

Skills 360 - Staying Positive (Part 2)

Discussion Questions

1. What are the problems that you face that make it difficult to stay positive?
2. Do you think people are becoming less courteous to each other?
3. How often do you smile and praise others?

Vocabulary

To build on: to add to something that has already been done; "All right everyone, let's build on the success of last year and make this year really great."

To implement: to make a plan or change happen; "HR has decided to implement a new employee benefit program."

To moan: to complain, especially in a way that bothers other people; "John, I wish you'd stop moaning about these meetings. They're actually very useful."

Lousy: bad or unpleasant; "A good manager knows how to deal properly with an employee whose performance is truly lousy."

Sense of humor: if someone has a "sense of humor," he can appreciate things that are funny and be funny himself; "David is a fun guy to work with because he has a great sense of humor."

To venture a guess: to guess, speculate, or estimate; "I would venture a guess that we've put in at least 300 hours on this design project."

Recipe for success: a way or method of being successful; "According to my life coach, hard work and an eye for opportunity is the greatest recipe for success."

Mistrust: a feeling of not trusting someone; "The two companies' relationship fell apart because of mistrust."

Jealousy: a bad feeling toward a person because you want what they have; "Professional jealousy can be a problem when a person is promoted and must supervise his former colleagues."

To blame: to say that someone is responsible for or the cause of a problem; "Don't blame me for the confusion. I was only trying to help."

To drag someone down: to make someone unhappy or negative; "It only takes one negative person to drag an entire staffroom down."

To go one's way: if something "goes your way," it benefits you or turns out well; "I thought we put in a great bid, but things didn't go our way in the selection process."

Empathetic: able to understand someone because you can imagine how it feels to be them; "As a former salesman himself, Dan is very empathetic when it comes to handling the sales staff."

To give in: to stop resisting or try to prevent something from happening; to accept that you can't win; "After a month-long strike, management finally gave in and accepted the union's demands."

To suck: be terrible, informally; "Gee it really sucks that we have to work on the weekend. I had big plans."

Universal: true about or applicable to everyone, every place, or every situation; "The United States is the only developed country without a universal health care system."

Courtesy: polite and respectful behavior; "Before doing business in another country, it is a good idea to learn their rules of courtesy."

To kill something: to eliminate, turn off, or stop something before it's finished; "Jerry, could you kill the lights so we can see this video better?"

To stand out: to be different or impressive; "Of all the interviewees, I really thought the woman from IBM stood out the most."

To compliment: to say something nice to someone; "Before I begin my presentation, I'd just like to compliment you on your wonderful facilities."

To praise: if you "praise" someone, you tell them they have done something well; "Tom praises his employees whenever they succeed, but he's not afraid to criticize them for failures."

Addictive: if something is "addictive," you want more of it because it makes you feel good; "The producers were happy that critics described the new TV series as addictive."

To gush: to express positive emotions very strongly, often too strongly; "I can't stand hearing Joanne gush about her wonderful new colleagues."

Pollyanna: someone who is always positive or optimistic, even when it's not realistic; "The president doesn't want a pollyanna for an advisor; he'd rather hear the truth."

Obstacle: a problem or challenge that makes it difficult to do something; "We encountered some major legal obstacles in setting up a new factory in Indonesia."

To find fault: to blame or criticize someone; "I feel like my boss is always finding fault with me even for very small things."

To turn a blind eye: to ignore something bad; "The inspector said he would turn a blind eye to our safety violations if we gave him money."

Transcript

Hello and welcome back to Skills 360. I'm your host Tim Simmons. In today's lesson we're going [to build on](#) last week's ideas and look at how you can [implement](#) a positive attitude at work.

Think about this for a second: what kind of people do you like to be around? People who [moan](#) and complain and talk about how [lousy](#) their life is? Or people who have a [sense of humor](#), who smile, who say "great to see you," and who can find solutions to problems? Well, I'm going to [venture a guess](#) here and say that you prefer to spend your time with the second type of person. Why? Because they make you feel good.

In our last episode we talked about positive thinking. Today it's all about maintaining a positive attitude toward *others*. And we've just identified one great reason to do this: it makes people feel good. And if you can do that, then customers will want to do business with you, colleagues will want to work with you, and bosses will want to see you do well. That's certainly a [recipe for success](#).

But as you know, it's not always easy. Staying positive can be very difficult, especially when other people are negative. Sometimes we're faced with [mistrust](#), [jealousy](#), fear, and [blame](#). Sometimes the people we work with seem determined to [drag us down](#). And sometimes things don't [go our way](#). We make mistakes. We don't meet deadlines. We encounter huge problems. At times like these, it can be pretty hard to smile and say, "what a great day." But it's important to try. Others may complain, but we should refuse to participate. We can still be [empathetic](#). We can still say, "I'm so sorry you feel that way." But we should try not to [give in](#) to negativity and say, "yeah, life really does [suck](#)."

So what does having a positive attitude involve? Let's start simple, with a smile. Smiling is one of the only [universal](#) human expressions. It means the same thing, and has the same power, in almost every culture. Smile at others, and they'll smile back. It doesn't matter what business you're in, or what situation. Whether you're a computer tech helping a company with its servers or an executive walking into a high-powered interview. Just smile.

Another part of a positive attitude is [courtesy](#). Yes, that means saying please and thank-you and how do you do. But it's more than that. Hold the door open for people. Shake their hands. Buy them a coffee. These simple things can do a lot to make people feel good. And here's a tip: it's pretty easy to surprise people by showing courtesy in email and other online communication. Technology has [killed](#) a lot of common courtesy, so [stand out](#) by showing you haven't forgotten how to be polite.

Now, it's not just about how you say things, it's also about *what* you say. Think about the last few people you talked with at work. What did you talk about? What did you say? Did you talk about problems and failures, or did you talk about successes? It can be pretty easy to focus on what is going wrong and on what needs to be improved. But we can't forget to say good things. That means [complimenting](#) and [praising](#) people. Like this: "Hey Dave, I think you did a great job on that report." Or "Susan, I'm really glad you're working on this project with us." Most of us could do with more of this positive talk in our lives. Success is [addictive](#), and reminding

people of their successes is motivating.

Of course, balance is important. You don't want to constantly **gush** with praise. You don't want to "things are great!" when they really aren't. Because you don't want people to think you're a **pollyanna**. A "pollyanna" is someone who *only* sees good things and thinks everything is wonderful even when it isn't. That's not realistic. Because problems happen. There are **obstacles** that we need to face. Having a positive attitude doesn't mean *ignoring* those problems. It means facing them creatively and looking for solutions.

Imagine you're working late with your team and the server goes down. What do you do? Do you say to everyone "crap, now we'll never get this done." Or do you say "let's get tech support in here right away so we can fix this thing"? In other words, do you see limits or do you look for solutions? And which type of person do you want leading the team?

Right, so let's review what we've talked about here. First, a positive attitude makes people feel good and want to work with you. Second, it's especially important to stay positive when faced with negativity. Next, being positive can be as simple as smiling and being courteous. It also means remembering to praise people and talk about the good things, rather than criticizing and **finding fault**. But it *doesn't* mean **turning a blind eye** to problems. Instead, it means looking for solutions and possibility. And if you can do these things, you'll be both happier and more successful. I guarantee it.

That's all for today. If you'd like to test yourself on what we've just covered, have a look at the **myBEOonline.com** website. There you'll find a quiz about today's show as well as a complete transcript.

So long. And see you again soon.

Review

1. What is the primary reason Tim says that we should maintain a positive attitude toward other people?
 - A It is respectful.
 - B It is easier than being negative.
 - C It makes them feel good.
 - D It is expected.

2. Tim mentions mistrust, jealousy, mistakes and problems as...
 - A ... issues that a positive attitude can counterbalance.
 - B ... reasons that it may be difficult to stay positive.
 - C ... common workplace complaints.
 - D ... unfortunate consequences of negative thinking.

3. What does Tim imply about smiling?
 - A It can make people think you are a pollyanna.
 - B It has a positive impact everywhere.
 - C It is difficult to convey electronically.
 - D It can be interpreted as false positivity.

4. According to Tim, what is one way that you can stand out as especially courteous?
 - A By helping people who are less fortunate.
 - B By taking the time to ask people how they are.
 - C By having a sense of humor.
 - D By being polite in electronic communication.

5. What does Tim say about compliments and praise?
[choose 2]
 - A They motivate people.
 - B They should be reserved for special situations.
 - C They are one way of solving problems.
 - D They should be balanced with realism.

6. When faced with problems, we should look for _____.
 - A Reasons
 - B Solutions
 - C Distraction
 - D Support

Review Answers

1. What is the primary reason Tim says that we should maintain a positive attitude toward other people?
C It makes them feel good.
2. Tim mentions mistrust, jealousy, mistakes and problems as...
B ... reasons that it may be difficult to stay positive.
3. What does Tim imply about smiling?
B It has a positive impact everywhere.
4. According to Tim, what is one way that you can stand out as especially courteous?
D By being polite in electronic communication.
5. What does Tim say about compliments and praise?
[choose 2]
A They motivate people.
D They should be balanced with realism.
6. When faced with problems, we should look for _____.
B solutions

Online Practice

Click the "Launch" button to open the **online practice**:

