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Why we must all be Solution-Oriented

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At work, one thing that always gets under my skin and annoys me to no end is when people present problems, or worse, complain about a problem but do not come with a solution or do not want to be involved in developing a solution. This, in my mind, defines a "Problem-Oriented person".

Let's just say it... anyone can point out the existence of a problem; that's the easy part. In fact, when the conveyance or involvement stops at the delivery of a problem, was there really any measurable value. In other words, "delivering a message and running". A problem-oriented person would say "Yes", and solution-oriented person would say "No".

In a business setting, the problem-oriented type of personality trait is, in my mind, bad for business. There is no value. In my opinion, it creates animosity among employees, it does not promote a team spirit, it does not allow for robust solutions, and quite honestly, it's just juvenile.

I say all of this not to discourage the elevation of issues or problems but to encourage

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inolve some key questions: "what are your thoughts on the issue", - "how can you, as someone involved in the process, help to resolve the issue", - "what part do you play in the problem". These types of questions should help encourage the employee to engage in the problem more deeply and encourage the attitude of solution based thinking.

Steps to Becoming Solution-Oriented

Becoming solution-oriented requires a shift in mindset, and the way in which you approach life in general. I believe that focusing on the following seven personality traits will develop a solution oriented attitude that will benefit you and those around you.


It Starts with our Attitude:



As soon as a problem surfaces, we must trigger a spirit of optimism that fuels us along our path to solutions. We must discipline ourselves to be hungry for solutions. The motivation to push past the obstacle in front of us should come from within and that takes a real paradigm shift. It's in that moment

of choice, when a problem appears, that we decide to let the problem consume us or tackle the problem head on with the conviction to break through the barrier.

Be Objective:

Many problem-oriented people face each obstacle in their life with a "Why me?" attitude. They act as if they're the only people in the entire world going through some sort of difficult time. 

Solution-oriented people know better. When they encounter a problem, they are able to completely remove their ego from the situation, and understand that anyone in the exact same situation would be facing the exact same problem. They don't waste time thinking "Woe is me" or getting frustrated that things "always happens to them". They save their energy for finding ways to overcome the issue and move on with the task at hand.

Have a Plan:



Problem-oriented people tend to fly by the seat of their pants. Since they live with such a defeatist mindset, they operate under the assumption that something is going to go wrong anyway, so they don't see the point of putting together a plan to overcome the

challenges they face. Of course, this creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: Since they don't plan

Solution-oriented individuals know the best way to get through troubled waters is to first think about the actions they'll take to do so. They don't just dive in and hope for the best. Instead, solution-oriented people think analytically and systematically about the problems they face. They break problems down into sequential steps, so as not to become overwhelmed by the more difficult aspects of an obstacle. By attacking problems in such a methodical manner, solution-oriented people anticipate the next steps they'll be taking, as well as any potential "hang-ups" they may face along the way.

Employ Creativity to Surface Solutions:

Albert Einstein once said, "We are boxed in by the boundary conditions of our thinking." When we commit to being solution-oriented, we are demonstrating the value we bring to a relationship, a team or an organization. Leveraging our creativity requires us to effectively brainstorm solutions that exceed a short list of average ideas and instead push our thinking beyond our self-imposed limits to get to the ideas that are innovative in their design and approach. When we integrate the knowledge and experience of one field with another field, there is a synergistic multiplier effect that is activated. It is in that space that our solutions are game changing.

Be Flexible:



Ironically, despite the fact that problem-oriented people usually don't plan out how they'll try to solve a problem, whatever method they *do* choose is the one method they'll stick with – regardless of whether or not it works. If that method fails, they'll resort back to the idea that "nothing ever works

for" them.

On the other hand (and again, ironically), solution-oriented people understand that, even though they've created a pretty good game plan, things won't always work out as anticipated. Since solution-oriented individuals leave their ego out of the equation when solving problems, they don't become emotionally attached to their chosen methods of solution, and are able to drop an idea when it becomes clear that it simply won't work. They aren't so stuck in their ways that they won't accept a good idea from an outside source when it's suggested. By adapting to the situation at hand, solution-oriented problem solvers are able to reevaluate their position and assess their progress on a constant basis.

Be Accountable:

difficult situations they face. When things go wrong, they blame it on some supernatural force, rather than thinking realistically about the situation at hand. When they mess up, they still manage to blame it on some extraneous factor that caused them to mess up, rather than just admitting they made a mistake. Problem-oriented people can often be heard exclaiming “It is what it is.”

A solution-oriented person would never be caught saying something so defeatist. It only “is what it is” if you allow it to be so. Solution-oriented individuals don’t waste time blaming others for difficult situations; they accept when a problem needs fixing, and they get to work. More importantly, if a solution-oriented person *causes* a problem, they’ll be the first to admit it. Again, they leave their ego completely out of the situation, so they have no qualms about admitting their mistakes. All that matters to them is overcoming the current obstacle as best they possibly can.

Take Action:



While problem-oriented thinkers usually don’t do much planning, they sometimes get way too caught up in the theoretical – or, more appropriately, the hypothetical – aspects of problem solving. Problem-oriented people will continuously offer “what if”

scenarios every time a possible solution to a situation is brought up. While it does help to think realistically, being of the mindset that things will go wrong no matter what leads to stagnancy.

A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week. Gen. George Patton

Solution-oriented people don’t waste time thinking of every possible worst-case scenario. While they *do* plan for contingencies and future potential problems, solution-oriented individuals don’t procrastinate or put off taking action because of the possibility that they might fail. They would rather take action and learn from any mistakes made than sit back and wonder what could have been better; going through the cycle of planning again.

Are you Making Strides Towards Becoming Solution-Oriented

Someone that is truly solution-oriented is looking at the problem holistically and neutrally; truly understanding the full scope of the problem. Solution-Oriented people pull the right