

People Boosting

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Boosting other people costs nothing, takes little energy and will help those at work and home feel and function better, plus it enables you to make a positive difference. It has been well researched that the number one reason children misbehave is to attract attention. It is accepted that they need love, appreciation and encouragement. Why should those needs end when we become adults? Love, appreciation and encouragement is longed for in many marriages. The three 'c's in the marital therapy business are commitment, communication and cherishing. Finally, there is increasing evidence that workers are seeking appreciation and recognition.

A 2003 Gallup poll on employee engagement and satisfaction reported that the number one reason most Americans leave their jobs is that they don't feel appreciated. It was also reported that 65% of the respondents had received no job related recognition in the last year. We can conclude that from childhood to the adult years we long to be seen, heard and known.

The three main strategies for people boosting are acknowledgement, appreciation and encouragement. All three strategies include the skills of observing and describing behaviour.

Acknowledge means *to accept as a fact or truth*. There are people who do not feel seen or heard. Some even feel invisible. Have you heard anyone say, "It's as if I don't exist", or "It's as if I am not heard"? Just like kids, some people would rather receive negative attention than none. That way, they at least have their reality confirmed.

Effective acknowledgement sounds like this:

1. "I hear your concern that (describe what was said)."
2. "I noticed that you (describe behaviour)."
3. "I see the stress on your face."
4. "I'm interested in your feedback."
5. "Tell me more."

Appreciate means *to value*. We show appreciation by expressing gratitude for small and big differences someone makes that affect our lives. We can appreciate something as simple as a smile. Have you heard anyone say, "No one cares how hard I work," or "She's never satisfied?" The behaviours we focus on expand. In *How Full is Your Bucket? Positive Strategies for Work and Life*, authors Tom Rath and Donald Clifton say that everyone needs "Five positive interactions for every one negative interaction."

Here are some useful appreciative statements:

1. "Thank you."

2. "I appreciate that you . . . (describe behaviour)."
3. "I like the way you . . . (describe behaviour)."
4. You helped me by . . . (describe behaviour)."

Encourage means to *increase confidence or raise hope*. Effective encouragement avoids competition or comparisons with others. Haven't you heard discouraging remarks such as, "You'll never learn", "It's your fault", "Harry did it better", or "Quit making mistakes"? Encouragement gives information about what is working and how to increase competency. It focuses more on the behaviour and less on judgments or words of praise. For example, "The focus you gave this project paid off," is better than "Good job." The person receiving the former message knows what to do next time to achieve success.

"Good job" is praise. It's non specific and the receiver does not have valuable information to repeat a job well done. Many of us confuse praise with encouragement. Recently I was told by a colleague, "I am proud of you." It didn't sit well with me. It seemed as if he was taking some ownership for my accomplishment, it sounded parental and I didn't know what I did well. Here are some effective and encouraging statements:

1. "Each day I see improvement in (describe behaviour)."
2. "I feel pleased with your (describe behaviour)."
3. "I noticed that you gave a lot of time and effort to the job."
4. "I heard that you accepted a lot of responsibility."
5. "I see you are now doing all the steps in order."

These strategies will help the people in your life feel better about being in your presence and will empower them to improve their performance. At home look for less conflict, improved co-operation and more reciprocal appreciation. Notice more romance and communication in your love life. In the work place look for increased productivity, fewer accidents, employee retention and improved customer satisfaction. Most of all look in the mirror and see an acknowledging, appreciative and encouraging People Booster.

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