Developing Positive Relationships at Work

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you'll be able to:

- Base every relationship on a common purpose

- Demonstrate actions that build trust and avoid those that erode trust

- Model the positive relationship behaviors you seek in others

- Manage, not manipulate, relationships

- Implement strategies to improve or survive relationships

- Set boundaries and stand your ground

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Developing Positive Relationships at Work

Module One: Unite around a Common Mission

Lessons from Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln probably isn't the first person who comes to mind when considering how to build positive relationships at work. He worked under the most stressful conditions—a civil war! Yet, he consciously chose to make and maintain relationships at work to achieve his purpose—in his case, saving the country.

We won't face such dire circumstances. However, we can learn lessons from Lincoln about making and maintaining relationships to support our missions—whatever they may be.
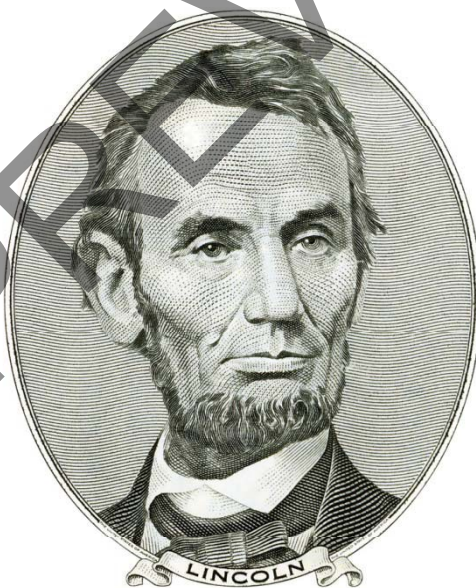
Here are some lessons:

- Know your purpose and use it to guide your actions.

- Value diversity of opinions and temperaments among those you work with.

- Rise above personal slights.

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Find a Common Purpose

Lincoln knew that the basis for building a relationship was having a common purpose. For ongoing, important relationships it can be worthwhile to spell out your common purpose and how you will work together. Here are some questions to consider:

- Why do we need to work together?

- What synergy do we create by working together?

- Who are the people directly affected by our success or failure?

- How will we work together?

- What will we do if either one of us breaks our working agreement?

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

Aristotle

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Build Trust

What makes you trust someone? What makes someone trust you?

Trust is built on five elements.

Trust in Action

Integrity

- You say what you mean and mean what you say.
- Your daily habits and actions support your values.

Consistency

- Your behavior is predictable.
- Your intent, words, and actions are congruent.

Confidence

- You give others responsibility and autonomy.

Concern

- You show understanding, compassion, and empathy for others.

Time

- Trust is earned over time.

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Positive and Negative Trust Behaviors

Behaviors that build trust

- Sharing information freely
- Keeping confidential information confidential
- Admitting mistakes
- Not getting defensive
- Being a good listener
- Being patient
- Offering to help others
- Encouraging others
- Being dependable
- Being accountable

Behaviors that erode trust

- Not keeping promises
- Making too many promises to be able to keep them all
- Blaming others
- Shooting the messenger when someone has bad news
- Saying and doing two different things
- Talking behind others' backs
- Having hidden agendas
- Being selfish

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