

Appreciation. *What you appreciate in others, appreciates in you and your company.*

Appreciation only costs you a few words, but what it buys is priceless. When Dale Carnegie said to be appreciated is the greatest human need, those who paid attention found appreciation one of the greatest motivating forces known to man.

Years of research has taught us this important lesson: if you don't pay people enough that they feel secure in life, you will get a small percentage of their creative abilities because they are worried about their future. So, it would seem logical that if those people were paid enough, you would tap into their full creative potential. The research shows this is not the case. What inspires people to give more, do more and be more is that they feel valued.

Enthusiasm and productivity increase in relation to the appreciation people are given. Mother Teresa said the greatest hunger in the world is the hunger for love.

I have worked with companies and organizations who hold annual events in which employees or supporters are appreciated for their contribution. What concerns me is when such appreciation doesn't continue throughout the year. It makes such events appear contrived and disingenuous. Of course, I am not saying they shouldn't be held. If it wasn't for such events, the only time most of us would be publicly appreciated is at our funerals!

Still, it is important to understand what real appreciation is. Appreciation is an emotion. When you genuinely appreciate someone, you experience the emotion of appreciation. And when you feel it, so do they. It is a simple fact that if your appreciation isn't genuine, it won't communicate well.

If words come out of the heart, they will enter the heart, but if they come from the tongue, they will not pass beyond the ears. ~al-Suhrawardi

Srila Prabhupada honestly appreciated everyone, even those who rendered the most "insignificant" service to him or his organization. His appreciation transcended the body. He appreciated the divinity within everyone. (Namaste: I bow to the Divine within you.) He appreciated everyone as God's creation, as an individual soul part of the Supreme Soul. His appreciation was so genuine and natural that it deeply touched hearts. This kind of appreciation created such dedication in the hearts of his disciples that they willingly sacrificed far beyond the call of duty.

What happens in an organization in which not only leaders, but all levels of employees develop the appreciative heart? As mentioned above, this is not just about training everyone to speak appreciative words. We are talking about imbibing the consciousness that causes appreciation to naturally flow from the heart. This consciousness will feed the culture of any organization with positive energy, powerfully raising the collective consciousness of the group.

Various levels of consciousness vibrate on different frequencies. Research shows that even a few higher vibrational people will raise the consciousness of an entire company, while people engaged in lower consciousness activities, like criticism and back-biting, have the opposite effect.

A simple way to change the vibrational level in your organization, and to allow people to experience the positive power of appreciation, is to organize an appreciation exercise (either with the entire company or within one department). Each person personally appreciates everyone present. The person receiving the compliment only responds with "Thank you," and then proceeds to offer his or her appreciation.

For the sake of discussion, imagine we did the opposite, a fault-finding session. The result would be a consciousness and energy drop. Everyone would feel depleted and upset - even frustrated. The contrast between appreciation and criticism speaks volumes about what we do to ourselves and the environment when we engage in fault-finding.

Great minds discuss ideas. Small minds discuss other people.~ Eleanor Roosevelt

The findings of Dr. Scott Peck in his book **The Different Drum** underscore another practical benefit of appreciation. Dr. Peck studied many communities of different sizes, including small groups of people and large organizations. He found that the most important attitude for development of community is the ability of its members to appreciate the differences brought to the community by the individuality of each person. When this is not done, the differences tend to be seen as a threat. He suggests differences not be seen as something to overcome, but as something to value. Thus rather than tolerate diversity, we appreciate and celebrate it.

Let's do the math.

Compromise - $1/2+1/2 = 1$

Co-operation - $1+1 = 2$

Synergy - $1+1 = 11$

How can we help people naturally see the good in one another, overlook faults, and show appreciation? We should understand that most people's egos are insecure. They think if someone else gets ahead, they will go down; if someone else is honored or appreciated, they won't be. We all need to acknowledge, and help others understand, that when we light up another's path, we also light our own path. When we bring people up the mountain, we end up on top with them. If we push people in the gutter, we live there with them. This is simply how karma works.

Our motto should be: "Leave others better than we found them."

Help others see that everyone is a walking temple of God that deserves to be respected, honored and appreciated. When we see God manifest in another, we naturally *feel* appreciation without having to specifically isolate their talents, intelligence or actions to appreciate.

When we feel appreciation, we communicate appreciation, even when we don't speak. And when do speak, our words will touch a person's heart. Most people can fly for months on a few words of genuine appreciation. This is why in survey after survey, the manager with the highest emotional (relational) IQ is most liked by employees.

The number one reason people quit their jobs is because they are not appreciated. People don't leave companies, they leave managers.

Principles

Practices

Make a list (or think) of what you appreciate about a person and continue until you begin to feel appreciation for them in your heart.

Lessons

Quotes

Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves. James Mathew Barrie

Your soul is nourished when you are kind. ~ Proverbs

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. ~ Norman MacEwan

If you cannot win, make the one ahead of you break the record. ~ Jan McKeithen

We make a first class mistake if we treat others as second class citizens. ~ John Mason

One who sees the Supersoul accompanying the individual soul in all bodies, and who understands that neither the soul nor the Supersoul within the destructible body is ever destroyed, actually sees. ~ the Bhagavad-gita 13.28