

Becoming a Great Leader

Lesson 4-4: Positivity

Discussion Guide – Confidentiality Reminder

One Word Check-in

Update – Personal, Business, Leadership

“Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.” Romans 5:2-4 (NLT)

Positivity conveys confidence that you will overcome life circumstances and problems. Every great leader was a positive person. In WWII, Winston Churchill championed the defeat of Nazi Germany. Today, we see similar positivity in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. He has rallied the whole world to help his small country in its war against Russia. He clearly communicated the issues, the need, how others should help and most importantly, that we will defeat Vladimir Putin.

A positive person is an encourager. We all need encouragement, and we need it more than we think we do. A simple encouragement of being told you did a good job or are working hard can be powerful. Know that others need it as well and maybe more than you, and the people that most likely need this appreciation are your spouse and your children.

Positive people are not faultfinders. A negative person always sees the negative attributes of others. If others are not perfect in what they do, a faultfinder will discourage them by highlighting the negative. Many people do not realize their tendency to be judgmental by finding faults in others.

Positive people create a positive environment. Negative people tend to create a negative environment around them. Positive people do not like to be around negative people, therefore positive people will leave an organization of negative people.

A positive person has strong values that come from their faith. You must have a good sense of who you are and believe in yourself. This is not an ego of thinking you are better than anyone else, which is easy to do for high achievers. Believing in yourself comes from the humble confidence of an assured identity and purpose.

How do I change to become a positive person?

1. Recognize how your actions and negative attitude affect others.
2. Evaluate your relationship with the Lord.
3. Commit to changing how you see yourself and how you treat people.
4. Find something that you can practice every day that will mentally remind you to be positive even when things are difficult. Read part one of Zig Ziglar’s book *Top Performance* (see below).
5. Look for ways to compliment people every day, especially people that you may not like. Be specific and genuine about your compliment (it cannot be fake).
6. Ask a positive person to be your accountability partner to keep you humble and tell you the truth.

Shared Experiences:

- Who is someone in your life that never gave up on you even when you performed poorly? These are people who always expected you to perform to your potential.
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being a negative person and 10 being a positive person, where would you rate yourself? Where would others rate you?
- When there is a major problem at work, how do you react? Do those around you see you positively find a solution, or do you tend to blame others?
- Who is a positive person in your life that you look up to?
- What is one thing you should do to be more positive when negative circumstances occur?
- The ultimate question: How do you react when you have been cutoff in traffic?

Bottom line: Our faith produces confident joy despite the difficult circumstances we may face in our businesses. This is a contagious attitude that inspires others to grow and look beyond their present circumstances.

One Word Check-out

Dig Deeper

Want to learn more?

- *Article:* [Pygmalion in Management](#) by J. Sterling Livingston from HBR
- *Video:* [The Pygmalion Effect](#) from sproutshools.com. This demonstrates the phenomenon whereby higher expectations lead to higher performance
- *Video:* [Leadership Skills at Work - Southwest Airlines Employee](#), published by Indeed.com
- *Article:* [How Are You Perceived at Work? Here's an Exercise to Find Out](#) by Kristi Hedges, Harvard Business Review
- *Video:* [Attitude Makes All the Difference](#) by Zig Ziglar TeamDifference Makers. The eyes are the widow to the soul.
- *Book:* [Top Performance](#) by Zig Ziglar with Jim Savage. Read part one.

The Pygmalion effect

The Pygmalion effect is a type of self-fulfilling prophecy (SFP) in which raising manager expectations regarding subordinate performance boosts subordinate performance. Managers who are led to expect more of their subordinates lead them to greater achievement. There have been numerous studies to this effect. George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* was based upon this principle. From the play:

"You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins because he always treats me as a flower girl and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you because you always treat me as a lady and always will."

The [HBR article cited above](#) is an excellent resource to study this more. It has many great examples. It clearly shows how some managers always treat their subordinates in a way that leads to superior performance. But most managers unintentionally treat their subordinates in a way that leads to lower performance. If managers' expectations are high, productivity is likely to be excellent. Likewise, if managers' expectations are low, productivity is likely to be poor.

Some practical tips:

- Never forecast failure, but clearly define what needs to be accomplished even if it will be very difficult to achieve. Share how this can be done and that you know we, together, can achieve it. But the most important thing is to share *why* this is important to accomplish so that everyone can buy-in to the challenge.
- Do not participate in gripe sessions. This just spreads negativity like a cancer.
- Have high expectations. "I know you can do this." Make sure your statements are sincere when they are made.
- Positivity does not mean you are positively right. It means you listen positively and respond positively.