

Optimism, Gratitude and Creativity

In the movie Apollo 13 there is a powerful statement made by Gene Krantz played by Ed Harris. He makes the bold statement that “Failure is not an Option”. This is a line that can be helpful for all of us, in life and in business. As a lesson many people would look at this as an example of will and determination. Of course it is and those are qualities that are important in our success but the three things I would like present as possibilities are **optimism, gratitude and creativity.**

As coaches, we listen to people. Maybe you do too! Whether we are listening to managers, members, staff, or the news, it seems that we have become a society that focuses on what is wrong. It seems like it is a pastime to complain about what is wrong and who is to blame for it. Instead of being part of the solution, or at minimum not part of the problem, it is easy to observe and complain.

And what are these terrible problems we face? My French Fries were cold, my table at dinner the other night was the wrong shape, I had to wait in line to get my new I-phone, my steak and lobster costs more than it did 15 years ago, the people who lead us are dishonest, the economy is bad, the valet took a long time to get my car to me.....! !

In the movie Apollo 13, the problem they faced was that three men would not have enough oxygen to get back to earth alive! **Not enough oxygen!** Now that is a real problem! We have watched the scene many times where the team is explaining the problem to Gene, the Mission Control Flight Director. In all those times we don't remember seeing the team spending time trying to determine who is to blame for the explosion that caused the problem. They didn't sit around whining about the inconvenience of having to deal with this kind of problem. There was no one pointing a finger and saying “They should fix it!” They did with a huge serious problem that which so many people can't do with small seemingly insignificant problems.

Optimism!

Many people would argue that they can't be optimistic when there are so many things to be pessimistic about. It may seem easier to be pessimistic than optimistic, but whether the pessimist gets it or not, there is a price to be paid. It sucks energy. It can lead to paralysis. It is not a happy place to be!

“Failure is not option!” We can! We will! We have what it takes! There is no problem no matter how big that we can't break down into small doable steps, if we decide to!

We are not talking about blind optimism, but rather optimism with passion and action!

For the NASA team to believe that failure was not an option, they needed a leader who believed it and would not stand for less. There were pessimists on the team but they were not in an environment where it would be accepted.

Gratitude!

We have so much to be grateful for. If you don't think you do, spend some time in a third world country. We have what we need - and in many cases more than we need. We have family and friends and things and resources and food! We have housing and jobs and televisions and phones. We have connections to others. If we focus on what we have it is hard to not be grateful.

Gene Krantz had a group of extraordinarily bright people working with him. He had rocket scientists and engineers. He had designers and mathematicians and creative thinkers. He had people who knew people. He had resources. He had caring dedicated people working alongside him in a common purpose. He had a lot! You might say he had everything he needed.

Creativity!

As soon as we decide it can't be done there is no need for creativity.

Finding a solution to a problem is all about creativity! Gene Krantz didn't solve the problem. He created the environment where the problem would be solved. He didn't care where the solutions came from. He only cared that the solutions arrived. He was surrounded by creative problem solvers and challenged them to talk to designers, sales people, or people who worked on the assembly line creating light bulbs and fuses to find a solution. The solution could come from any one of the thirty or forty people in the room or any one of the billions outside the room. What really mattered was that the solution came to them in time!

How do you see the world and the challenges or irritants that you face? Are you optimistic or pessimistic?

In your life or at work, are you the leader of optimism, gratitude and creativity or does an inability to focus on these things get in the way of your success?

Just imagine if the members of a club focused on optimism, gratitude and creativity. Not enough members? No problem! If a board, a management team, a staff and a membership all played their part in solving this problem, it probably would be solved.

Now imagine a challenge you have outside of work. You probably have the resources to solve it, even if you are not aware of them.

Go ahead! Be optimistic, grateful and creative!