

The top 10 ways to bring out the best in people

Want to bring out the best in yourself? Then bring out the best in others. Here are 10 ways to take action, whatever your workplace role.

1 Think *how*, not *what*

Day-to-day busyness can keep us so focused on work that we lose sight of the people who do the work. Be alert to this task-focused tunnel vision. Instead of asking people what they're doing, ask them how they're doing.

2 Work it out now

When conflicts arise, letting them simmer is easier in the short term – but destructive in the long term. Unless you're fond of grudges and hurt feelings, start resolving today's conflicts today.

3 Just say thanks

There's no need for fancy awards and rewards – because there's no substitute for simple, sincere appreciation. Make a habit of putting your gratitude into words.

4 Take action *with* people

A bias for action is a good thing. But the action should be done *with* people and not to them or despite them. If you're going to implement anything that affects anyone, gather a group of co-creators.

5 Leverage the differences

A workplace full of clones would be easy to manage. And boring. And terribly unsuccessful. Look for and leverage the many differences that you and your colleagues bring to the table. As long as you share meaningful goals, you'll achieve uncommon success.

6 Make a point of asking

When you're full of certainty about a situation, resist the urge to declare your perspective as the end all. Replace statements with questions in order to activate that nearby know-how and creativity. Go from "here's what I think" to "what do you think?"

7 Tell stories

If you want to shape the workplace culture, become a positive gossip who dwells on what's going right. Look for examples of employees serving each other and their customers. Then tell those stories over and over.

8 Engage people in return

When someone tries to engage you in conversation, be conscious of your reaction. In a hectic work environment, it's easy to be dismissive. Take the time to open your ears and mind.

9 Show your emotions

You're not a robot or a potted plant. If you're thrilled, angry, enthused, confused, curious, or whatever, let it show in a constructive way.

10 Be the real you

We've all met people who are one way one day – then someone else the next. It's no fun for anyone, including the chameleon. Get to know yourself, and remain true. Everyone will benefit.