrichment through his workshops, teleclasses, audio and video products, and his many articles.

He is a master practitioner of NLP, an acupuncture detoxification specialist, an EFT practitioner, and a clinical hypnotherapist. His bestselling book, *Unleashing Your Brilliance* has a companion DVD, *Enriched Learning*. In addition, he has co-authored a self-help book with John Gray and Jack Canfield, *101 Great Ways to Improve Your Life*.

Join Julie's Inner Circle Today and get a copy of this audio program and the transcripts. Visit www.MotivateTeachers.com and click on Join Today!

The Danger of Working While You're Exhausted

Are you a person who prides yourself in working even though you're exhausted?

If so, consider this: Working when you're fatigued might increase your blood pressure. A University of Alabama-Birmingham study has found that fatigued workers have higher blood pressure-level increases than rested individuals.

In the study, when fatigued individuals perceived a task as worthwhile and possible, they increased their effort to make up for their diminished capacity. As a result, their blood pressure rates rose and remained elevated until they completed the task or stopped trying because they determined that success was impossible or too difficult to be justified.

The results of the study were originally published in the *International Journal of Psychophysiology*.



Understanding Rewards & Recognition



Recognition or a reward is backward-looking according to author, Cindy Ventrice.

Recognition says, "Look at what you did," acknowledging something that has been accomplished. Maybe your computer crashed and somebody worked extra hard to get it up again and you reward them for their commitment and time. Or there's a plumbing emergency and somebody took the initiative to personally take care of it.

That's not the kind of thing you can plan for as part of an incentive program. However when it happens, you want to reward and acknowledge the behaviors that you want to see duplicated.

In other words, when others show how much they care about your program and they invest time, even putting their life on hold to handle a situation, it's a wise decision to recognize and reward those behaviors. When you do recognize their actions they will be more inclined to show their dedication again knowing how much their efforts are valued.



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Thriving on Staff Feedback: Quick Tip

Model the process from top down. Start modeling the process from top down and encourage your entire team to participate in giving and receiving feedback. Make giving and receiving feedback an art that is visible everyday not just a once-a-year event. If you only open yourself up to feedback from your staff once a year, it will be like pulling teeth to get it. When you model how to be open to feedback and make changes based on the feedback that you receive, your staff will follow suit.

From the desk of Julie Bartkus

Hi!

Just in case you don't know me, let me start out by introducing myself. My name is Julie Bartkus. I am a performance and productivity expert in the early care and education industry. I help leaders create the positive and productive workplaces that they desire and deserve. For over a decade, I have been helping child care directors & owners and school administrators eliminate the destructive communication patterns (such as gossip) and the negative mindsets that keep their teams stuck. Through the thousands interviews I have personally conducted with leaders and their teams I have discovered what the "demotivators" are in the workplace as well as the motivators. My findings are incorporated into my step-by-step Staff Motivation and Retention System.



If you would like more information about my services, please call me at 1.800.211.5671. I offer:

- One-on-one telephone coaching
- Keynote presentations
- Full-day leadership retreats
- Full-day staff retreats

Boost Morale in Minutes

Here are a few action items to help you boost morale in minutes and yes, without spending a buck. These action items include recommendations staff have made to their leaders in the thousands of surveys and interviews I've conducted.

- 1) Unite your team through establishing a common goal that can be worked on and obtained in the next several months. Set a time frame for this goal and get everyone excited about accomplishing it. Break the goal down into small achievable steps and celebrate when small accomplishments are made.
- 2) Close all communication gaps. Make sure staff are aware of the things they need to know in order to perform their jobs successfully - such as a co-worker or child calling in sick.
- 3) Break down barriers (break the gossip chain – morale will never be high if gossip and other destructive communication patterns persist!).

More to come...

