

Power Up Your Attitude

Janet is proud of her skills. She graduated at the top of her class in dental hygiene school, then passed her licensure exam and national boards with flying colors. Her patients' teeth sparkle after she cleans and polishes them. And crowns fit perfectly because of her skill at taking impressions.

Janet believes she's a model hygienist. She always arrives at the office early, works quickly and efficiently, and rarely calls in sick.

For all of these reasons, Janet thinks she deserves a raise, but none has been offered. She has become irritable, and it shows. Her negative attitude has affected her relationship with the dentists, and sometimes she's short with the office manager. She enjoys the young patients, but she resents the adult patients who want to tell her every little detail about their dental problems. "If they'd just get to the point," she complains to Dr. Rosen, "it would save us all a lot of time!"

One day Dr. Rosen asks to see Janet in his office. "I must be getting my raise," she thinks excitedly. "It's about time. No one deserves a raise more than I do!"

After Dr. Rosen asks her to sit down, he says, "Janet, you know Dr. Gold and I think your technical skills are top notch. But there's more to being a dental hygienist than that. Patients have complained that you're short with them and don't listen when they want to talk about their dental



problems. Staff members say you won't pitch in to help when they are busy, even though they clean your patient rooms when you're backed up.

You need to work on your attitude."

Janet is confused. Dr. Rosen didn't say a thing about a raise, and not getting a raise is why she's been so irritable.

What's Inside

Here, you will learn to

- ◆ show a positive, can-do attitude
- ◆ cooperate with team members
- ◆ stop gossip in its tracks

Janet's Workshop 2

What's So Bad About a Bad Attitude?

Employers expect you to possess a good attitude at all times—whether you're happy or sad, feeling good or bad, or experiencing problems outside of work. A good attitude increases creativity and productivity, which leads, ultimately, to greater profits for the employers and larger raises for the employees.

A bad attitude is like a virus. One person with a bad attitude can infect an entire company. Once a department or work crew “catches” a bad attitude, it can take days, weeks, or months to recover. In the meantime, everyone's stress increases, accidents occur, morale dips, productivity slumps, and the bottom line suffers. It's easy to see why company owners and supervisors reward employees who are positive and enthusiastic.



Show Your Best Side

A positive attitude is one of the most important characteristics employers look for in applicants. You can show your positive side by displaying the characteristics listed below. What others would you add to the list?

- ◆ Enthusiasm for the job
- ◆ Eagerness to learn
- ◆ Respect for coworkers, customers, and supervisors

You can't be a smart cookie if you have a crummy attitude.

— **LENNART HAGEGARD**

Venture capitalist

- ◆ Upbeat and friendly manner
- ◆ A natural smile
- ◆ Reliability and dependability, fulfilling obligations
- ◆ Willingness to try new methods
- ◆ Patience in listening to different viewpoints
- ◆ Commitment to meeting deadlines and achieving goals
- ◆ Cooperating with others
- ◆ Avoiding gossip and backbiting
- ◆ Dealing with conflict constructively
- ◆ Pitching in when the task requires it
- ◆ Being a team player
- ◆ Doing your share
- ◆ Accepting challenges eagerly
- ◆ Seeing new possibilities
- ◆ Showing loyalty to your company

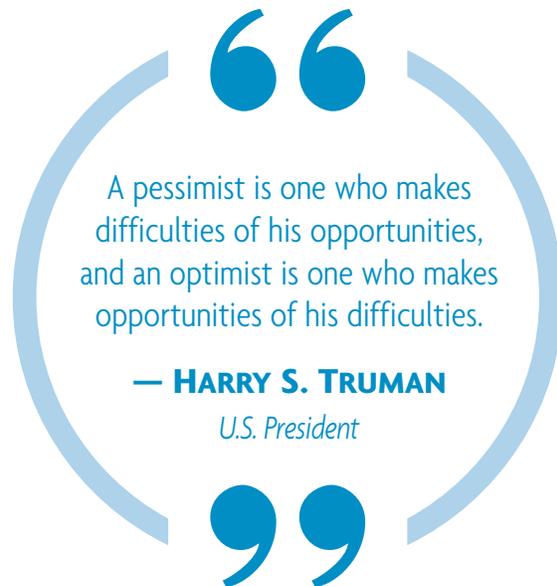
Upbeat employees don't waste their time whining or complaining about others. They see challenges where negative coworkers see obstacles. They leave their personal problems at home and approach their work energetically and enthusiastically. They tell the truth, acknowledge their mistakes, and treat mistakes as learning experiences.

You Can't Hide a Bad Attitude

No one is cheerful all the time. You may experience irritations that try your patience—traffic jams, too much work, arguments with a significant other, incompetence or lack of helpfulness by a coworker. Sometimes, you simply may not feel well, or you may be troubled by a major personal or business problem.

Janet's bad attitude in the opening story shows up in her irritability with her coworkers and resentment toward her adult patients. Some people demonstrate a bad attitude by being arrogant, rude, belligerent, defensive, pushy, aloof, or intimidating. While you probably will not be in control of all aspects of your job, and you certainly won't be able to control how others act, you can control your attitude.

Think of a time when someone made you laugh when you were in a bad mood. Most likely, your bad mood disappeared and was replaced—at least for a while—by a happier, lighter feeling. You can impact the people around you by showing the same type of positive attitude. You might also try these suggestions:



A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities, and an optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties.

— **HARRY S. TRUMAN**

U.S. President

- ◆ Smile. If you act like you're in a good mood, soon you will be in a better mood.
- ◆ Think, "I can," "I will," "I'm capable."
- ◆ See obstacles as opportunities and failures as learning experiences.
- ◆ Remind yourself that attitudes are contagious, and make yours positive.

Ten Elements of a Healthy Workplace



Communication consultant William I. Gordon listed these characteristics of a healthy workplace. How many contribute to a positive attitude?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ Respect | ✓ Employee empowerment |
| ✓ Honesty | ✓ Equitable rewards |
| ✓ Commitment to quality | ✓ Team spirit |
| ✓ Flow of information | ✓ Corporate social responsibility |
| ✓ Open-book management | ✓ Cheerfulness |

ACTIVITY 2.1

NAME _____

Seeing the Glass as Half Full

Match each negative statement in Column 1 with a positive version in Column 2.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. I've never done that before. I'm not sure I can. | _____ I'm sorry I missed the deadline. Next time, I'll start collecting the data much earlier. |
| b. Marsha's an awful manager. I could do a better job. | _____ This project sure is taking a long time. But we're collecting valuable data that can really improve operations. |
| c. The people in Shipping don't know what they're doing. | _____ Sure, I'll give it a try. I'm always up for trying something new. |
| d. He has some nerve to tell me how to do this. I'm the expert. | _____ There's always room for improvement. I'd better listen carefully. |
| e. It's not my fault! If Sancha had gotten me the information on time, I'd have made the deadline. | _____ I hadn't thought of it that way before. Can you tell me more? |
| f. Not now! Can't you see how busy I am? | _____ I wonder why Shipping does it that way. I'll have to ask. |
| g. This project is taking forever. What a waste of time. | _____ Sure, I'll give a hand. You seem swamped. |
| h. You're wrong. You don't know what you're talking about. | _____ I'm really busy right now. Can we talk about this tomorrow? |
| i. Why should I help? It's not part of my job description. | _____ I respect Marsha for getting to management level. She's very talented. |

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Getting Along

Cooperation is easy when you work with people you like and your workload is about right, but the picture changes when new coworkers or a new supervisor joins the team or when stress builds because deadlines aren't being met.

In today's team organizations, team members are expected to make decisions and achieve goals with little outside supervision. In this environment, everyone must get along.

You can probably think of several consequences of people not getting along in the workplace, but the most likely consequence is conflict. People who study organizations have described many damages caused by conflict, including these:

- ◆ Energy is diverted from important organizational goals.
- ◆ Tasks that depend on cooperation don't get done properly.
- ◆ Parties to the conflict feel increased stress and frustration, which can affect their ability to do their job.
- ◆ The losers in a conflict often feel demeaned or not respected, and this can affect their commitment to the organization.

No man is an island,
entire of itself;
every man is a piece
of the continent.

— **JOHN DONNE**
English poet



- ◆ Often the conflict forces coworkers to choose sides, poisoning many relationships throughout the organization. Morale declines, suspicion and distrust mount, and job satisfaction suffers.
- ◆ Absenteeism rises and honesty suffers.
- ◆ As hostilities escalate, some people may get fired. Others may quit because they can't stand the atmosphere. In both cases, turnover increases, and the organization may struggle to keep a competent and productive staff.
- ◆ Clients or customers notice that something is wrong in the organization, and they begin to take their business elsewhere.

The way you handle your relationships, both in and out of the workplace, can have a major impact on your happiness and your fulfillment in life. The skills for getting along can be learned. Even if you're not adept at them now, you can learn to get along through understanding and practice.

Building a Bond With Coworkers

From your first day on the job, you will be expected to work cooperatively with everyone in your organization. Start out by showing that you are approachable and friendly. Whether you work in teams, units, or departments, you and your coworkers will need to be able to depend on each other.



Chances are, some of your coworkers will have cultural backgrounds that are different from yours. Realize that culture has a powerful influence on how people work, what they value, how they make decisions, and how they communicate. When people of different backgrounds work together, cultural misunderstandings can lead to conflict. If you don't know what a coworker means or why he or she is acting a certain way, ask questions to clarify. The better you and your colleagues understand each other, the better you'll work together.

To build relationships with your coworkers, follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Take time to listen. You'll learn more than when you talk.
- ◆ Show respect. Realize that different ways of looking at things and different backgrounds lead to creative ideas.
- ◆ Communicate clearly. Let those speaking finish without interrupting them. Nod to show you're listening.
- ◆ Strive to be pleasant and positive. Don't whine or complain.

How to Say You're Busy Without Offending



What should you do when a coworker, known for socializing, invites himself into your office and sits down to chat? Here are some phrases you can use to pleasantly ask the person to leave:

- ✓ “May we talk this evening after work, or perhaps at lunch tomorrow? I'm really busy right now.”
- ✓ “I have to get this finished. You can wait if you'd like.” (The person will probably get bored with waiting and eventually leave.)
- ✓ “Can you come back later? I'm just swamped.”

Here are some other effective tactics:

- ✓ If your supervisor approves, hang a sign on your door saying that you're very busy and would appreciate no interruptions.
- ✓ Pre-empt disruptions by telling your coworkers that you need to meet a deadline and would appreciate no interruptions.

- ◆ Accept criticism as constructive, and strive to learn from it.
- ◆ When you offer corrective feedback, don't criticize. Focus on the behavior, not the person.
- ◆ Avoid judging. Instead, try to understand others.
- ◆ Remember that your way of looking at things is not the only valid approach.
- ◆ Work to eliminate your prejudices and biases. Never express prejudice or bias at work.
- ◆ Get to know your coworkers on a personal basis.
- ◆ Praise and compliment your colleagues when they've done a good job. Avoid taking credit for their successes.
- ◆ Pitch in to help during busy times.
- ◆ Work to resolve conflict as soon as you become aware of it. Try to find a solution that makes everyone feel okay.

No matter how hard you try, some people will be difficult to get along with. Say you have a coworker, Jared, who is always ill-tempered and loud-mouthed and sometimes is abusive. You want to tell Jared to

staple his mouth, since nothing positive ever comes out of it. But you know that wouldn't be a constructive remark. So what can you do about the situation?

First, you can try to avoid Jared whenever possible. If you don't have to work with him, just stay away.

Second, if you do have to work with Jared, remind yourself that he may have some reason for his ill temper. Perhaps he has a terrible home life.

Perhaps he is insecure for personal reasons. While you don't need to invent excuses for him, you should try to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Third, realize that you're not actually objecting to Jared as a person. You may hardly know Jared. What bothers you—what you want to see changed—is his behavior, the way he acts around you and your coworkers.

If you decide to offer Jared some well-intentioned advice, focus on specific suggestions that would make the environment better for everyone. Try to show Jared how he would benefit from changing his behavior.



? Did you know?

Managers in major U.S. corporations spend more than four weeks a year handling problems caused by employees who can't get along with one another, according to a survey by Accountemps.

Although you must try to develop a working relationship with all of your colleagues, you don't have to develop friendships with all of them. Realize that you'll be judged by the company you keep. The best friends you can have are people whose values and attitudes you respect.

“Yes, Sir!”

Your relationship with your supervisor may be your most important relationship at work. Because supervisors recommend you for promotions and can address your needs and requests, they can help you advance in the company or ensure that you don't advance.

Developing a relationship with your boss can be difficult, however. If he or she is extremely busy, you may feel that you should keep your concerns to yourself. If your boss acts distracted or irritable, you may wonder if you have done something wrong. If your boss is a poor communicator, you may find it hard to develop a relationship.

In most cases, you will be able to gain your boss's attention and respect if you follow these guidelines:

Do

- ◆ Knock before entering your boss's office.
- ◆ Respect your boss's time. When communicating something, get right to the point. If more details are needed, your boss will ask.
- ◆ Learn what your boss expects and do it well.
- ◆ Observe your boss's body language to identify approval or disapproval of your actions.



- ◆ Notice whether your boss asks for reports in writing or prefers to learn things verbally. Then follow that approach. Strive to adapt your actions to your boss's way of doing things.
- ◆ Become a finisher of projects. Give your boss materials that are complete and accurate so that no additional work has to be done.
- ◆ Organize your thoughts before approaching your boss. Don't ramble when you speak.
- ◆ Respect your boss's authority. If you dislike some of his or her actions or behaviors, focus on the things you can respect. And, never go above your boss's head without his or her permission. That's a quick way to destroy any relationship you've built and a fast way to lose your job.

No one would talk so much
in society, if he only knew how
often others misunderstand him.

— JOHANN WOLFGANG
VON GOETHE

German poet

Don't

- ◆ Disturb your boss with problems that you can resolve. If you bring a problem to your boss's attention, have a solution ready to suggest.
- ◆ Complain to your boss about your coworkers. Try to work things out.
- ◆ Bring your personal problems to work or let personal problems interfere with your ability to get to work! Show that you're reliable and can be trusted.
- ◆ Make your boss have to guess what you want. Communicate clearly and directly.
- ◆ Waste time. Your good work will make your boss look good, and he or she will take notice.
- ◆ Give insincere compliments. But do show appreciation and admiration when it is due.
- ◆ Take every harsh reply or unfriendly action from your boss personally. If you haven't done anything to deserve the action, most likely your boss was reacting to something else.



Developing Rapport With Customers

Whether you work directly with customers or support the employees who do, the customer is the reason your job exists. Without customers, your company would have to close its doors. It's the customers who pay your salary by purchasing the services or products of your organization.

As your company's greatest asset, customers will expect your best service, whether or not customer service is a responsibility listed on your job description.

- ◆ Always greet customers with a positive, upbeat attitude.
- ◆ Treat them like they are right, even if you think them to be wrong.
- ◆ Smile and show that you're approachable.
- ◆ Be respectful, and strive to meet the customers' needs.

Getting along with customers is vital to your company's success. It's an area where every employee makes a difference.

We see our customers
as invited guests to a party
and we are the hosts.

— **JEFF BEZOS**
CEO, Amazon.com

ACTIVITY 2.2

NAME _____

Looking Within

Place a checkmark next to the attitudes that best describe you—the ones you believe you exhibit most often. Be honest with yourself. On the lines below, list four attitudes you want to change, and describe two steps you can take to make each change. Then practice the new behavior. As with any aspect of life, practice makes perfect!

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open-minded | <input type="checkbox"/> Reassuring | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful | <input type="checkbox"/> Pessimistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uncooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidating | <input type="checkbox"/> Arrogant | <input type="checkbox"/> Quitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sincere | <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging | <input type="checkbox"/> Secure | <input type="checkbox"/> Complaining | <input type="checkbox"/> Complacent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defensive | <input type="checkbox"/> Critical | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Rigid | <input type="checkbox"/> Lethargic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insincere | <input type="checkbox"/> Persevering | <input type="checkbox"/> Insecure | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Considerate | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Humble | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive | <input type="checkbox"/> Resilient | <input type="checkbox"/> Argumentative | <input type="checkbox"/> Helpful | |

Attitude I want to change: _____

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Attitude I want to change: _____

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Attitude I want to change: _____

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Attitude I want to change: _____

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Say No to Gossip

Patrice, a hospital lab technician, has just returned to her job after maternity leave. She confides to Al, a coworker and friend, how much she misses her baby and says she's been thinking seriously about quitting. The next day, Patrice's supervisor calls her into his office. "Patrice," he says, "I've heard you may be leaving, and I understand your dilemma. We'll begin looking for a replacement right away. Please be sure to give two-weeks' notice."

Patrice is stunned. She confronts Al and says, "I told you something in confidence. I hadn't even made up my mind, but now the boss is looking for my replacement!"

Patrice has good reason to be upset. Al shared with others what she told him in confidence. Now, whether she stays at the hospital or leaves her job, her boss will question her commitment to stay.

More than 90 percent of 1,500 workers surveyed by a British firm admitted they spread information given to them in confidence at work. Three-quarters said they told a colleague's secret to at least two other people on the same day they heard the information.

Why do people tell secrets? Most often it's to boost their ego. They feel powerful because they know something others don't know. But spreading gossip destroys trust and relationships. It's a quick way to lose a friend and become unpopular. Plus, it harms morale, hurts feelings, and destroys productivity. If everyone is spending time spreading

rumors or trying to stop their damage, not much work is getting done.

One of the quickest ways to derail your career is to gossip about your boss behind his or her back or to share with others information your boss tells you in confidence. The first action shows a lack of respect; the second shows you can't be trusted. Both demonstrate a negative attitude. In the British survey described previously, two-thirds of

the bosses surveyed said they wouldn't trust an employee who shared company secrets.

Workers who respect their colleagues don't gossip about them. They keep their opinions to themselves. If they have a problem with another person, they talk about it directly, calmly, and respectfully, with the aim of solving the problem. When others gossip to them, they politely remove themselves from the conversation, and they don't repeat the gossip.



Just Say No!

Rule 1: Let others know, through your actions or words, that you don't want to participate in office gossip.

Rule 2: If you hear gossip, don't pass it on!

ACTIVITY 2.3

NAME _____

Effects of Gossip

Gossip may seem harmless, but it isn't. Gossiping on the job can destroy relationships with coworkers, supervisors, and others in the company. Think about the following situations and then answer the questions.

1. Your foreman, Stan, tells you in confidence that your factory's sales are low for the third straight quarter. He's worried that there will be layoffs. You tell the people on your assembly line that Stan says people are going to get canned.

What effects might your news have on your coworkers? _____

What may happen if word gets back to Stan? How would your relationship with him be affected?

2. You think Maria isn't pulling her weight at the bakery. She's supposed to get the bagels made by 7 a.m., but she's been working too slowly and the bagel bins are often empty. You don't like having to tell customers that you're out of cinnamon raisin or poppy seed bagels, and you begin to blame Maria. "I'm sorry," you tell your customers, "One of our bakers hasn't been doing her job. We're going to have to do something about this."

How do you think customers would react to your news? Could it affect business? _____

How would Maria react if she learns what you've been saying? Would her reaction be justified? _____

What might be a better approach for you to take? _____

3. Your team meetings have not been going well. One team member, Derek, has been pushing his ideas and not listening to anyone else's. Soon the meetings disintegrate into arguments, with no one listening to anyone else. You tell a coworker who is not on the team how Derek is making a mess of things with his know-it-all attitude.

What effect might your comment make on your relationship with Derek? _____

If your boss hears about it, what might she think? _____

What would a better approach have been? _____



GETTING CONNECTED

For more information on showing a positive attitude at work visit this Website:

<https://myqss.link/Positive-Attitude>

and read the article “The Benefits of a Positive Attitude in the Workplace.”
The following article entitled, “18 Simple Ways to Keep a Positive Attitude at Work”
can be found at:

<https://myqss.link/18-Ways-To-Keep-Positive>

WORKSHOP WRAP-UP

- A positive attitude boosts morale, increases creativity and productivity, and makes work more pleasant.
- You can control your attitude.
- A positive attitude will help you get along with coworkers, supervisors, and customers. A negative attitude will destroy relationships.
- Just say no to gossip. Gossiping is a quick way to lose friends and damage your credibility.