

Attitude: It's Everything

Our attitude as a member of a school staff has a very powerful effect on colleagues, students and in fact the whole tone of the school. It is not uncommon, however, to hear complaints and negative comments in school staff rooms.

Negativity is infectious and can spread quickly or cause conflict and tension in interpersonal relationships. Although this may be an all too common occurrence in today's workplace, we all do have a responsibility to be optimistic and positive in order to be able to reinforce with students the importance of attitude and realizing one's dreams and potential.

If negative comments are prevalent at your workplace, the issue could be raised at a staff meeting and discussed together as being part of everyone's problem.

As an individual, try to turn negative comments around into positive ones. Use humour if possible. Ask the person who makes a negative comment if there is something that you can do to help.

Acknowledge the person's feelings while, at the same time, offering something positive to change the focus of the comment.

Saying nothing or responding with another negative statement will only serve to perpetuate and reinforce negativity, bad feelings, and tension among the staff.

The first step towards resolution is to identify these behaviours. The second is to talk about them and work together to create the healthy and pleasant work environment that each of us has a right to expect.

Strategies to Consider

Consider these steps to help you maintain a positive attitude.

1. Assume the best in others – look for the positive side of a situation. Try to find common ground to build to a positive outcome.
2. Actions speak louder than words – rather than think or talk about a problem, do something about it.
3. Simplify your life – get rid of the unhealthy relationships and maintain contact with positive people.
4. Set reasonable tasks, goals, and expectations for yourself. Celebrate your accomplishments.
5. Allow yourself to make mistakes.
6. Laugh often with others and at yourself.

Don't hesitate to forgive, forget, and move ahead.

Here are a few ideas you may wish to consider:

- Celebrate the successes of others as much as your own.
- Be a good listener when a colleague is experiencing difficulty.
- Avoid listening to or participating in negative talk about a colleague.
- Share the work fairly in the school among the staff.
- Be kind to each other. Empathize when necessary.

From *After the chalk dust settles*

Research indicates that those with a positive attitude have lower stress levels, less sickness, and live longer. Attitude is a lifestyle choice. Individual people's attitudes can affect the overall morale of the whole staff and the tone of the workplace. We cannot make other people act in a certain way but we can make choices regarding our attitude to a situation. Keeping a positive attitude can make each day better and keep us in good health for our entire lives.

If you are experiencing difficulties and need to talk to someone in confidence, call staff in Professional Relations Services (PRS) at 416 962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836.

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