

Members Quarterly

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President's Message

Is Your Glass Half Full?

Change your attitude and reap the benefits

I am a 'glass half full' kind of guy. I need to be in order to stay in business. If I stop believing that I will be successful, then that may well turn out to be the case. So I have a belief in myself, my abilities and that the future holds opportunities as well as challenges. This makes my business run more smoothly and in fact helps me in all aspects of my life. As I realize that I'm getting older, I actually need that attitude in order to stay happy, content and focused.

I am also not blindly optimistic about the world or other people. I have deep and real concerns about the world we live in and the mess we have made of it. I am particularly concerned about the impact of our current decisions on future generations. I just don't dwell on those issues. I do my part whenever I can and I have to hope that's enough. I do my absolute best when it comes to what I do have control over. That lets me sleep at night.

I am certainly not a rabid optimist, but even my milder version gives me an advantage over the critics and cynics who often populate our offices and other places of work. My personal sense of positivity allows me to accept minor defeats graciously and move on quickly to more successful endeavors. It also frees up my time and energy so that I don't dwell too long on mistakes but learn from them and then move on.

My optimism is also based on science. Well, almost science. Researchers at Harvard University found that having a positive attitude benefits both your mental and physical health. They looked at the correlation between cardiovascular risks and emotional states and found that when people had optimism or hope, they had a reduced risk of heart disease and stroke. Other studies have shown that positive people can cope with serious diseases and ailments like cancer better than pessimists. They respond better to treatment and their full recovery rates are much higher.

If you are not exactly on the positivity track, how can you switch direction so that you head towards optimism? The answer according to some experts is to retrain your brain to think differently and more optimistically. There was an article a few years ago in INC magazine by author and blogger Geoffrey James that offered some suggestions on how to do this.

He suggested writing down what you do now, what he called 'your rules'. Then see how well, or not, your current thinking was working for you. Next, try coming up with some new rules and commit to practicing them for a specific period of time. Stick your new rules up in a prominent place in your workplace so you don't forget about them and start practicing being optimistic.

Of course, you could just stay miserable and see the glass as half empty. How's that working for you?



Brian W. Pascal
President