



THE Learning Advantage

Mobley's Musings: Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, and Other Forms of Make Believe

It's fun for children to believe in Santa, the Easter bunny, leprechauns, and the tooth fairy. Kids don't need proof these magical beings exist, and even when they suspect they may not be real, the benefits of believing — receiving chocolate bunnies, toys, money — outweigh accepting reality. As a child, I usually discovered my gifts days before Christmas, but why would I risk not getting presents by letting on that I knew Santa wasn't real?

When we become adults, this magical thinking continues when we look at everything through the lens of self-interest. Whether we believe in something like global warming may be swayed by how the belief serves us. If we work for a company that provides clean energy, for example, we may be more motivated to accept the reality of global warming than if we work for a company producing fossil fuels.

Which brings up the question: How can you influence someone to believe something that isn't in their perceived best interest? Unless you show how changing their belief serves them, I don't think you can change their mind.

How would you go about changing someone's mind?

Sandy



Ask Sandy

How to care less

Several of my clients and I have faced situations where we pour our heart into our work, only to have the work taken away or abandoned. How can we do our work with heart but not invest our heart in the outcome?

One client had spent months developing a seminar for an organization in her area of expertise. She delivered the seminar multiple times to rave reviews. Recently she learned the organization had given responsibility for the seminar to another person who was not as experienced nor accredited in the work. She was justly hurt and angry.

Another client took over a consulting project that was failing. The company's reputation and a large amount of revenue were at risk. He worked hard to rebuild trust with the project team, ferreting out what was causing the project to fail and setting a clear vision for moving forward in a positive way. Within six months the project was back on track, the client was happy, and staff enjoyed coming to work. He created a wonderful culture where team members worked together collaboratively and were making a difference for the client. At the end of the year, his team was assigned to a peer whose recent promotion required a larger span of control. He was offered another underperforming team to "fix."

As consultants to an organization, my colleagues and I created a popular leadership program for high potentials that helped participants grow and establish strong networks with others in the class. After running the program for 5 years, the internal leader retired and no one else in the organization was willing to support the program. The program that we had put our hearts into was shelved and forgotten.

When we bring our expertise and passion to these efforts and care deeply about its success, losing the work, team, and relationships is disheartening. How can you encourage people to care about their work but not break their hearts when the work is given to someone else or discarded?

One way I've learned to think about it is that the company, project, team, or program weren't "mine." Their success was entrusted to me for a time, and during that time I was fully invested. I take satisfaction in the fact that I cared deeply about what I was doing and that it made a difference. At the end of the day, the work, the team, the success all belong to the organization, and if they choose to use the product of my efforts differently or not at all, that is their prerogative.

Of course, the other option is to not care deeply about the work. But that's unsatisfying to me and ultimately soul-crushing. I'm reminded of the quote, "Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

Learning for Leaders: Help your staff recognize that the work they do is in service to the organization. Their efforts are meaningful, regardless of what happens to the work.

Coaches Corner: Work with your clients to love their work and let go of the outcome.

If you have questions, you'd like Sandy to address in future newsletters, email them to sandy@learningadvantageinc.com



When Faced with Challenges, Self-Compassion is Better than Self-Esteem

In the past when I thought about leadership traits, self-compassion never rose to the surface. Not that I thought it was a bad trait; I just underestimated its power. But my eyes were opened when I attended a webinar by Rich Fernandez and Steph Stern based on their article "Self-Compassion Will Make You a Better Leader" in the November 9, 2020, issue of Harvard Business Review. Rich is the CEO and Steph is a Director with the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute (SIYLI, pronounced "silly"). "Search Inside Yourself" began as an internal training program at Google that became so popular that it was spun off as a non-profit. Today SIYLI works to promote mindfulness, empathy, emotional intelligence, and resilience in individuals, teams, and organizations around the world.

In the webinar, Rich and Steph discussed research conducted by Juliana Breines and Serena Chen of UC Berkeley to determine the impact of self-compassion. Their research indicated that people who were self-compassionate outperformed people who were self-assured when recovering from a negative or difficult situation.

In one experiment, a control group was told to journal about their hobbies, a self-esteem group wrote about their strengths and accomplishments, and the self-compassion group journaled about kindness and acceptance. All three groups were then given a challenging task like a difficult vocabulary test. After they got their results, they were allowed to study and take the test again.

The self-compassion group took advantage of the opportunity to study and learn, and the second time they took the test, they outperformed both the control and self-esteem groups. When faced with a setback, the self-compassion group had more of a growth mindset and didn't connect a poor performance with past mistakes. They were motivated to grow and learn and were willing to expend effort to improve after a setback.

Breines and Chen concluded, "... self-compassion may increase self-improvement motivation given that it encourages people to confront their mistakes and weaknesses without either self-deprecation or defensive self-enhancement."

READ MORE



WWW.LEARNINGADVANTAGEINC.COM

Share this email:



Manage your preferences | Opt out using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? Sign up to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

7200 Michael Place
Falls Church, VA | 22046 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.