

Jemstone Consultancy Business Psychology: Adding value to business through the application of positive psychology: increasing wealth, health and happiness: 020 8293 0017

Positive Coaching: Using the power of the 'best self'

Two recent articles support Jemstone's long held belief that **concentrating on people's strengths and aspirations is the key to effective performance improvement.**

Case Western Reserve University: Findings from 17 years of longitudinal study

80% of 'a great experience of being helped' stories related being helped to develop new dreams, aspirations or conceptions of being a good or successful person. These experiences evoke a **positive emotional attractor response (PEA)**

However the bulk of the help they had experienced focussed on their weaknesses. These experiences evoke a negative emotional attractor response (NEA).

The PEA response includes a lowering of blood pressure, an increase in immune system response and an increase in decision making activity: **People feel calm, optimistic and hopeful**

NEA response is the fear response. People feel anxious or pessimistic

To make a sustainable change in habit or behaviour coaching needs to start with the PEA and address the NEA in that context.

Change can be framed in terms of a learning plan rather than a performance improvement plan. Identify good learning opportunities for trying out new behaviour

Boyatzis et al (2004) Target Practice. People Management 11 March 2004

Steve Harvey, Microsoft UK's Director of People and Culture: Better productivity comes from getting people to concentrate their energies on what they do best rather than trying to mend their weaknesses.

Director March 2004 Skills for Business Special Supplement

For more information on Jemstone coaching services visit <http://www.jemstoneconsultancy.co.uk/coaching.htm>

Here's one I made earlier: a consultancy story?

A man was concerned about his eyesight, so he went to see his friend who was also an optician. After all the tests the friend said 'Well you are definitely short-sighted I'm afraid, but don't worry we can fix that in no time. Tell you what, why don't you take my glasses, they are the best I've ever had!'

Not wanting to offend his friend, the man tried the glasses 'but this is hopeless, everything is a blur!'

'That's impossible' said the friend 'I've had them for years and I've had great vision. Try harder!'

'I am trying' said the friend getting irritated 'its just getting worse. I can't see a thing'

'Well there must be something wrong with you,' concluded the optician huffily 'I've never had any trouble with them at all!'

Courtesy of Margaret Parkin (2001) Tales for coaching. Kogan Page. For a different consulting experience, try Jemstone consultancy: <http://www.jemstoneconsultancy.co.uk/consult.htm>

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Motivation is easy: Help others feel good about themselves

Confidence and motivation go hand in hand, and are closely related to performance. **What helps us to feel confident about ourselves?** Alain de Botton suggests a key answer is **our status in the eyes of others**. He notes

We are very bad at remaining confident in ourselves without signs that other people like us

How we feel about ourselves depends to an awkwardly large degree on how others feel about us

We need others to like us in order that we may like ourselves

Bad feelings of others about us grip like a barnacle to latent negative feelings we already hold about ourselves

The love of others can highlight the best of the many available verdicts about who we are and dim the bad ones

So how can managers ensure their staff know they hold them in good regard and so increase their confidence, motivation and performance? It's the little things that count

Notice them: Acknowledge them, exchange greetings, know their names

Encourage them: Be extravagant with praise, meagre with criticism: help them succeed

Be interested in them: Be curious, ask questions, temper judgement with support

Alain de Botton (2004) The Guardian Life 04.03.04

Appreciative Inquiry works: by building relational capital

Recent research by Miller et al demonstrates the particular benefits of an AI approach to a strategic alliance development. The key challenges of such endeavours being to build relationships and trust, mutual understanding and collaboration.

In this study two different alliance building interventions were compared: appreciative inquiry and management education.

This is a field study so there are some methodological difficulties such as the composition of the group for the two interventions not being identical. However NUD*IST (tool for analysis of text) analysis of the evaluation data (various sources) suggests

Improved collaboration was the primary outcome of the AI session ($p > .05$). They also reported establishing **more contacts with the partner organisation**.

AI session significantly contributed to **building relationships** amongst participants ($p > .05$)

AI people (38%) reported feeling **empowered to collaborate**.

Overall the AI group seemed to have developed **more relational capital**

Miller et al (2002) Academy of Management Proceedings ODC

Jemstone Consultancy News and Updates

Sarah Lewis of Jemstone Consultancy will be presenting at the Association of Business Psychologists Conference 21st-23rd May at Coventry on Using Appreciative Inquiry Techniques for Team development. For further information contact: <http://www.TheABP.org/events.html>

All copies of past newsletter containing short articles about Appreciative Inquiry, coaching, strategy, team development etc. can be found on and downloaded from the website. <http://www.jemstoneconsultancy.co.uk/newsletters.htm>

For further information on any of the above, or to enquire about team development, coaching, consultancy or management development services, please contact us 020 8293 0017 or sarahlewis@jemstoneconsultancy.co.uk