



*This article is one of many available to download
from the Advanced Training website at www.a-t.co.uk
T: 01235 770791
F: 01235 766701
E: information@a-t.co.uk*

*The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author,
who has given Advanced Training permission to make it
publicly and freely available.*

*In the spirit of that openness, we ask that any copy of this
document remains intact, including this page, so that its
provenance and distribution credits can be acknowledged.*

*You are free to use this material for any non-profit-making
purpose (subject to any restrictions otherwise noted) as long as
this header and any copyright & contact information are included.*

Developing Habits to Prompt Our Success by Tony Atkins, Director of Advanced Training

We can all perform well and do the things we know to be right when everything is going well. It is when the pressure is really on that this becomes more difficult. At these times we often need to operate on "auto-pilot" and that is when our habitual behaviour becomes critically important.

We need to develop fundamental habits that prompt our desired behaviour and performance when we are under pressure. We will then automatically do the productive things and results will follow.

Here are some proven productive habits worth cultivating.

1. Look for the good

As the quotation says, "Out of every adversity lies the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit". So when things go wrong, somewhere there will be a benefit.

Most people go to pieces when adversity hits them. They wallow in self-pity and seek sympathy. So when things go wrong, we need to develop the habit of thinking, "Now how can I turn this to my advantage?"

2. Compliment people

Make sure the compliment is sincere. This habit helps people to feel good and perform better, plus it is catching. Before long, others will follow our lead and

the whole environment will be more positive, helping everyone to become more productive - including us.

3. Treat each customer as the only one

We need to treat everyone as though they truly matter. Every customer wishes to be treated as being special and very important to us. Achieve this and our customers will not only remain loyal to us, they will tell others how good we are.

Of course, this also applies to our internal customers.

4. Eliminate negative language

Never think of what might have been, we need to concentrate on building on what we have now. There are many *experts* who can tell us it will not work, or it has been tried before and failed.

Remember the a-b-c success cycle and use it:

- a What we tell ourselves about our strengths and abilities reinforces what we think we can do.
- b This becomes our autopilot that controls our performance, particularly when we are under pressure.
- c Our performance stimulates - either positively or negatively - what we tell ourselves about our strengths and abilities.

5. Look for the common success denominator

Mix with successful people, they think about life differently. Listen and learn from them. If in doubt think what a failure would do and do the opposite.

6. See the oak tree in every acorn

Not all people are like oak trees, but every acorn can become an oak tree. We need to support and help people in our team to grow. We do not need to grow Bonsai trees.

7. Develop into a how-can-I-do-it-better person

Whenever we do something badly we should ask ourselves, "How can I do it better?" Equally important is to ask the question when we do something well.

8. Paint positive pictures

Everybody, including us, thinks in pictures. Use words that help people to see the desired end result.

Talk up situations - not down. Imagine our Managing Director coming to a meeting and saying:

- "Whether you like it or not we have a job to do." Instead of:
- "Everyone, we are facing a tremendous opportunity."

We can all see which approach paints the more positive picture and is more likely to motivate others to achieve.

9. Recognise the danger of negatives to ourselves

Potentially, one of the biggest causes of failure is allowing negative people to influence us adversely with their attitudes.

We need to recognise that we are vulnerable and be ready to refuse to listen to such people. We all know that a bad apple in a basket will quickly infect all the other apples.

10. Keep a personal balance sheet

If we are serious about improving our performance and results, we should regularly audit our strengths and weaknesses. This is personal information just for us and not for sharing with others.

We list all our strengths and our weaknesses. We then select a weakness that we most wish to improve and actively study and/or seek help to turn it into one of our strengths. Once successful or on the way to success, we return to our audit and select another area for improvement.

11. Smile

It has been said that smiling is the shortest distance between two people. Smiling helps us to build rapport and working relationships. This in turn helps us to be optimistic and achieve better results.

Medical research has also shown that being optimistic and smiling boosts our immune system and helps us to fight disease. It helps us to produce in our blood more T-cells and "killer cells". Both types of cells are vital for fighting infection.

People who are optimistic and smile a lot frequently feel better and work much more effectively than people who are pessimistic and do not smile.

12. Have purpose in everything we do

We need to set our-self goals and targets to focus our effort, activity and achievement. We should always expect to achieve. Achieving then becomes a habit in itself.

Note

Tony Atkins will welcome the opportunity to discuss any views or comments prompted by this article. He can be contacted on his direct line number 0118 979 2533, or by email at tony.atkins@a-t.co.uk.

Advanced Training will be happy to discuss your specific business needs and help you to deliver the right development for your people.