

Be Positive and Stay Optimistic for a Happy Life and Successful Career

Rita's Career Corner ...With Rita B. Allen

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Are you the person who sees the cup half full or half empty?

This has been an age old question to determine our outlook on life - one of optimism or pessimism. One might say that optimists are always positive choosing to see the best in all situations where pessimists are always negative opting to see the down side in all situations. Of course, it isn't always so clear cut where most people may go back and forth depending on the situation, the people involved as well as how high the stakes may or may not be. Think of the advantages for *always* having an optimistic outlook!

Life is unpredictable, demanding and full of pressures which certainly play a big role in our ability to look at things from either a positive or negative lens. But...have we ever truly considered the disadvantages of not staying optimistic and positive in all situations, no matter how difficult and challenging? It is very easy to go down the slippery slope of focusing on the negative and dwelling on the bad things that have happened and/or the worst case scenarios which only drains us of our energy to be effective, be engaged, be happy and able to get things done. I would like to suggest we take the alternate path and develop the ability to look at the up side of life and maintain a positive attitude even in the worst of times which can make the ultimate difference in leading a happy life as well as a successful career.

One of my favorite sayings is from the end of a **Charles Swindoll poem titled, "Attitude"...**

"We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way,

We cannot change the inevitable.

The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have,

and that is our attitude...

I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it...

And so it is with you...

We are in charge of our attitudes."

In fact, optimism is one of the elements used to assess our emotional intelligence quotient in the highly regarded EQ-i 2.0® assessment tool. Emotional intelligence is our ability to identify and manage our own emotions as well as recognize that of others and groups. It represents the communication path between the rational and emotive sides of our brain...and how well we are able to manage that communication path. It suggests there is a direct link and connection between our level of optimism to our happiness and even goes as far as to say optimism is an important element of emotional intelligence that plays into all of the other elements required to develop our emotional intelligence, also known as EQ. In addition, many studies have indicated that EQ can be a predictor of personal and professional success.

Managing a successful career also requires a high level of positivity and the ability to stay optimistic. We will always experience change in the workplace which is the only constant we can expect today. Our ability to embrace and deal with changes in addition to on-going expectations and demands will require us to maintain a positive attitude and outlook even during adversity. By doing so, we are able to uncover different approaches, tap into unfound potential in ourselves and others, as well as manage stress effectively. People who are positive and optimistic leave strong and lasting impressions on others. They get promoted and advance in their careers consistently growing and developing. Not only are they content and fulfilled, they are moving forward and successful! There are so many benefits to maintaining a positive and optimistic outlook and here are just a few of those benefits.

Benefits of being positive and staying optimistic:

- High level of energy
- Hopeful approach to life and work
- Healthy level of self esteem
- Appreciation and gratefulness
- Ability to keep things in perspective
- View of the big picture and all possibilities
- Inspiration
- Creativity
- Sense of calm, peacefulness
- Effective stress management
- Higher level of well being and health
- Desirable impressions and perceptions from others
- Increased performance and productivity
- Empowerment in all aspects of life!

I know what you are thinking - this all sounds great, but much easier said than done! I would absolutely agree with that thought! I always like to say to my clients as well as to myself, we need to get comfortable being uncomfortable and pushing ourselves in new ways. It can be very difficult to always be positive and stay optimistic, however, I have learned that it is much better and more effective than the alternative. Try the following tips to help you do so.

Tips to be positive and stay optimistic:

- Make a list of the positives in all scenarios while identifying best and worst case
- Laugh and smile often
- Connect with other positive people

- Practice good time management skills
- Acknowledge your blessings and be thankful
- Express gratitude and appreciation every day
- Focus on your strengths and leverage them in everything you do
- Find and develop your spiritual self
- Have a good sense of humor
- Expect some ups and downs every single day
- Embrace mistakes as learning experiences and don't be afraid to make some
- Realize there is no such thing as perfection
- Allow yourself to take some risks
- Control your self-talk
- Let go of the past and live in the present
- Be goal-oriented and have a plan
- Know yourself well and accept yourself (the good, the bad and the ugly)
- Make wise choices for yourself

Be positive and stay optimistic to have a happy life and successful career!

Ask Rita...

Question: I work with a colleague who is so negative to a point where I believe is damaging the morale of our team. I've tried helping him with issues that arise but am at a point where I am losing patience and can't take the drama anymore. How do I continue to work with him but not allow him to negatively impact my work and effectiveness?

Answer: The difficult part of negativity is how contagious it can be and even when we don't allow it to change our thinking, it can still impact our surroundings and ability to get things done. I would suggest a few strategies you may want to try with this individual. First, offer only positive suggestions to all of his negative ones in an attempt to perhaps exhaust him of his negative energy. Second, be the role model of positivity on the team because it actually always wins out as the strong lead. People will follow your lead rather than his. Allow him to see the benefits of your success as someone who is optimistic and focuses on the upside. Third, challenge him to grow and push in new ways. Change is good and leads to progress. Lastly, if all else fails, work around him as best as you can. There does come a time when we need to make choices that are right for us. We need to surround ourselves with other positive people and disconnect with people who don't allow us to bring out the best in ourselves and others. Good luck!!

Send your questions to: [Rita B. Allen](mailto:rita@ritaballenassociates.com)

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