

Enhancing Self-Esteem at Workplace for Improved Productivity

Sanjeev Kumar Mathur¹, Shivani Mathur²

¹Swami Keshvanand Institute of Technology, Management and Gramothan, Jaipur-302017 (INDIA)

²Department of Home Science, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur – 302015

Email - skmonnet@gmail.com

Received 16.02.2019 received in revised form 28.02.2019, accepted 10.03.2019

Abstract: It is often seen that organizational employees are not tantamount to one another when it comes to their organizational performance. There is a class of employees who are exceptionally brilliant with full blown attitude for gratitude in whatever they do in the organization. They inculcate a feeling that every small step taken forward is a step toward achieving something meaningful and bigger for organizational success. They take pride in everything they get involved with.

Such employees feel good about themselves. They are apathetic to any surrounding negativity and wrap themselves up with an attire of positivity. They spread out positivism and are highly infectious with this characteristic. They are uncompromising and stubborn with their self – esteem. They use their self-esteem as a catalyst to enhance their performance and thereby, benefit the organization.

In this paper, we shall discuss all those features that sharpen and embolden self-esteem of employees for improved productivity at work place.

Keywords: Employees, Meaningful, Positivity, Self-Esteem

1. INTRODUCTION

Man in spite of being a personage is simultaneously a social being. He is conjugated to society and his economic needs prompt him outdoors to work for an organization to earn his livelihood. He also craves for numerous material possessions while questing for economic firmness of purpose in all phases of life. However, en bloc economic needs and material values are not the only reasons that induce him to stir out and work for the organizations. He aspires to cultivate those personality traits which can bring him appreciation, laurels and give a boost to self esteem. He takes pride and delights to see his confidence in his abilities and/ or worth scaling high. [1]

It is a well-known fact that whatever a man does, at the fulcrum of his endeavors, lays his pursuit for happiness. The pursuit of happiness orients man for higher purpose, even if that purpose is non-existent per se. The establishment of higher purpose in life infuses a 'sense of meaning' and self assurance.

The savor of success picks up enthusiasm and self-esteem from the air for a man [2].

A professional who is high on self-esteem is bound to be more creative and productive than one who is unsure of whether he has the ability to deliver.

The famous psychological theory of motivation i.e. Maslow's needs of hierarchy also discusses at length self – esteem needs at the fourth level which is just below self-actualization – atop of the pyramid and the ultimate in needs hierarchy. It is now proven that self-esteem is a motivational factor that is endless and constant source of an individual's inspiration right from the time of joining the organization [3].

'Self-esteem' is an assumed evaluated value for self-competencies that individuals attach to themselves and carry in all the situations.

The human capital of an organization and its relative degree of self esteem is a yardstick for its performance in the competitive environment. The employees who are self assured of their competence and worthiness for the organizations are the ones who write the script of successful organizations.

The focus of organizations must be to develop measures to enhance self-esteem of its employees to do better competitively and deliver consistently at a high level of performance. It is imperative for organizations not to let the culture of the organization dampen self esteem of its employees at any time. Let us familiarize ourselves with what maintains high self esteem among employees.

2. AVOID NEGATIVE SELF TALK

Franklin D. Roosevelt – the former President of USA, said, "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today." [4] The statement is evincive and relevant in present context. At times; there are situations where the outcome is not what one had anticipated. Any failure calls for self introspection and one should never ever be shy of it. Follow a methodical way of

such self-examination. However, what is significant is that we need to understand that “success is never ending and failure is never final.” [5] There is no need to do any negative self talk that may lower self esteem. It is better to learn to take failure and success in the stride with equal ease and remain insulated from any negativity that may gain its ground in the surroundings and plague. In all situations, positive self talk makes a critical difference in the performance of elite professionals. In order to create something great in the organizations, individuals swing themselves above their weight and jump into areas where they feel unqualified at times without realizing that it is a pre-requisite to step into unknown to achieve monumental success. Don’t ever let the specter of failure get anywhere close to hit self-esteem and create self-doubt about the capabilities. Don’t ever ask questions to you like Is it that I will never succeed? Will I ever be able to do it? Why do I fail repeatedly? [6]

One of the famous quotes of Miley Cyrus that aptly applies here is, **“You can’t live a positive life with a negative mind.”**

3. STOP COMPARING WITH OTHERS

More than two thousand years ago, Geek Philosophers, Plato and Aristotle had written about how people used to compare themselves with others. Whenever a comparison is made, it may either push upward or pull downward. [7] Akin to the fact that no two minds can think alike, it is also a fundamental truth that no two individuals can ever have same set of competency level on varied parameters. When it is so, then should we make comparisons with others? Within an organization, individuals differ in terms of their skills, knowledge, aptitude, etc. The refusal to compare opens up the vistas to measure various aspects of human life such as wealth, success, communication skills, interpersonal skills etc.

It is better to take up life as a god’s gift for doing meaningful things rather than thinking it a competition and doing critical analysis of self worth with others in terms of what they are good at, their social status, their physical appearance and their accomplishments. It is a passport to enter in the low-self esteem zone, which would dent and wreck overall personality. It is to apprehend that someone is better than you somewhere and what is right for one person, may be just opposite for other at the same time. Every individual is a bundle of certain positives and negatives and true identification of one’s own strengths and weaknesses through

reflection is the most significant way to hold self esteem high and immune from any negative vibes. [8]

This is a pithy statement. One must understand that s/he can’t have all the knowledge and skills in life. Do what one is good at. An individual must do what is right for him/ her at the right time without imaging what would be right for others. One can be at his best by liberating himself from the thought of competition with others in life. [9]

This is like nectar to life and so long as one does things with finesse and excellence, nobody can dare to defeat self esteem. The comparison is like auto immune disease, where self generating negative thoughts completely destroys the self-esteem, which pushes the person towards failures only. There is no need to be excessively concerned about the results and/ or achievements in life.

Albert Einstein wrote, **“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”**

4. LEARN TO ACCEPT CRITICISM IN A POSITIVE WAY

It is a universal truth that some of our actions are being lauded and some are being attacked scathingly. As long as the feedback is positive and inspiring, we don’t mind, but the moment we have to handle any negative feedback, which happens more often than not, it becomes difficult to come to terms with it. Any negative remark invites self doubt and raises question about the self motive. [10] Under such circumstances, combating criticism becomes exceedingly difficult as it starts gaining more and more space in the mind and occupies major portion of thinking brain. If the criticism appears to be apparent, then it may be brushed off and the positivity of the mind should be allowed to remain intact. However, if the negative remarks are genuine, then one must listen to and consider them with utmost seriousness for better and improved performances in future. Positive minds always accept that individual brilliance is always lesser than collective wisdom. It is quite easy, in fact to handle negative criticism by following the following simple tenets:

- (1). The negative remarks should not be taken personally and reaction to such remarks should be late after a careful thought, and not instant.
- (2). If the path that you have chosen is clear in your mind and you are staying true to it, then words of others carry little meaning and need not be given weightage. Just stick to your plans and

believe in yourself.

- (3). Try to elicit positive inferences from the negative comments that come your way. If the words are not true, then ignite fire in the belly to motivate yourself further to expedite the progress of your endeavor.
- (4). Every individual has a unique perspective for life and the views are influenced by the mental models and thought processes that one cultivates over a period of time. If you know that you are moving in the right direction and you feel good about the progress you have made, you need not pay any attention to what others say or think about you.
- (5). When criticism is with good intent, it may be used to make amends in the behavior or action. However, if it is counterfeit, then it may be used to strengthen the belief you have. Either way, it is a win-win situation.

Indra Nooyi, Chairwoman and CEO, PepsiCo – the second largest F & B Company of the world by net revenue, used this trait to be at helm for 12 years successfully. She embraced this quality soon after taking over as Numero Uno of the company in 2006.

Successful negotiation with negative criticism improves self – esteem to a formidable extent. Someone has rightly said, **”If someone is strong enough to bring you down, show them that you are strong enough to get up.”**

5. DRESS YOUR WAY TO FEEL GOOD

Someone has aptly said that there are three areas of excellence in life, which are also related to basic needs of human life: Food, Clothes and Shelter. If an individual excels in these three areas of his/ her life, the self esteem is bound to be high. There are people who understand the power of look and believe that it is their attire that first does the talking before they speak up to anybody. The impression about a person’s persona is being created the manner in which he dresses himself up. A neatly dressed up man creates positive impression about him and is readily acceptable by the people who get in touch with him. Everyone should pay some attention to the attire to be worn to create a powerful personality. It is extremely important for those who represent companies at the highest level and those who are a part of sales team. A good dress sense is not just what one wears, but also how one wears that. For e.g., a neatly pressed shirt, well –fitted pant, matching tie and polished shoes are not enough. The shirt should be tucked in and a pant must be held tight with a belt matching the color of

shoes and clean socks matching either pant/ shirt color. Apart from all this, well groomed hair, clean nail fingers, oral hygiene, sparkling shave face etc. add immeasurable value to professional dressing. It won’t be erroneous to say that ‘tie’ on shirt radiates personality of professionals. Many people say that it is the most delicate and expensive ornament a professional wears. When one is satisfied with the way one dresses, it makes him feel good and that feeling propels the self-esteem. [11]

Loretta Young says, **“Wearing correct dress for any occasion is a matter of good manners.”**

6. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE

It is very essential in life to choose people you want to be surrounded with. The people around you may have either of the two effects: boost up morale and self – esteem or lower morale and self –esteem.

When you are in the company of those who are there to empower you, believe in you, support you, uplift you, motivate you to excel, appreciate you for what you are, respect you and hold a good opinion about you; such people put the self esteem and self worthiness on a high orbit, where you are bubbling with confidence and have the confidence to take up any task and perform with perfection. [12]

It is high self esteem that makes a person believe in his potential and ability to do any piece of work. The impact of positive people in life is very gigantic. When we surround ourselves with positive people, we instantly kill negativity in the surroundings and build space to invite renewed energy that has velocity and mass to propel us into next orbit of success. This leads to the enrichment of lives and envelops us in a healing space, which ultimately stimulates greater growth and understanding – two major pillars of self-esteem. Most of the life’s challenges are being taken up with positive or negative intent in mind and win or loss is a premeditated condition in the sub conscious mind. The outcome is the execution of what mind perceived earlier about a situation. The presence of go-getters helps individuals to cross bridges of one’s own insecurities and explore possibilities of “yes, I can” in the challenging times. Hence, it is important to be careful while choosing friends because they create an ambience where you would learn to thrive or perish. The goals and dreams of life ought to be shared with those who value them and ready to stand with you in their pursuit.

Pluto’s famous line explains the impact of others in life, which goes like this: **“People are like dirt.**

They can both nourish you and help you grow as a person, or they can stunt you and make you wilt and die.”

7. BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOU

It is often felt that those who are busy in doing their level best for any task that is assigned to them; they can never ever be short of confidence about their worthiness. [13] They can accept any challenge and get involved with all their might and competency to accomplish the work. They set high benchmark related to their performance and/ or for their efforts and refuse to settle for anything better than the best. They ride high on self – esteem and stay focused. Their involvement into job work is so profound that they are completely immersed into that. Such people always do as good as they could in all situations and don't give up easily.

The 37 year old Swiss Tennis legend, Roger Federer won Australian and Wimbledon Open Championships in 2017 and Australian open 2018 due to the fact that he always believed in his skills and ability to win the big tournaments. What is praiseworthy for Roger Federer is that he does not let his self pride go down in the most difficult situations and accepts in all humbleness that he is also a human being and at times he is not good enough in his mind, body and game. [14] He has done wonders in world tennis and has set a new benchmark among the contemporary players to emulate.

Anthony D. Angelo's famous quote can be aptly used here that says, **“Wherever you go, no matter, what the weather, bring your own sunshine.”**

8. BE WILLING TO HELP OTHERS

The high on self esteem people have an unselfish concern for the welfare of others and they are always 'on' to extend their unconditional support to those who are in dire straits. Such altruistic people are inimical to the human sufferings and always strive hard to create surroundings that are conducive and encouraging. They elicit enormous strength by supporting others and smiling faces act as nectar to them. [15]

These good Samaritans are fantastic ambassadors of humanity in their organizations and instantly strike a positive chord with their colleagues. They always keep at bay negativity as they create an aura of generosity and nobility. They are always more than willing to bring in an element of ease and comfort by offering their services to pluck sadness and stalemate in others' lives and maintain a

healthy and happy atmosphere they are associated with. The extension of help and support to others does a lot to rejuvenate and nourish the value system and give every reason to feel contented with little joys deriving out of munificence.

Barak Obama, the former President of US says, **“The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope.”**

9. SELF - MOTIVATION TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY

It is the alignment of mind towards executing productive things for the organizational growth and passion to contribute in the heydays of the organization in whichever way it can be, so that work done propels the system and prospers for the development of the society at large that drives away pessimism and fills mind with self pride and self belief. [16] An internal drive or urge is seen in some people to be ready and self trained mind which is in acceptance mode constantly to pick any work in the organization where dedication and determination are two essential ingredients to perform. An ever engaged and ever thinking mind draws huge inspiration and puts mind and spirit in the higher orbit for enhanced performance paving way to better and improved self –esteem.

The famous American journalist and novelist, namely, John Didion's apt quote on this state, **“The willingness to accept responsibility for one's own life is the source from which self respect springs.”**

10. BE PROACTIVE

A meticulous and methodical way to understand and prepare a “list of to do things” and associating with ‘time frame’ ensures ease of carrying out things without buzzing the pressure button. The proactive completion of tasks guarantees quality of work, which in turn lead to sense of accomplishment with finesse. [17] The successful professionals have a sense of urgency to complete the task at hand and not to procrastinate or dilly-dally on matters that are imminent to test the mettle of professionals and be a vital cog for the organizational success. An organization that is fuelled by the actions of go-getters is unlikely to fail. However, it is important for the executioners and think tank to be prescient so that there is correctness in anticipation of imminent significant

developments and prepare in advance to tackle them competently and not to get nervous and botch up. The result: It boosts morale and self-esteem besides improving confidence and mental toughness to deal with any situation and not to capitulate. One of the famous quotes of Leo Babauta is, **“Do what matters, now.”**

11. DO THINGS WITH EXCELLENCE

There are plethora of narratives for everyone's consumption where all successful people share one common characteristic and that is “a penchant for achieving excellence in whatever they strive for or undertake as a challenge.” Where does this penchant for excellence emerge from? The answer: Self-Esteem. An organization that is identified in the market with a “DNA of excellence” has a team of professionals who are unbeatable and unstoppable in their work ethics and execution. They attempt everything they own up with deep interest/ involvement and unparalleled skills. The outcome is finest craftsmanship in the execution of their work. Their performances are always a treat to watch and they are trend setters as they keep on raising the performance bars each time they attempt the same piece of job. The world looks up to them for scintillating and exemplary performances and establishment of new paradigms. It is apposite to say that excellence is an attitude for people who cultivate a habit of doing things with perfection. A person who is a habitual superlative performer remains on top of the world and the driving force is his self-esteem. There are many studies that have shown that persons high on self-esteem have self appreciation and high self-worth, which is inbuilt and that acts as a fire propelled with fuel to perform at optimum levels. [18]

The classical example of achieving excellence with high self-esteem is Ukrainian pole vaulter Sergei Bubka who consecutively won six IAAF world championships, an Olympic gold medal and broke the world record in men's pole vault 35 times surpassing/ breaking his own record 14 times during the period of 1981-2001. He has the distinction of crossing 6.00 metres and 6.10 metres for the first time in the history men's pole vault event.

One of Ralph Marston's prominent citations reasonably complements this and it goes like, **“Excellence is not a skill, it is an attitude.”**

12. KEEP SMILING

A smiling face is a sign of a pleasing personality

that radiates confidence and humbly speaks of a life that has failed to accept failures ever and relevant either success or learning out of every move of life hitherto. Behind the smiling face of successful people, there is a hidden resilience to let any demeaning thoughts opinioned by others cross over the mind to disturb the equanimity of mind, which may cause corrosion of self-belief. The studies suggest that a single smile is so powerful that it can potentially transform a person suffering from low-esteem into a positive and productive self-hood. [19]

The organizations that employ people have a unique characteristic of a smiling face never ever fail to perform in the market place and their beaming employees do the talking point for the world about the DNA of the organization that makes it a dream destination for other professionals.

The foundation of self-esteem embarks on in childhood. An imperfect smile in the early stages of life among children need not be mistaken or ignored as cute because it may turn out to be extremely injurious to the image as one grows old and attains adulthood. A deficient smile may have an undesirable blow on an individual's success, confidence and ease of dealings with others. It is a proven fact over decades that a beautiful smile adds charm and attractiveness. Also, it emerges out more trustworthy and amenable. A smiling and beaming face changes people's perception about individuals and make them free from being looked at with suspicion, thus enhancing overall value. [20]

Brian Stacy has explained the cognitive value of smile in the following line, **“Each morning when you wake up, before you do anything, SMILE!”**

13. CONCLUSION

It is a proven fact that behind the positive and quintessential performances of the organizations, there are concerted efforts of enthusiastic employees who know their self-worth and are absolutely sure of the fact that their actions would bring forth best results. However, they weave certain positive traits into their personality to be success imbued. The triumph caresses feet of those who always ride on their self-esteem and keep themselves at bay from any place, situation or person where they sense imminent emergence of threats to their worthiness. An organization that is blessed with such professionals continue to be a role-model for others in its segment with their employees as vital cogs providing momentum to accomplish vision and mission and be one of the most admired organizations.

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