CORPORATE HARMONY

An Enlightened Approach to Leadership and Organizational Development

Hello again from Corporate Harmony and welcome to the Module 4 Week 1 'Conversation Starter'!!

We are now half way through the Positive Presence Skill Building program, and by now you may be coming to realize how important it is to check in with your feelings and your thoughts. By now you may be noticing also how easy it is to slip into the negative. In fact you may struggle at times to even be able to find the necessary positive thoughts, let alone the positive emotional energy that is necessary for success, for a strong relationship, and for good health. Do not be discouraged if you are a bit (or a lot) uncomfortable with this new way of thinking. If at times you do get discouraged, fear not, for the positive that you are looking for **is** there. It will perhaps just take a few more days, a bit more time, and an extra personal check-in. Remember, acquiring the skill of Positive Presence is a slow and gentle process … and every moment of every day will bring you closer to your goal.

Knowing your values is extremely important to acquiring the skill of Positive Presence. A personal value is an individual's absolute or relative and ethical value, the assumption of which can be the basis for ethical action. A value system is a set of consistent values and measures. A principle value is a foundation upon which your other values and measures of integrity are based.

Some values are physiologically determined and are normally considered objective, such as a desire to avoid physical pain or to seek pleasure. Other values are considered subjective, vary across individuals and cultures, and are in many ways aligned with belief and belief systems.

Values can be defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes. As such, values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what "ought" to be. They identify what should be judged as good or evil. Values are abstract concepts of what is important and worthwhile. "Equal rights for all," "Excellence deserves admiration," and "People should be treated with respect and dignity" are representative of values. Values tend to influence attitudes and behavior. Different cultures reflect values differently and to different levels of emphasis.

Most concede the power of core values in business. Jim Collins made a great case in his book "Built to Last." But it's difficult to accurately create or accept core values for your company if your own personal core values have not been clarified. You may claim to understand your own values, but real awareness does not arise until you have articulated them clearly in writing and tested them through daily decision-making. Real awareness begins with asking yourself daily, moment by moment, "Am I thinking true to my core values? Am I feeling true to my core values? Am I acting true to my core values?" Real awareness truly begins when those questions are asked often enough to become an unconscious habit and ultimately become 'who you are.'

Your personal values are there to guide behavior and choice, much the same as business core values. Identifying your values enables you to be swift and focused in your decision-making, with clear direction. Identifying your values and then living in sync with them allows for living in harmony with

your choices – your choice of friendships, relationships, profession and business partnerships; how you choose to manage your personal resources such as time and money; and how to stay true to yourself.

Without personal value clarity you will suffer from cognitive dissonance, a term often used to describe the feelings of discomfort that result from holding two conflicting beliefs – when there is a discrepancy between beliefs and behaviors, something must change in order to eliminate or reduce the dissonance. Without personal value clarity you will ultimately suffer from stress, low emotional energy, lack of motivation, low productivity at work and at home, poor relationships and overall poor health.

Steve Pavlina provides a great list of values that can help you develop a clearer sense of what's most important to you in life. To see Steve's comprehensive values list go to Module 4 and click on 'Steve Pavlina's Values List'. This values list is merely a guide. It is lengthy and contains many synonyms but is certainly not exhaustive, so feel free to add unlisted values to your own list as well. There is an excellent exercise that can help you think more about how these values influence your actions, and understand why you may respond in a certain way if someone acts in a manner that goes against one of these values. Go to Module 4 to download the 'Understanding Your Values Exercise', and even if you have done this exercise in the past, understand that as we grow and as we change, our values may also change and so it is good to 'check-in' every once in a while to make sure you are still clear and can articulate your personal values.

As you work on your values list you will find that some just jump out and call to you, and you feel, "Yes, this value is part of me." These values reflect how you live, how you think, and how you make decisions and choices. Research coming from the neurosciences shows clearly that you can assess your personal energy flow through your feelings. Feelings such as happiness and optimism can be linked to a positive energy flow, and feelings such as anger and frustration can be linked to a negative energy flow. You can control your feelings with your thoughts. It is through your thought process that you choose how to behave. A clear and concise picture of your beliefs and values as they exist today, and perhaps even your goals and aspirations of tomorrow, is essential for enlightened leadership and a life of harmony.

Mahatma Ghandi said it best; "Your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become your words. Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits. Your habits become your values. Your values become your destiny."

The **HOMEWORK** for Module 4 is pretty much the same as what you have been doing for Modules 1, 2, and 3:

Listen to this audio of the weekly 'Conversation Starter' at least once more in the next 7 days, and download the written script of the weekly 'Conversation Starter'. You must use this written transcript at least 2 times in the next 7 days. Some suggestions might be for you to share it with a friend or colleague, add it as an agenda item to one of your meetings, or use it as the conversation starter when you gather with your group. In Week 2, you will use "Week 2 Conversation Starter". In Week 3, you will use "Week 3 Conversation Starter". And in Week 4, you will use "Week 4 Conversation Starter".

Set up an hourly reminder to yourself (either on your computer or your phone) for a 'personal check-in'. When the reminder goes off, ask yourself the following questions: "(1) What sort of feelings have I had since my last check-in?"; and "(2) What have my thought patterns been like since my last check-in?"; and finally, "(3) What have my behavior patterns been like since my last check-in?"

In your private 'Positive Presence Skill Building' page where you accessed 'Module 4' you will see a link for "Resources Page". Click on that link and look at the LIBRARY Section, then click on Corporate Harmony's "**BOOK STORE LIBRARY**".
Browse through the Library and pick a book, any book. Then download it, buy it, find someone to borrow it from ... whatever … and start reading. Read one quarter of the book each week so that it is finished at the end of week 4.

Again, in your private 'Positive Presence Skill Building' page where you accessed 'Module 4' you will see the link for "Resources Page". Click on that link and look at the LIBRARY Section, then click on Corporate Harmony's "**FAVORITES LIBRARY**". Then pick two new websites to visit.
Before the end of this week, visit your first website and read everything there is to read on it.
In Week 2, visit your first website again and sign up for something free (you will have to give your email address, but when you are finished the 'freebie' just go into the next email they send you, go to the bottom of the email, and 'unsubscribe' and you will not be swamped by their continuous emails).
In Week 3, visit your second website and read everything there is to read on it.
In Week 4, visit your second website again and sign up for something free (you will have to give your email address, but when you are finished the 'freebie' just go into the next email they send you, go to the bottom of the email, and 'unsubscribe' and you will not be swamped by their continuous emails).

In Modeule 3 we introduced a new assignment section. However, if you are thinking that you just *DO NOT HAVE TIME* for another assignment, that's ok too – just roll this assignment into the usual assignment #4 above.
In your private 'Positive Presence Skill Building' page where you accessed 'Module 4', click again on the link for "Resources Page". Then, look at the LIBRARY Section and click on Corporate Harmony's "**ONLINE COACHING LIBRARY**". Here you will find a number of online 'Life' coaches that have all sorts of knowledge to share. Pick two new websites to visit.
Before the end of this week, visit your first website and read everything there is to read on it.
In Week 2, visit your first website again and sign up for something free (you will have to give your email address, but when you are finished the 'freebie' just go into the next email they send you, go to the bottom of the email, and 'unsubscribe' and you will not be swamped by their continuous emails).
In Week 3, visit your second website and read everything there is to read on it.
In Week 4, visit your second website again and sign up for something free (you will have to give your email address, but when you are finished the 'freebie' just go into the next email they send you, go to the bottom of the email, and 'unsubscribe' and you will not be swamped by their continuous emails).

Refer again to Corporate Harmony's **Generic Behavior Questionnaire**.
Select one more new question and read it, and then ask of yourself this question "How can I do this better?" Do this exercise of reading the same question and asking yourself daily for the remainder of this week.
In Week 2, select a different question and read it, and then ask yourself this question "How can I do this better?" Do this exercise of reading and asking yourself daily for the remainder of Week 2.
In Week 3, select a different question and do this exercise of reading and asking yourself daily for the remainder of Week 3 … and so on for Week 4.

Remember, acquiring the skill of Positive Presence is a slow and gentle process that begins with awareness … but it's also a process that must be doused liberally with forgiveness -- especially self-forgiveness -- as well as a good solid pinch of humor.

Remember, a learning mind is a healthy mind – and the more time we spend in the positive, the greater our capacity for achieving peak performance, for building and maintaining good relationships, and for experiencing good health…

So my friends, go to Week 13 in your Positive Presence Skill Building Journal, and until next time, let the skill of Positive Presence work for you.

Catherine M.E. Osborne

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 http://corporateharmony.ca