

## THE INSURANCE COACH

### Part 4 of 5: Positive Self and Public Image

#### Use Dynamic Leadership Principles Drive Business Forward!

“He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty.” (Lao-tzu)

This month we'll be discussing the fourth key to dynamic leadership: **Positive Image - Public and Self**. All leadership is leadership by example. The people who follow us usually duplicate half of the good things we do and twice the poor things. To be dynamic, a leader must both "play the part" of a leader and have a solid, positive self image.

**Public Image:** What does a leader look like? Does a dynamic leader wear a suit? expensive clothing? dress to fit in with the crowd? The fact is, a leader doesn't really *look* like anything in particular. It's more about how he or she acts. Your clients and your prospects want to know that they're part of a winning "team". They want to follow a leader who knows where he or she is going. They want to follow someone who exudes leadership, authority, confidence...

A dynamic leader must play the role that clients and prospects expect. People watch how a leader acts and re-acts. They draw confidence from the behavior of their leader. They become inspired by their leader's actions. Become someone that people look up to. Be a professional. Dress the part. Instill confidence in your clients. I always make it a practice of dressing one notch higher than my client - after all, we're the experts. Does your office create a professional presence? Are you conveying the kind of image you want others to have of you? Take a step back with a critical eye, or even better, have a spouse be the "outside person".

**Self Image:** Have you ever endeavored to attain a dream or goal, only to find that you've sabotaged yourself? Many of us have, including me. Often our efforts are thwarted by our fears. We may have a fear of failure, a fear of success, even a fear of money. When we don't address and overcome our fears, they take a heavy toll on our accomplishments. All too often, we decide to limit ourselves because of them. Our vision for our future and our assessment of our abilities becomes narrower. Our dreams become extinguished.

The degree to which we master or at least deal with our fears determines our level of persistence in the pursuit of our goals. Inevitably, obstacles arise to challenge us on our path to success. Someone once said, "Always measure an obstacle next to the size of the dream you're pursuing." The bigger your dream, the bigger the obstacles (opportunities) you'll face. Persistence with a sense of purpose will help us prevail, but our image of our self will, in large part, affect just how persistent we are. If we lead by example, then we must set the example of persistence.

How can you affect your self image? It helps to understand how we formed the image of our self to begin with. Children are very impressionable. Not only are they impressionable, but their life experience is limited. The consequence is that frequently, children "wire-up" the meaning of an event or a remark in a way that, as an adult, we know to be flawed. They draw a broad conclusion that is often unwarranted.

Couple that with repeated, unsupportive situations (negative remarks, negative self-talk, repeated "put-downs"), and a child will firmly believe in their negative self image. Children form opinions about the world from all the sources of input surrounding them (friends, bullies, family, teachers, TV, radio, ...). Forming opinions in this manner continues as an adult. The way we see things is influenced by what we continually get exposed to. We carry these false beliefs around with us into adulthood, and that's where we need to correct all those misperceptions.

The most effective way to change our self image, is to replace the input that others choose, with input that we choose. Read personal development books (leaders are readers). Listen to tapes on personal growth and positive attitude. Associate with positive, success-minded people. The people you associate with and the books you read determine where you'll be five years from now. Stop feeding yourself with negatives. Cut out most TV. Don't bother with the negativity of the newspaper. Avoid people who bring you down - either with direct attacks or with their pervasive negative attitude. **Take charge of your life!** An effective, dynamic leader does not have to be perfect. None are. But they do make a continuing effort to improve who they are as a person.

As your attitude and perspectives change, you'll find yourself adopting a solution-oriented mindset rather than a limiting, problem-oriented mindset. Your creativity will blossom and where before you saw obstacles, you'll begin to see new opportunities. And one more thing...

People are attracted to positive, solution-oriented, success-minded people. You'll see your business grow as you yourself grow.

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