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A Bit of Pollyanna

By Nan S. Russell

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"Stop being such a Pollyanna," a trusted, more experienced colleague counseled as we took the long route back to my office. He had just witnessed my project idea annihilated as co-workers eagerly argued why my idea wouldn't work, where it was flawed and why it shouldn't be funded. Despite naysayers in the room that day, I believed it was worth pursuing. Ultimately, it did receive funding and became, in time, a successful endeavor. A bit of Pollyannaism got me though.

Everyday, in meetings just like this one, ideas are gutted before they're allowed to evolve. It's becoming a workplace ritual to poke pinholes in the balloon of an idea until enough air leaks out to drop it to the ground. We look first for the reasons why something can't be done; why it won't work; why it's too difficult; why it's a bad idea. We've become so good at burning idea bridges that might lead to new business, new procedures, or new products that we don't even have to try to build the bridges first.

But, people who are winning at working take a different approach. They pump air into idea-balloons by offering suggestions, brainstorming possibilities and encouraging input. They point out problems by offering solutions that make the idea more viable. They're curious and intrigued, looking at how one idea might fit with another, or weaving two small ideas into one bigger one. Instead of asking why should we do this, they're encouraging people to give it a try.

Understanding the fragile nature of emerging ideas, they help protect, nurture and green-house ideas (their own and others) until they have a chance to take root. They get excited about new possibilities. Often it's their optimism, vision, and positive approach that waters the seed until it grows and blooms. They have a bit of Pollyanna in them. But they probably won't call it that. You see, Pollyanna's gotten a bad rap in business circles as naïve and unrealistic.

I think it's time to look at Pollyanna differently. You will find more work success embracing ideas, seeing the positive side, and stretching your horizons than finding reasons not to. Impossible is often more a state of mind than a reality. As Helen Keller reminds us, "No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars ... or sailed to an uncharted land ... or opened a new heaven to the human spirit."

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But I've also learned in twenty years in management there's more to winning at working than positive thinking and optimistic approaches. A bit of Pollyanna should be mixed with strong doses of common sense. Or, as British political leader Harold Wilson puts it, "I am an optimist, but I'm an optimist who carries a raincoat."

Still, I know if I had listened to everyone who deflated my idea–balloons, I wouldn't have the life opportunities I have now. I've experienced the power of hope, vision and positive thinking in the workplace. My point of view? A bit of Pollyanna is a very good thing.

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Sign up to receive Nan's free eColumn, *Winning at Working*, at www.winningatworking.com. Nan Russell has spent over twenty years in management, most recently with QVC as a Vice President. Currently working on her first book, Nan is a writer, columnist, small business owner, and instructor

Boosting Your Success with Six Easy Happiness Tips

By Christina Winsey–Rudd

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In what areas of your life would you like to achieve greater success? State–of–mind (attitude towards life and work) absolutely affects your performance and your outcomes. People who stay in jobs they hate, or relationships and situations in which they are chronically unhappy are not only missing out on the joy life has to offer, but are literally putting their health at risk at the same time.

When coaching clients I ask them to do a rough pre–assessment: on a scale of one to ten, ten being that you are consistently happy with your day–to–day life 90–95% of the time, where do you rank? If the answer is five or six, here are some tips and techniques to boost it up.

Live by your definition of happiness and success? Many people feel an ongoing sense of dissatisfaction with their lives or businesses because they are using someone else's "happiness measuring stick". Comparing your life and achievements to those of others, and using their criteria rather than yours is a sure fire way to lose the happiness game.

Take "happiness breaks" using a "fun and joy list". Many people don't realize how much more productive they can be by feeding their souls and hearts throughout the workday. Lunch hour notwithstanding, 10–15 minute "happiness breaks" are real attitude and brain–boosters. A checklist prevents you from saying "I wouldn't even know what to do with myself if I took a break from work."

Become a Pollyanna! Pollyanna, contrary to popular opinion, wasn't teaching denial, or pie in the sky positive thinking. Rather she perfected a mind–set of learned optimism and of seeing the glass "half full". Pollyanna's "Glad Game" turned around an entire town from being gloomy and pessimistic to

being a happy, joyful place.

Not only will your sunny outlook help you be happier more of the time, but also your "vibes" will positively affect those around you. If you're single, keeping a sunny disposition will make your "vibe" much more attractive. People like to be around upbeat people who make them feel good).

If you're in sales, or are looking to climb a success ladder, you will be much more attractive to your ideal employer or ideal customer if your attitude is obviously an optimistic and happy one.

Have Better Relationships by Living From Both Head and Heart. Being too rigid, and intellectual can really wreck the relationship "happiness quotient". The people in your life, just like you, want to hear expressed appreciation and to be given more understanding.

Sadly, it seems much easier in our society, for people to express disappointment, criticism and negative observations than it does the positive ones. Speak words of encouragement and appreciation freely.

Ask for acknowledgement when you need it too. People can't (HEAR THIS - THEY ABSOLUTELY CAN'T) read your mind. When you give and take freely of appreciation, understanding, praise, joy and

fun in relationships they are bound to flourish.

On the business side of things, you will be seen as a premier team player when you contribute to your business relationships in this way.

Stay in the here and now. When coaching clients, one of the most frequent things I hear is "When I achieve this goal I will finally be happy." Life isn't happening "then". Life is happening right NOW!

Make a habit of slowing things down. Savor those good people, experiences and feelings in the very moment you are experiencing them. While you are experiencing them and noticing them, inwardly say a thought of gratitude that you have this person, job, experience, feeling, or talent.

Whatever it is that you are enjoying, it will stay with you longer throughout the day if you don't let it fly by without acknowledgement. At the end of the day, as you review it, if you've really practiced this "here and now happiness", the overall feeling about your day will be a good one.

When negatives come along the fact that you have spent time practicing this "here and now happiness" will make it a great deal easier to wade through it without overreacting.

Quiet your negative self-talk. Many people are completely unaware of the numerous negative things they may say to themselves throughout the day. The fact is that, like criticism of others, negative self-talk never ever helped anyone perform better.

Become your own detective. Carry a little notebook around with you and whenever you are aware of some negative thoughts running through your mind write them down. Then consciously and

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deliberately refute the negative thought with some positive observations.

What if you were to stop those thoughts as if you were a policeman with a whistle and immediately bring on the flow of positive self-compliments? Pick any and all good characteristics about both your looks and about you as a person begin to acknowledge yourself for them emphatically.

Here again, when you love and appreciate yourself for what's good, your "vibes" will be good ones and people will like being around you. In fact, they will begin to think and feel about you, the way you do. When you value yourself the world will too!

These are just a few ways you can enhance the quality of your happiness experience and your life. Get creative and begin thinking of your own solutions! They will pay big dividends.

"Go for the moon. If you don't get it, you'll still be heading for a star." — Franklin D. Roosevelt

Dr. Christina Winsey-Rudd is a coach, speaker and writer. She developed her unique, new coaching technique: Neuro-Integrative Action & Energy Technique, through years of working with patients and clients as a holistic chiropractor, and medical massage therapist. Her passion is to help others to live joy, fulfillment and prosperity in all areas of their lives!

Dr. Chris is accepting only select clients who are serious about living their dreams!

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