

The Power of Positive People

By Tom Rivers, Managing Director, DGA

Based on my long-term management experience in the insurance industry, I've often been asked for my opinion about what is the single most important trait a successful professional should possess. This is an interesting and sometimes complex consideration. There are many traits that are essential to career advancement but one stands out more than any other: **a positive attitude.**

Have you ever noticed how good you feel when socializing or talking with upbeat or positive people? They always have a smile on their face or an encouraging tone in their voice. They seem to find the good in life and have little time to wallow around in negativity. They rarely look at themselves as a victim but rather find ways to learn and grow from every challenge life throws their way. Instead of the glass being half empty, it's always half full! They constantly see opportunities for improvement in their minds eye.

Negative people tend to create their own self-fulfilling prophecy. Many of their contributions in conversation tend to be disparaging stories or examples of why ideas won't work. Their world becomes an anxious place to be wary of people, places and things. Instead of generating empathy or support from their peers, the exact opposite happens. These negative types alienate themselves from the leading performers in life and business. Associates and friends soon tire of the pessimistic rhetoric and avoid them whenever possible. Most telling is that management rarely promotes those who are not positive influences in an office. Contrary people do not succeed over the long term because they actually bring the overall mood and performance down.

I've seen many exceptionally bright people in the insurance industry implode their promising careers because of negative behaviour and attitudes. It becomes tiresome for others who deal with them on a daily basis. It's difficult to extend compassion towards people who take no accountability for their own dissatisfaction in life. Negative people often blame others for their lack of status or happiness in life. Strong performers prefer to associate with others like themselves. The company you keep says a lot about who you are and what you believe in. So think positively and hang with like-minded winners!

Thinking positively doesn't come naturally for everyone. It takes time to ingrain this attitude into your habits and automatic thinking. However, one method is to objectively pay attention to your behaviour. How do you respond to challenges or adversity? Do you look for potential solutions or are you quick to blame others? Do you roll up your sleeves knowing there is a way to get things done or do you roll over and hide? Only you can effectively bring about change. Accountability is an admirable trait. Look yourself in the mirror and determine who you really are. Find a mentor who can show you ways to look at the brighter side of work and challenges.

Strive to constantly surround yourself with positive people and emulate their conduct and attitude. You'll find yourself becoming more and more like them with each passing day.

According to Stuart Booth, Director of Digital at RSA, "It's time to humanize the insurance industry". Read some interesting insights of how this could be achieved: