

Appreciation

Are there days when you wish feeling appreciated was as easy as the cartoon below? Are there days that others on your team and in the organization feel this way?



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If we were to ask, "Do you receive enough appreciation?" most people would say "No!" And yet, it is a well-known fact that people want to be recognized. They want to know they are making a difference, and they want to know how they are doing, both in terms of how they can improve and what they are doing well.

what is the value?

What is the value in telling others what they are doing well? Imagine for a moment teaching an infant how to walk. What if we focused our attention on the falls or the missteps, instead of enthusiastically applauding the small signs of progress? How successful would the baby be? With children, we catch them doing something right and then we applaud. The same principle applies with grown-ups.

An environment where people are recognized for the things they do well leads to an atmosphere of respect and dignity. This gives everyone a foundation for putting forth their best effort. Not only do people perform better in an environment of appreciation, but they also feel more fulfilled.

why don't we give it?

Recognition can be as simple as a pat on the back or as elaborate as a formal awards ceremony. Saying thank you, starting meetings by acknowledging the contributions of the people present or posting complimentary letters from customers are simple, inexpensive ways to let people know they are appreciated and valued. The dividends are enormous.

Think about your own personal situation. Do you give others enough appreciative feedback? If not, why?

Below are some common and often unconscious beliefs that can keep people from giving each other the appreciative feedback they might like:

- 1. It might sound insincere.**
- 2. They might get embarrassed.**
- 3. It is more important to tell them what is wrong.**
- 4. They might ask for a raise.**
- 5. They might start to slack off.**
- 6. It is their job to do well.**
- 7. People know when they do well; I should not have to tell them.**

Do any of those sound familiar to you?

some guidelines

Here are some principles for offering appreciation to others that will help overcome the self-limiting beliefs above:

1. Make sure you have rapport. Being present and tuned in to the other person's needs and concerns also turns off our own distractions and worries so we can maximize our effectiveness as coaches.

2. Be specific. General comments such as, "Nice job," are not as meaningful as, "That report you turned in had some great, innovative ideas." People need to know specifically what was appreciated so that they can continue doing it and develop their strengths even further.

3. Have a positive, caring attitude. Check where you are on the Mood Elevator. If your mood is not on the upper levels, your message could be misinterpreted and the result could be something other than what you intended.

action steps

1. The average person communicates only a small percentage of all the appreciative thoughts they have in a day. Stop and reflect on the feelings of appreciation you have had, but not communicated, over the last several days. Make a point to communicate those unarticulated messages.

2. For the next four to five meetings that you lead or participate in, find opportunities to express appreciation.

Appreciation

**“what I
appreciate
about you
is...”**