The Power Of Positive

By Lyn Carman

The importance of having fun at work – – being happy at work

In the 30+ years of my career, I hear now, more than ever, people are feeling more undervalued, unappreciated, underutilised, unsafe, mistrusted, disrespected, tired and isolated. This is not only employees but business owners alike. I am curious and wonder what, as a profession we are missing; what are we accepting; and what vision have we let go of?

Being in a happy environment creates ripples far beyond where we can see and what we are aware of. This is truest when we look at workplace environments – creating a workplace people love can be critical on so many levels. If you are unhappy in your workplace, then you are unhappy in your homeplace and you are unhappy in other environments as well – it changes the way you can live your life.

When we feel we are contributing; feel valued, appreciated and respected; have fun and are engaged in a culture where people take joy in their work; this inspires others and is a key to success, whatever this means for you.

I recently listened to a podcast featuring Bob Chapman CEO and author of 'Everybody Matters' and I simply love this quote "Culture = values plus behaviour, as my friend Lt. Gen. George Flynn, USMC (ret.) says. If an organisation has a strong and clearly stated set of values and the people act in accordance with those values, then the culture will be strong. If, however, the values are ill-defined, constantly changing, or the people aren't held accountable to or incentivized to uphold those values, then the culture will be weak. It's no good putting "honesty" or "integrity" on the wall if we aren't willing to confront people who consistently fail to uphold those values, regardless of their performance."

Why do we want great culture? We often hear about branding and the importance of branding – I think branding is culture, culture is branding. It's not your logo, it's your culture. If you have a space with great culture, you have great people, if you have great people, you have great clients, if you have great clients, you have great success!

If you have a great culture, you have lots of fun – it's a place where people want to hang out, it's a place you want to be. To do this, we need to create a culture that has particular standards; know what it stands for; what it represents; what it fights for and defends. Without this anything goes.

A great culture is building trust; knowing it's worth it; knowing it's worth fighting for. It's about being in a place where people love it.

A great culture is never about the money. Money and things don't create a great culture - you can have the most amazing building, equipment and values on the wall – take away the people and there is nothing.

If you are in an environment, you don't like... should you stay there?
Should you continue to turn up due to sheer necessity – are you on autopilot because you are fearful of change or because it pays the bills ... or for whatever reason?
Is this the standard you are holding yourself to?

You are the only one who drives your bus. If you get up every day and you are miserable; you are miserable because you choose to be miserable and you choose to stay miserable... nothing on the outside world can force you to stay miserable – it's a choice that you are making. Don't get me wrong ... I'm not saying this is easy! From experience, I know it isn't - It can be really hard, uncertain and scary ... and so was riding a bike for the first time.

Finding a place that is a good fit for you is critical.

- Happiness is contagious – creating great role models and ripples of joy spread throughout.
- Happy employees are successful people – increasing self confidence and inspires greater performance.
- Happy employees bring the right attitude to your workplace – a positive can-do ethic.
- Reducing stress increases productivity – stressed employees are distracted.
- A positive work environment encourages 'risk-taking', enhancing creativity and openness
- Happy employees support each other – a willingness to provide positive support and more likely to seek support if needed.
- Happy employees are not afraid to make mistakes – a supportive environment creates safety to learn from mistakes, not fear them – enhancing growth and learning.

- Leaders lead by example –those who take joy in their jobs inspire confidence and positive examples encouraging others.
- Happiness inspires creativity – innovation provides solutions to problems.
- We all enjoy working with happy people – yielding enormous benefits by improving relationships and being more willing to work collaboratively for the common good.

The way we lead impacts the way people live. By default, we are all leaders in our space. Most of us understand our influence on team members' lives during work hours but, often enough, don't think about how leadership also affects team members outside of the workplace.

At the end of our day, when we leave our workplace feeling as though we have contributed, inspired, felt valued and had a great day, we go to our homeplace bringing this energy. The impact our workplace permeates all that we do on many levels.

Find your secret sauce. Find your voice, defining what you care about; what you fight for; and gaining clarity on your vision and values. It matters and you are worth it ... and the ripple effect on people around you spreads wide.

The way I see it is we have 3 choices –

1. We can be miserable, unhappy and exhausted.
2. We can get to a point where we simply exist on autopilot and are numb. Or
3. We can actively seek a workplace where we experience joy and bring joy. We add to the culture, not just fit with it!

I wish you happiness – you are worth it!