

Positive Mood = Success

- Marcia Hughes, President, Collaborative Growth

In her article, "Don't Worry, Be Happy," Kate Sweetman reported that companies with top teams made up of folks with a positive attitude had 4% to 6% higher market-adjusted earning per share than companies who did not have these positive teams. The research was drawn from 632 major U.S. organizations, selected from Fortune 500 companies, leading nonprofits and a few well known emerging companies. 4 to 6% for large companies is considerable success!

Positive mood counts in the quality of your day and in your organization's success. Emotional contagion is a term you might not have heard before, but I'll bet you can quickly figure out what it means. Our moods affect one another. Sigal Barsade's research demonstrates that the mood your team is the most likely to catch is from the pleasant optimist – now that beats the common cold hands down! Technically, they call this person a low-energy positive, and fortunately this person's emotional influence is at least as great as a high energy negative person. You know, the one who always knows why any new idea won't work. Or who quickly dismisses innovative approaches with a "No, we tried that ten years ago, and it didn't work." The pleasant optimist can counter with "Well, we're ready to give it a go again. Imagine how much we've learned in the last ten years."

You will have the most powerful team if you have a team largely made up of pleasant optimists. We've found that teams with a similar temperament are able to feel more comfortable with each other. This psychological safety leads the group to have a more participative decision-making style. That means team members are more engaged including in developing the business decisions. As teams build their engagement, they build their communications intimacy by learning how to read one another's verbal and non-verbal signals accurately. Being on the same page as your team moves forward leads to success and satisfaction.

Tips for building your positive mood and that of your team's include:

- Decide to feel happy for no particular reason
- Catch yourself thinking of why something won't work and experiment out loud with turning it around – just imagine a positive result and talk about it, even be playful as you consider outcomes. Creativity and playfulness are linked.
- Start your meeting by genuinely talking about what went well recently.

Sweetman says people who had low positive mood were labeled "sluggish, dour and sedate." Be sure this isn't you, you have a choice!