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COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

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How To Adopt An Attitude Of Gratitude

It's very easy in this economic climate to remain negative about the present circumstances. Even the mainstream media cannot decide whether we're in a upturn or a downturn. When I get up in the morning, I try my best to lay out my day so that I get a feeling of some control. Yes, once in the office, my day often doesn't go quite the way I planned it, but occasionally, I have a productive day.

On a day where things seem way out of control, it helps me to realize that I still do have control over my attitude. To help me maintain my positive attitude, I try to expose myself to positive events. One of the ways I do that is by subscribing to the website www.dumblittleman.com. Here's a recent piece on "gratitude." I find that it helps reinforce my positive outlook when I can express gratitude for at least one thing during my day. Here's some tips on how to do that:



"When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food, and the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies with yourself."

—Tecumseh

Adopting an attitude of appreciation towards the things in your life makes an enormous difference to your level of happiness. People who consciously attempt to be thankful and appreciative tend to feel happier and at peace to a greater extent than others.

According to a research project from the University of Miami, people who practice some form of conscious gratitude:

- exercised more regularly, were healthier, slept better and felt more optimistic.
- made more progress towards personal goals
- were more alert, enthusiastic and could handle stress more effectively

Some people are naturally more optimistic and positive than others, and some studies suggest that, to a certain degree, our genes determine happiness. However, even the most pessimistic

of souls can develop a more optimistic and happier mindset with gentle and persistent practice. Here are some ideas for feeling happier and more at peace:

Be careful when you make comparisons

It's natural to compare ourselves with others, and many of us tend to compare ourselves with those who are better off. Of course, we all encounter problems and obstacles every day,

but most of them are trivial compared with the problems many people experience. We all know that people experience serious illness, live constantly with great pain or relentless hunger; there are people who never had an education, who can't read or write, people who have been abused or who have no family. The list, of course, is almost endless.

Is the glass half empty or half full? Of course, there are people who are more successful, wealthier, have a "better" job, etc., and it is easy

to be envious of them. But there are so many others who are worse off than ourselves, so why not focus on how fortunate we are? Feelings of envy are corrosive and can cause great damage to your happiness and self esteem, so choosing the right comparisons is important.

Be more conscious about the things we take for granted

Many of the things we should be thankful for get forgotten because we are so used to them, and it is only when we lose them that we remember how fortunate we were. I recently had a minor leg injury which made me realize how precious the ability to walk really is! Don't wait until something's gone before you are grateful—your sight, your health, your family—take some

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Who Wants To Be A Billionaire?

Are you destined to become a billionaire? *Forbes* magazine conducted an informal, unscientific analysis of its list of self-made billionaires and noted a few common denominators:

- **Math skills.** A lot of the world's wealthiest people show a high aptitude for math. Many of their parents had math-related careers such as engineering or accounting.
- **Birth date.** More billionaires were born in the fall than in any other season. September was the most common month of birth for the 380 self-made American billionaires who appeared on the *Forbes* list in the past three years. What does this mean? Nobody knows. Maybe it's the magic of mistletoe.
- **College.** Higher education isn't necessarily a requirement for vast wealth. Of the 292 Horatio Algiers on *Forbes'* most recent list, 20% either didn't complete college or never bothered with it in the first place.
- **Failure.** *Forbes* notes that several of the billionaires on its list failed to score on their first attempt. Some of their first attempts at business were disastrous—but they learned from their failures and now view them as a necessary step to their eventual success.



Set Your Sights On The Right Target

Your organization won't grow unless you and your team are working toward goals. Setting the right goals, though—goals that will inspire and motivate—is crucial. Aim for goals that are...

- **Quantifiable.** You should be able to measure success in objective terms so everyone can see the value of your efforts.
- **Challenging.** If it's too easy, chances are your objective won't have significant impact on your organization.
- **Company-focused.** Set a goal that supports your organization's agenda, not one that just makes you or your department look good.
- **Realistic.** Although challenge is important, pursuing an impossible dream will result only in a morale-crushing letdown.
- **Flexible.** Don't back yourself into a corner. Although you don't want to adjust your goal to suit your results, be willing to modify your ambitions if circumstances push your original objective out of reach.



5 Tips For Being A Better Boss

Every manager wants to get better at his or her job. But how can you do it? Here are some guidelines:

- **Adapt to each person you oversee.** Look at employees as individuals. Get to know their strengths and weaknesses and deal with them accordingly.
- **Don't be a know-it-all.** Acknowledge your own humanness. Turn to employees for advice on how you can be a better supervisor to them.
- **Learn to let go.** Don't micromanage. Trust employees to do their jobs. Cultivate their growth by giving them a little more than they think they're capable of doing.
- **Stay available.** Keep your door open, and let employees know they can come to you at any time to discuss any issue that affects them positively or negatively.
- **Work for employees' goals.** That means first knowing what an employee's goals are. Then, serve as a mentor, and strive to do what you can to advance a person's professional goals.

Getting Feedback From Your Employees

It's part of your job to give feedback to your employees. But good bosses know they need constant and constructive feedback, too. Here's how to make sure you're getting the feedback that will make you a better manager:

- 1) **Ask for it.** Few people automatically provide feedback. Because you're the boss, your underlings are even less likely to speak up voluntarily; they may be intimidated or don't want to ruffle any feathers. Set up a meeting with them, and let them know what you want.
- 2) **Make sure you ask the right people the right questions.** Be specific about the feedback you want. Make sure your request for information and feedback is focused. The responses will be more valuable.
- 3) **Probe for specifics.** Sometimes the feedback needs elaboration. Don't hesitate to probe deeper. You need to fully understand what is being said to put it to use effectively.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly





What British name applies to a type of sofa...?

Who Knows This Stuff?

- 1) What breed of dog is commonly referred to as the Russian Wolfhound?
 - a) Basenji
 - b) Saluki
 - c) Whippet
 - d) Borzoi
- 2) What telltale shape is hidden inside the FedEx logo?
 - a) a truck
 - b) a wedge
 - c) an arrow
 - d) a cross
- 3) Which American humorist died in a 1935 plane crash along with aviator Wiley Post?
 - a) Bill Nye
 - b) Will Rogers
 - c) Mark Twain
 - d) James Thurber
- 4) Graves' disease often causes an abnormal protrusion of which part of the human body?
 - a) the nose
 - b) the eyeballs
 - c) the tongue
 - d) the belly button
- 5) What British name applies to a type of sofa, a style of overcoat and a brand of cigarettes?
 - a) Davenport
 - b) Winston
 - c) Wellington
 - d) Chesterfield

Answers: 1) d 2) c 3) b 4) b (Graves' disease is an autoimmune disease that causes an overactive thyroid.) 5) d

Orient New Workers Quickly

Companies today often don't have the time to conduct extensive orientation sessions for new hires. But getting newcomers up to speed quickly is as important as ever. Here are some tips for getting "the new hire" started:

- **Don't overload them.** Start with information that directly affects their current job. Skip the interesting but unnecessary history of the company. Don't explain outbound sales calls, for example, if they're starting with inbound customer calls.
- **Find out what they know.** If they're already familiar with certain functions of the job, don't waste time "teaching" them.
- **Assign one person to take charge of each new employee.** Try not to hand new people off from one supervisor to another. An immediate supervisor or HR person should stay with the new hire throughout the first day and much of the first week.
- **Recognize their accomplishments.** New hires want to know what they need to do, why they need to do it, and—most important—whether or not they're doing it correctly. Make a point of recognizing their improvement, no matter how small, to build confidence.

What Do You Want Out Of Life?

To-do lists. Phone calls and e-mails. Urgent assignments. Demands on your time—and your sanity. Every once in a while it all piles up, and you feel ready to collapse. Before you have a breakdown, you need to step back and focus on priorities. Here's what to do:

- **Create a master list.** Start writing down everything you want to do in your life. Not the tasks you have to do, but the things you've dreamed about. Take your time—walk around your home and your neighborhood, letting your thoughts run free, and listen to your memories.
- **Organize your list.** Group the items into three categories: things you really want to accomplish (include some steps you can take right away); activities you're interested in but not fully committed to (hold this list in reserve and check it every few months); and goals you want to drop (either you've accomplished them or they no longer really interest you).
- **Discard your master list.** Throw away the big list you compiled in step one. This symbolically clears your mind of all your scattered thoughts and let you zero in on the activities you want to pursue in the immediate future.



Mother Tongue

We've spoken foreign languages all our lives, often without realizing it. Check out these foreign terms that are quite common to us:

- ad hoc (Latin): impromptu, spur of the moment.
- aficionado (Spanish): a fan or enthusiast.
- alma mater (Latin): literally, "nourishing mother," applied by students to former schools.
- angst (German): dread and anxiety.
- carte blanche (French): unrestricted authority or freedom.
- et cetera (Latin): "and the rest."
- mea culpa (Latin): literally, "I am to blame," an expression of responsibility or guilt.
- pro bono (Latin): without charge, free service.
- quid pro quo (Latin): an equal exchange of one good or service for another.
- verboten (German): forbidden, prohibited.
- versus (Latin): against.

Gratitude... *continued from page 1*

time to appreciate these wonderful things.

See the good in every situation

Situations are rarely “all good” or “all bad.” These are, to a large extent, labels we put on situations whereas, in reality, it is our response to the situations that determines what kind of experience it is. Even in the most apparently awful situation, we can derive some benefit if we have the right mindset. I think most people would agree that growth and development usually involves some degree of pain, and so challenging situations are opportunities for such growth.

As a manager, for example, I have probably learned the most through interacting with “difficult” people and through having to deal with situations which, initially, made me feel uncomfortable. Instead of seeing these people and situations as problems and obstacles, I try to see them as opportunities which will lead to growth and future success.

Keep a gratitude journal

This is something very concrete you can do to ensure that gratitude is a conscious and regular part of your day or week. Making a list of the good things in our life can be a wonderful experience. Although we might not think we have much to be grateful for, when we start writing, it becomes clear that we do have a lot going for us. At the end of

the day, why not take ten minutes to list a few of the good things that happened during the day? You will end up with a record of things you are grateful for which will be very helpful to read in times of stress or unhappiness.

Little things matter

“Just as millions of snowflakes pile up to create a blanket of snow, the ‘thank you’s’ we say pile up and fall gently upon one another until, in our hearts and minds, we are adrift in gratitude.”

—Daphne Rose Kingman

A dripping tap soon fills a bucket until it is overflowing. The same is true of anything in life, and developing appreciation is no different. Appreciating the many small things in your day will lead to greater and greater levels of gratitude and happiness. When someone smiles at you, when you receive a small compliment, when the bus is on time, when a friend sends you a nice SMS message...these are all things to be thankful for.

As with all things, success requires persistence. A little bit of gratitude every day can, over time, make a big difference to our level of happiness and well being.

(Written on 7/12/2010 by Mark Harrison and posted on www.dumblittleman.com)

Check Out Our Revamped Website

We recently remodeled our website and changed our address to www.PipingSystemsInc.com. Please make note of the new Web address and the accompanying change to our e-mail addresses. For now, visitors are automatically redirected from the old addresses to the new.

We’ve added a feature that allows our customers to fill out a Job Completion Survey online. Soon our job contacts will receive a communication directing them to the website to complete a questionnaire about a recently completed project. Your feedback is vital to us and helps us align our business focus with your needs.

Make A Friend

Do you know someone who would like to be added on to our mailing list? Please drop us an e-mail with contact changes, additions or deletions at psi@PipingSystemsInc.com.



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