

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

**How To Resolve Tough
Performance Problems
Quickly ... and Permanently**

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INTRODUCTION

If you're like most leaders, you've undoubtedly spent some time in that frustrating zone between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, you're responsible for accomplishing the goals and objectives of the organization ... for making sure the job gets done. On the other hand, you have to *get* that job done with and through other people. And those people have agendas of their own – agendas that sometimes run counter to the goals of the business and your personal expectations. Two conflicting realities, one you ... right in the middle. Ouch!

To be sure, there are definite benefits (and accompanying perks) to being a leader. You're in charge ... you get to call the shots. But headaches "come with the territory" as well. No one has to tell you that leadership is challenging. The demands on you are increasing – as are the number and complexity of obstacles you must face. And typically, the most intense and gut-wrenching of these obstacles fall in the category labeled with those three dreaded words:

employee performance problems.

The good news is that the vast majority of employees want to do well and try hard to do so. Most people are on target most of the time. They come in, do their jobs, and then go home – causing you few, if any, problems.

The bad news: nobody's perfect. Everyone occasionally makes a mistake that needs to be addressed (by you), and corrected and avoided (by him or her) in the future.

The worse news: there are a *few* people out there who are just plain difficult; they aren't good team members ... they can't or won't perform as expected. Though small in number, this group can cause a lot of disruption within your workplace – not to mention a bunch of sleepless nights for you know who! And, of course, despite any emotion you may be experiencing, you're expected to calmly and "professionally" deal with these problems in ways that are in-sync with: a) the values and procedures of your organization; b) all applicable laws and governmental regulations; and c) reasonable expectations of fair and consistent treatment.

Welcome to more of that land between a rock
and hard place!

The Avoidance Trap

Few leaders wake up thinking, "Oh good, I get to go in and chew somebody out today!" How about you? When you face the prospect of confronting someone about a performance problem, do you dread it ... worry about it ... get stressed-out? If your answer is yes, you're not alone! Most managers agree that "taking disciplinary action" is the absolute worst part of their jobs. Many hate it so much that they look for every excuse to avoid it altogether. And they justify their inaction with these all-too-common rationalizations:

The employee's performance really isn't THAT bad.

WRONG! If it's negatively affecting people or results (which it probably is) – if it's bothering you and causing you some level of discomfort (which it obviously is) – then it's "bad" enough to require corrective action.

Eventually, the problem will go away on its own.

WRONG! If the problem isn't addressed and corrected, chances are greater that it will continue ... or get even worse.

I'm too busy. I don't have the time to deal with it.

WRONG! Even if you're busy (as most leaders are), you have to *make* the time. Like the old saying goes: You can pay now, or you can pay later ... with interest!

It's not MY problem. My boss, HR, or someone else should handle it.

WRONG! That's looking for a scapegoat and shirking leadership responsibility. Addressing performance problems of the people you lead is a critical part of your job.

I'm not sure what to do ... I don't know how.

COULD BE!

Only one of these rationalizations (excuses) has real validity: *I don't know how*. A leader's lack of problem-solving skills and techniques can cause discomfort, diminish confidence, and ultimately lead to poor results. It's just plain hard to do a good job when you don't have the right "tools."

Fact is, far too many leaders are ill-prepared to effectively address employee performance problems ... and it shows. It takes its toll – on their organizations *and* the leaders themselves. But it doesn't have to be that way.

That's why we wrote this book. That's why you'll want to pay attention to what you're about to read. In the pages that follow, you'll learn you how to use POSITIVE DISCIPLINE – a practical, time-tested approach to resolving performance problems ... and strengthening employee commitment in the process.

Whether you're an executive, manager, supervisor, or team leader – whether you're new to the job or have been in leadership for some time – POSITIVE DISCIPLINE will help you better navigate in that land between a rock and the hard place. You'll discover how to minimize the intense emotions that typically accompany performance discrepancies. And you'll uncover the secrets to getting the results you want and need – one that's based on a new, more accurate, and more *positive* understanding of what "discipline" is really about. As a result, you'll be a better, more confident leader ... for your organization, for your team, and for yourself.

In the real world, there are no guarantees that you'll always be successful at addressing workplace issues. But, if you practice the strategies and methods that follow, you'll be successful *most* of the time. You won't need fear (or avoid) taking corrective action.

You will know how!