



## POSITIVE LEADERSHIP

**W**e have been learning a lot from Gallup Organisation about the power of focusing on strengths and the impact of an engaged workforce on long term organisational success. (I have reported previously on their research and findings in Cuttings 40 and 50). Now Tim Roth of Gallup has looked at the opportunity from the perspective of the leadership needed to develop a positive, strengths based organisation.

Think about this story: Suzie walks into the office and the receptionist greets her with a smile, calls her by the name she prefers ("Suzie," not "Susan"). Suzie adds 1 to her Positive score. She notices that the elevator door is beginning to close. It looks like she will miss the elevator, but at the last moment, an arm shoots out and stops the door from closing. Suzie thanks the unknown woman who held the elevator for her. Another Positive.

A few minutes later, Suzie starts to read her e-mail. One of the first messages is from a co-worker who is complaining – again! Suzie's Ratio is now: Positive 2, Negative 1. She

decides to grab a cup of coffee and meets Amy, one of her closest friends. who tells her that she "loves the new shoes." Suzie's Ratio: Positive 3, Negative 1. In chatting, Suzie loses track of time and arrives late to her meeting. She has never been late before, and apologises immediately. But her boss can't resist making a snide comment which only exacerbates her bad feelings. Another Negative.

In just 30 minutes, Suzie, a good performer, had three positive interactions and two negative a positive-to-negative ratio of 3:2.

### Is there a 'magic ratio'?

Research with 700 newlywed couples predicted whether would stay together or divorce using a 5:1 ratio identified in one 15-minute conversation between each husband and wife. Ten years on they had predicted divorce with 94% accuracy.

In organisations, a recent study found that work teams with a ratio greater than 3:1 were significantly more productive than those with a lower ratio. This research also uncovered an upper limit of 13:1 -

when workgroups exceed that it seems that blind optimism can be counterproductive (and annoying).

But managers shouldn't worry about breaking this upper limit. The levels of positive emotions in most organisations are woefully inadequate and leave substantial room for improvement.

Hence the idea of Positive Leadership – Positive leaders deliberately increase the flow of positive emotions within their organisation. They choose to do this not just because it is a "nice" thing to do for the sake of improving morale, but because it leads to a measurable increase in performance. Studies show that organisational leaders who share positive emotions have workgroups with:

- \* a more positive mood
- \* enhanced job satisfaction
- \* greater engagement
- \* improved performance

So the rule is – view each interaction with another person as an opportunity to increase his or her positive emotions.

*Tom Rath How Full Is Your Bucket? (Gallup Press, August 2004)*

## THE TWELVE HABITS OF THE TOXIC MENTOR

Here is a light-hearted look at how not to mentor compiled by mentoring guru, David Clutterbuck, quoted in the Brefi Group *Corporate Coach* e-newsletter:

1. Start from the point of view that you - from your vast experience and broader perspective - know better than the mentee what's in their interest
2. Be determined to share your wisdom with them - whether they want it or not; remind them of how much they still have to learn
3. Decide what you and the mentee will talk about and when; change dates and themes frequently
4. Do most of the talking; check frequently that they are paying attention
5. Make sure they understand how trivial their concerns are compared to the issues you have to deal with
6. Remind them how fortunate they are to have your undivided attention
7. Neither show nor admit any personal weaknesses; expect to be their role model in all aspects of career development and personal values
8. Never ask them what they should expect of you - how would they know anyway?
9. Demonstrate how important and well connected you are by sharing confidential information they don't need (or want) to know
10. Discourage any signs of levity or humour - this is a serious business and should be treated as such
11. Take them to task when they don't follow your advice
12. Never, never admit that this could be a learning experience for you.

In the next edition I will share his complementary list of habits of the toxic mentee...

*Corporate Coach, Brefi Group. www.brefigroup.co.uk*

# Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations ...

- ✂ “Outside of a dog, a book is man’s best friend. Inside of a dog, it’s too dark to read.” *Groucho Marx*
- ✂ “You can tell them to go to hell but they just won’t go” *Lyndon B Johnson*
- ✂ “People are very open-minded about new things...as long as they’re exactly like the old ones!” *Charles Kettering*
- ✂ “Beauty is all very well at first sight; but who ever looks at it when it has been in the house three days?” *George Bernard Shaw*
- ✂ “One day, out of nowhere, you realise you don’t know who you are, and none of the cards in your wallet provide the slightest clue to your real identity.” *Sam Keen*
- ✂ “The autopsy revealed that his coronary arteries were clean. The heart attack had been caused by a spasm of the coronary vessels, directly induced by hostility, resentment, impatience, fear and exaggerated feelings of being indispensable.” *Deepak Chopra MD*
- ✂ “Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves” *Rainer Maria Rilke*
- ✂ “Nothing shapes our lives so much as the questions we ask, refuse to ask, or never think of asking. The question is the helmsman of consciousness. The questions we ask determine whether we will be superficial or profound, acceptors of the status quo or searchers. The difference between Einstein and Hitler depends on the questions they asked. What you ask is who you are. What you find depends on what you search for.” *Sam Keen*
- ✂ “A vision without a task is but a dream. A task without a vision is drudgery. A task with a vision is the hope of the world.” *Inscription on a church in Sussex, England circa 1730*
- ✂ “So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.” *Christopher Reeve*

## New Directions News

New Directions continues to offer public versions of some of its courses through Learning Consortium and Frost & Sullivan.

### 2005 Public Programmes

#### Focus on Influence

– is about developing interpersonal skills, reflection and insight, assuming responsibility, personal commitment, enhancing flexibility and achieving goals together with others.

Belgium: 26-29 April (in Dutch)  
Netherlands: 11-14 October (in English)

#### Information and booking:

Learning Consortium  
[www.learningconsortium.eu.com](http://www.learningconsortium.eu.com)

#### Managing Technical Professionals

– a two day workshop for anyone moving from a technical job into management or in a role that entails managing technical professionals, covering personal style, communications, and building, motivating and focusing your team.

London, UK: 18-19 April, 24-25 November

#### Information and booking:

Frost & Sullivan +44 (0)20 7915 7878  
[www.training.frost.com](http://www.training.frost.com)

#### Internal Consulting Skills

– a two day workshop for people working as internal consultants in an organisation, focusing on the consulting and interpersonal skills necessary for success.

London, UK: 19-20 May, 7-8 November

#### Information and booking:

Frost & Sullivan +44 (0)20 7915 7878  
[www.training.frost.com](http://www.training.frost.com)

*Or call me direct (contact numbers below).*

#### In company workshops

To enquire about in-company versions of these programmes or our other popular courses and workshops please call me.

**Winning Projects!** – a suite of workshops to improve project planning and implementation

**Influencing for Results** – increase your flexibility and strategic use of different influencing styles

**Negotiating for Results** – create more win:win outcomes in negotiations and conflict situations

**Appreciative Inquiry** – Introduction and application workshops in this strength based process for organisation development.

All courses and workshops are specially designed or tailored to meet individual customer needs. We also offer delivery in six languages.

## 50% increase

Don’t panic!! *Cuttings* is not going to start charging. It will remain as a free newsletter. But for 2005 onwards the frequency will increase to six per year from the current four. This reflects not only the increasing speed of information since I began publishing over 10 years ago, but also the increase in the numbers of ideas that are being developed. (It also probably reflects the age-related reduction of your editor’s ability to retain information ☺)

So publication for next year will be February, April, June, August, October and December.

As always, please feel free to pass on this copy to anyone who you think might be interested, and if you want to receive your own personal copy, please send me an email.

## More on the music metaphor

A further insight on my lead article on *Jazz – The New Metaphor* in *Cuttings* 51 from Learning Consortium colleague and professional Irish pipes player Tomás Kennedy. He points out that traditional musicians have a number of similarities to the jazz approach, especially in the intense listening, minimal structure and in the informal learning process. So if your taste is more traditional folk than jazz – please feel free to change the metaphor.

### MORE INFORMATION

*Cuttings* is published by New Directions and distributed through an international network of consultants and trainers who work together to learn, research, design and provide world-wide consulting and training in management, organisation and individual development across cultures, sectors, subjects, and languages. On our website you will find downloadable copies of all past issues plus articles and information on our network and services, including links to our partners’ websites.

To discuss any ideas or needs that you have and to access the network, please call me direct:

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