

Overcoming Negative People In Your Life

Planet ^{Of} _{The} Sewer Monkeys



Gary Moore

Planet of the Sewer Monkeys
Overcoming Negative People in Your Life

“The only disability in life is a bad attitude.”

Scott Hamilton

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**A heartfelt
“*thank you*”
to all the
negative thinking,
solution-empty
people and co-workers
who selfishly entered
our world as models
of how not to
pattern our lives ...**

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Introduction



“The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes.”

William James

It takes spectacular, meaningful and practical concepts within a book to capture your interest and maintain your reading commitment. The following pages have been carefully put together to address a serious philosophical enemy that troubles most everyone, including you! Of course that means you have most likely already identified and encountered real life experiences linked with this mysterious topic we’re about to rediscover! So be prepared to initially be reminded of, and then provided with, sensible recommendations to add to your know-how in dealing with these frustrations.

We’ll discuss many ways to manage, restore, and maintain an indispensable and dynamic thought process. This is more widely referred to as a

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positive mental attitude. You will discover it's possible to instantly win back and take command of your personal thinking routine. You'll discover why ruling your thought life is a key principle to enjoying ongoing success, developing a stronger sense of peace, and receiving a high level of pleasure. This book's subject matter will help you craft a new meaning of success in your own positive way.

As you go along with the principles in this book, you'll pick up the expertise to actually transform "affirmative potential" into sensible "constructive reality". (One significant tragedy of anyone's life is to be labeled as one with "a lot of potential", yet never coming to the point of developing that potential to its fullest.) It takes know-how and determination to positively and confidently enhance your *reactions* to your moment-by-moment life experiences.

You will realize powerful benefits from practicing the freeing skills that will be covered in the following pages. By understanding how to discipline and further develop your awareness levels, you will know how to better interpret what is going on around you. With certainty you can know that you are in charge at those important moments when others try, consciously or unconsciously, to redirect and maneuver your destiny from positive to negative; or tempt you to wander from the path of

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being content to crossing over to the “dark side”, referred to here as dissatisfaction.

The primary purpose of this book is to help you recognize and face those subtle manipulative influences that have, or could have, a significant impact on your life. We'll uncover various areas that you've most likely come to accept, and to a certain extent, have probably made decisions to tolerate. Your indifference may well have established a calloused perspective that makes the factor you're about to rediscover exceptionally treacherous to your best interests.

The second purpose of this book is to help you discover that there are things you can do to shield yourself from becoming a victim of a “Sewer Monkey” (the definition of “Sewer Monkey” is coming in two pages). There are many steps you can take, professionally and personally, to win back a positive attitude despite disappointing circumstances or negative influences. By applying some of the principles in this short book, you can reestablish solid habits of self-governance, self-leadership, and positive mental competence. The process begins by pointing out and acknowledging a heightened awareness factor of those things that keep you from experiencing full satisfaction in your day-to-day activities. Next, you move forward by preparing yourself with a few simple disciplines to regain control of your thought life. Soon ... you,

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and others around you, will notice the positive results!

Many forces are at play in keeping all of us from enjoying the concealed benefits and potential advantages that are within our intellectual ability. Ironically, this book's theme is centered on destructive forces that you might unknowingly allow to influence and have power over your daily life. Wow!

We'll find out immediately if you have a common challenge in your life. The 800 lb. gorilla that, interestingly enough, I have found is literally haggling each and every individual I've had the privilege of leading, training, consulting, or working with directly or indirectly. There is a common dynamic that we all must meet head-on. Those who are most successful have learned to conquer this gorilla so it doesn't dominate, or otherwise muscle in to control their thought life.

You will most likely be tickled, or humored, by the concept we're about to reveal, but yet, in some respects it really isn't funny at all. This devious and pessimistic influence can bring about life changing implications fostering limitations for you and others in your workplace. Also, it most likely has a history of causing disruptive consequences that instigate problems within your personal life, and yes, even within your family.

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Of course, there is little reward to have a toxic problem identified for you, unless you are also provided with proven solutions and methods on how to overcome it. This book is designed to do that and more for you! It is unlikely that you'll want to keep the concepts you discover in this book to yourself. You will most likely decide to discuss the principles with others, so they too will benefit. Of course, that's a good thing. Plus, sharing concepts with others allows you to learn additional ideas and solutions about the subject that can help you even more. Scores of people have encouraged the writing of this book, individuals just like you who are tired of becoming a victim to one or more "Sewer Monkeys" that they have to deal with in their lives.

What is a "Sewer Monkey" anyway?

Sadly, before you complete this very paragraph, it's highly probable that you can conjure up and list at least two "Sewer Monkeys" that are currently in your life. They seem to be prowling in every workplace, family and neighborhood. So, here we go...

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“Sewer Monkey” Definition

*Those harmful animals in your life,
or organization, who have one goal:*

*To drag you, and whoever else will follow,
into their negative mental sewer.*

*They have a sick and nauseating outlook
about the company, as well as life in general.*

*They want to verbally puke negative ideas
into your ear so you too will get sick.*

“Sewer Monkeys” lurk around corners and water coolers waiting to pounce on anyone who will listen. They want to manipulate you even if they have to make you feel stupid, insecure, and out of touch. Why? So you’ll accommodate, and then embrace, downbeat behavior, and join their causes. Many “Sewer Monkeys” are fierce recruiters with little regard or concern about the damage they cause along the way.

Like a vulture circling its prey, “Sewer Monkeys” gravitate to situations that provide them the opportunity to attract others to connect with their down-trodden path. Beware when they appear to be excessively concerned about someone (perhaps even you), with something, or they have an obsession with a particular situation where they have disagreement. For instance, they really thrive

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on circumstances that they self-proclaim as “unfair”. Many times they want to sadden you because they are sad. Every so often their thinking can cause sadness that brings with it grief ... grief brings with it mental anguish ... mental anguish leads to emotional reaction ... which then takes the place of reasonable thinking. Most times this brings destructive thoughts and behavior into play. When this happens you can really fall into a trap. Before you know it, you begin to create life-sized issues for yourself.

There is enduring guerrilla warfare all around us with “Sewer Monkeys” wielding “sharp words and degrading gestures” as weapons that are designed to undermine and destroy. There are so many innocent individuals who unknowingly become “Sewer Monkey” victims where verbally negative raids and ambushes are designed to cause harm and destroy their otherwise positive attitudes. Unfortunately, these hit and miss tactics are successful more times than not. “Sewer Monkeys” parachute into the lives of others. They use surprise attack strategies to catch victims like you off-guard, and when your discernment is at its lowest level, they verbally blast away. The negative impact during these times can be strong and the destruction can be far reaching.

The “Sewer Monkey” definition and explanation should give you an idea what we are up against. This sets the stage so you can identify and

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concentrate on some cases where you have “Sewer Monkey” challenges. We will provide you with skill sets to more effectively identify the truly dangerous “Sewer Monkeys” in your life. More importantly, we’ll provide challenges associated with these “Sewer Monkey” attacks, and instructions on how to deal with the people issues, so negativism doesn’t become bigger than life in your world.

Are you capable right now to identify by name a couple of “Sewer Monkeys” that impact your life? Ha! I knew you could!

How do you prepare yourself to deal with these types of negative issues? Are you destined to have no options that can help you avoid the “Sewer Monkeys” brunt forces that are all-around you? Do you need to just sit back and put up with the unconstructive challenges that are placed in your life by others or should you develop the skills necessary to identify, and then face, the “Sewer Monkeys” in your life head on?

You can learn how to deal with these issues. For your own good, and the well-being of those you care about most, you owe it to yourself to read on.

Chapter 1



You Have Much to Win (or Lose)

“Life is too short to spend your precious time trying to convince a person who wants to live in gloom and doom otherwise. Give lifting that person your best shot, but don't hang around long enough for his or her bad attitude to pull you down. Instead, surround yourself with optimistic people”.

Zig Ziglar

Communication is a wonderful pastime. Recent Gallup Research found that happy workers can spend six hours a day socializing. Imagine how all that daily interaction can impact one's thinking; either positively or negatively. Why should this stop us in our tracks and get us to ponder the impact? Because ... how we think all through the day ... ultimately directs our behavior and attitudes. So the question to ask is “Do my words and actions mostly provide positive or negative value to those around me?”

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Our instincts tell us that “Sewer Monkeys” are operating in virtually every organization throughout America. It seems to be their self-appointed responsibility to make us just as miserable as they are. They are on their own self-imposed mission to articulate their pessimistic spin on positive activities happening all-around them. For example, they seem determined to want to annihilate any good that is accomplished by pep talks delivered by others and ruin any good news that may be announced in the workplace. Just as destructive, is the “Sewer Monkey” tendency to have a passion to highlight and keep top-of-mind any depressing activity or gossip rumor that positions them to look like the expert on “how things really should be done”. Frankly, they are exhausting to be around, regardless of whether we acknowledge them with our time, or make an attempt to avoid them.

Aggressively chase negativity away!

Consider this: Your mind is an extremely valuable asset. The positive culture you have worked so hard to create within your own brain is extremely precious. Do you really think you can afford to tolerate “Sewer Monkeys” in your life? Do you think it’s a good risk to allow them the privilege to take control of your conversations and dump their horrible ideas into your brain like you’re a garbage dump? Is it possible for you to give them a very short time to alter their negative speech when they

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are around you before you shut them right out of your life? Let them know there is a limit and that you aren't willing to entertain their negative input anymore! Can you rid yourself of that type of toxic speech and thought pattern, therefore, limiting their destructive impact in your life, and from harming the lives of those you care about most?

Place them as far away as the east is from the west (those two points never meet); place those "Sewer Monkeys" outside the influences of your life, if they aren't willing to guard their speech. Your thought life is most likely more fragile than you think. Would you allow streams of poison into your water system and then expect your water to be safe to consume? Of course not! Like water, your mind can be disrupted and hijacked if you allow it to happen. You don't need the stench and messes that "Sewer Monkeys" inevitably create.

You certainly don't want your mind to be a malicious battlefield where you have to combat all their negative views and impressions that are jammed in there by "Sewer Monkeys". Those awful unconstructive animals heap junk upon you and anyone else they can dig into with their philosophical claws. If your boss doesn't clean out the "Sewer Monkeys" from your organization, it's left up to you to discipline yourself so you limit the time you associate with them.

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Negativity - welcome in your world?

There is an ongoing battle for the attention of your brain's center stage. If you aren't careful you'll fall into the trap of "Sewer Monkeyitis". The suffix "*itis*" is meant to emphasize negative "inflammation" in one's life. So, "Sewer Monkeyitis" is the ever-imposing and disgusting swelling of negative views in your life. This harmful culture almost never wants to allow you to foster an environment where your success is imminent, or even possible. In "Sewer Monkey Land", positive attitudes and constructive input are viciously attacked, and many times made to be perceived as trivial and unrealistic.

Not all "Sewer Monkeys" even realize it when they are planting negative thoughts in others. However, their efforts seem to squelch good thoughts and positive momentum so the noble are eventually systematically eliminated. Positive thoughts are replaced with self-centered entitlement attitudes from pompous individuals who think it's their personal right to pass judgment and talk down profitable events and successful people around them. Why do we allow these people to have so much control over our thought life?

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Information is (positively) great!

Saying that we are in the information age is a gross understatement. According to *Tips for Time Travelers* author Peter Cochrane, mankind's knowledge base is now doubling in less than every two years. Or think about it in other terms; a weekend edition of *The New York Times* contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime during the 17th century England. (An interesting tidbit revealed by Richard Saul Wurman in *Information Anxiety*.)

So how much poison or *negativism* do you need to consume before your persona becomes off-putting and depresses your entire thinking process? Suppose you are drinking juice from a glass. How many flies need to land inside the glass before you're done consuming the juice from that cup? Or how much arsenic would need to be placed in your glass before you will stop drinking? It doesn't take much to ruin a good thing like a simple glass of juice, let alone your mind.

We all should have a strategy to diligently guard our mind's intake from the "Sewer Monkeys" of our world. Ultimately, it is in our best interest to pattern our thinking and craft our behavior from a productive and positive perspective. This grave subject matter requires an action plan that has both an offensive and defensive strategy.

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Declare war!

Is war too drastic of a consideration? Depends how serious you are about gaining control of your thought life. “Sewer Monkeys” need you; on the other hand you don’t need them. Learn to say “no”! Win back the right to a work environment that respects the virtues of constructive thinking. At the same time discourage the sharing of depressing views unless they are accompanied with reasonable solutions. Treat negative thinking that is thrown carelessly towards you on its own as your enemy, because it certainly doesn’t have your immediate success or long-term well-being at heart. If you’re not careful, you can become the victim. Perhaps you already are. Yikes!

Think about what’s at stake!

When a “Sewer Monkey” impacts the workplace, lost sleep, destroyed career paths, spoiled efficiencies, shattered friendships, organizational failure and traumatized teams are common results. When the negative philosophies are left alone and unchallenged, they permeate everyone who is directly, and at times, even those indirectly involved.

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Some highly successful time-tested bullet-proof organizations have fallen to destructive employee morale issues instigated by “Sewer Monkeys”. These organizations had good people, who are just like you, who suffered mightily over the long haul because negativism was left unchallenged. People, and even companies, have been allowed to be commandeered and hijacked into negative hostile work cultures. The innocent get manipulated and placed into ugly, unenthusiastic workgroups. These cultures are filled with controlling negative influences cultivating conspiracies that are hard to beat when they are left unchallenged. If it seems like confrontation is a hard thing to do, don’t give up yet! The stakes are too high for us to take on the ostrich approach of hiding our head in the sand to gain a false sense of security. Hoping the problems will just go away over time is a strategy with a very low success rate. Have the tenacity to address and take responsibility for a healthy state of mind for yourself and those around you.

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Take the high road!

“I believe the single most significant decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of attitude. It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failures, fame or pain, what other people think of me or say about me, my circumstances, or my position. Attitude keeps me going or cripples my progress. It alone fuels my fire or assaults my hope. When my attitudes are right, there is no barrier too high, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too great for me.”

Charles Swindoll

Accepting the challenge to influence your company’s higher purpose and add to your professional self-worth is meaningful indeed. If you’re tired of the “downbeat drum” setting the tone for you and your organization, then read on because there is hope and the answer is within you. As stated earlier, the following pages have been carefully formed to give you practical ideas on how to win back an encouraging culture that’s so lacking in many workplaces today. While this book won’t be definitive or exhaustive on the subject, it will be extremely valuable to you as you begin to immediately build a personal strategy for the

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affirmative daily adventure. Initially you want to refine the proper process with expertise to identify the “Sewer Monkeys” in your world, and then successfully eliminate their destructive influences.

The backbone of this book is - You!

As you navigate through this little manuscript you’ll notice an encouraging, yet, challenging tone. The proven recommendations it contains are designed to stimulate you and others to share the know-how and concepts required to take control of your environment. It’s a roadmap to an assertive plan going forward as opposed to a passive approach that often leads to becoming a defenseless victim. In addition to identifying the “Sewer Monkeys” (the enemy), you’ll be able to clearly define and recognize their ill effects in your world. Then you’ll have a simple formula on how to lead and encourage positive cultures where you both work and play. While most people read books passively, you are now encouraged to be proactive as you take the time to thoughtfully answer the questions, and think through the principles, you find throughout this book. These thought provoking questions and ideas will help you to personalize the theme of this paperback in a productive way. It also will assist you as you begin to combat the potentially lethal effects of the “Sewer Monkeys” chattering in your life.

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One of history's best thinkers stated the importance of a man's attitude this way:

“Weakness of attitude becomes weakness of character.”

Albert Einstein

There's no need to fear the action-directed steps you'll be encouraged to address in order to strengthen your attitude. It would be far more a matter of concern if you allow the harmful elements you will identify and expose, to be left alone and unattended. That's why you're encouraged to read this book with a pen. Your entries will serve as a personal reminder why “Sewer Monkeys” aren't for you or those around you. Why these creatures are allowed to “do their negative thing” to us is beyond fairness and reason if we only take the time to nurture our positive mental health.

Encouragement for a lifetime!

Each chapter has been put together so you can read through each one in 15 minutes or less. Prior to moving on to the next chapter, it would be productive for you to think about a couple of “Sewer Monkey Declarations” and get mentally prepared to act upon them. Each chapter should provide enough idea starters for you to write down some

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action steps for consideration. This is, of course, designed to make it possible so you begin living in a more positive world. Life's experiences can be perceived either from a negative or positive perspective. When it's sensible, positive is preferred over negative! You'll soon see that we'll acknowledge that not all negative thoughts however are bad, in fact, there are many times when they are necessary and serve a solid purpose.

The title of this book is silly. However, most everyone will agree that it would be helpful to have a road map that provides us with simple and positive results as we deal with the sour pushers in our lives. You can keep this book as a reference manual. It will provide you helpful direction and with a freeing sense as you face and conquer the dilemmas created by the infamous "Sewer Monkeys" in your life.

Happy "Sewer Monkey" hunting!

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“Sewer Monkey” declarations:

By name, list at least three “Sewer Monkeys” in your business life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

By name, list at least three “Sewer Monkeys” in your personal life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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On the previous page you have listed the specific individuals who have the potential to bring you down and harm the efforts of your entire organization, career achievements or your personal lifestyle!

Do you, and those around you, sense their negative impact?

Are you willing to do something about it?

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Chapter 2



You Are on a Life-Threatening Safari

“Misery is a communicable disease.”

Martha Graham

Successfully tracking down and then slaughtering wild animals during an organized jungle safari is considered by many to be a noble hobby and skilled proficiency. Some adventuresome types “rough it” for less than \$75 per day while others select the plush and exotic safari route for \$500 or more daily. “Sewer Monkey” safaris don’t have to cost you a thing, but leaving the beasts unchecked in your day-to-day life, they may ultimately cost you plenty ... if you get my drift.

How to spot a “Sewer Monkey”!

Certainly it is essential to know what you’re looking for and why. How do you know when you’re in the company of a “Sewer Monkey” - or even worse - surrounded by a pack of them? You’ll need to

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skillfully employ your hearing, sight, and good old common sense to discover if you are experiencing a serious outbreak of these despicable vermin. Or you might have just a few stray “Sewer Monkeys” that latch onto, and seize, a part of your world.

It’s critical that you find out specifically who the guilty parties are that create the pessimistic toxic and negative enterprise that is surrounding you. Initially spotting the destructive animals is a vital first step in gaining an upper hand with your negative cultural circumstances and the troublesome state of affairs that are certain to tag along.

Be on the lookout for what?

Being fully aware with the following tips will help you to establish a radar sense. You can personally be adept in detecting the presence and movement of your targets. Listen for the top six “Sewer Monkey” “stinky” speech patterns:

- 1) Cleverly opening a sentence with a soothing positive thought and completing it with a harmful notion. This is easy to spot as the middle of the sentence contains the conjunction “but” or “however”. For example, “He is usually good at what he does, but have you ever noticed how he never compliments others?” or “She

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might be a top producer, however, she's really not a team player, is she?"

- 2) Consistently using the noun "they" when talking about those in authority. For example, "They never think about what's best for us, those who really do the work."
- 3) Slyly positioning questions that manipulate you to say something negative about others. For example, "She didn't really say and do something like that to you too, did she?"
- 4) Regularly second guessing what's going on around them. For example, "In my opinion, the company should have given us the entire day off with pay instead of only a half day".
- 5) Repeatedly complaining to gain attention and sympathy about how unfair their life's circumstances are compared to others. For example, "I really don't know what to do, it just seems so unfair. What did I do to deserve this? Why me, why you, or why us?"
- 6) Systematically gossiping by picking out what's not going right in a given situation or appears unjust by taking a situation and pulling it out of the proper context. For example, "Did you hear about what he did three weeks ago? You won't believe it!"

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Why concern yourself with these types of comments?

Beware of those who really don't have an interest in what's best for others or what may be beneficial for the group at large. They will frame things unreasonably, and in the poorest light possible to influence others to join their woeful outlooks.

“Pessimism, when you get used to it, is just as agreeable as optimism” was, unfortunately, rightfully stated by Enoch Arnold Bennett. It can be a costly trait if we fall victim to the “Sewer Monkey” way of thinking. Like the frog in a boiling pot of water, our attitudes can slowly adapt to the negative environment perspective until we get to the point where we're experts and begin to think we can play judge over everything and anyone. Few people appreciate an attitude of superiority, condescending attitudes, and self-appointed expertise.

Don't build yourself up at the expense of others!

Be on guard with those who make it a practice to speak poorly about circumstances or other people. It's possible that “Sewer Monkeys” sense a need to bring others down so they look smarter, wiser, and more successful. They tear down others'

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reputations (sometimes without realizing it) for the sole purpose of making themselves appear to be a bit more complete and whole in comparison to the victim of their verbal venom. It's a sad state of affairs, but this type of verbal slander is more common than we'd like to admit. And if we aren't careful, we join right in with the best of the "Sewer Monkeys". Harming ones reputation is wrongfully taking away something from one person or organization. Keep in mind it's done by someone who doesn't have the right to do so. Hurting someone's reputation unnecessarily is a form of status stealing or character assassination - some even call this a form of slander. Of course there are faults in others, including the "Sewer Monkeys", but there is no need to hatefully exaggerate those shortcomings.

You know the type don't you? Those who want to look superior and intelligent at the expense of others. These self-appointed experts are a legend in their own minds. They seem to have solutions for everyone else's challenges and problems. You know the type, with a condescending way about them as they pontificate on how to solve this problem or take fuller advantage of that opportunity. The results from these types of communication disconnects can be very damaging to you and to those around you.

Why must we guard our minds from this nasty habit? Because we too can cultivate internal

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tendencies to become calloused and bitter! When this condition takes control over someone it is nothing short of a tragedy. Staying focused on productive things is a great way to avoid becoming sour about your own world.

It was recently said,

“The man who is busy rowing the boat generally doesn’t have time to rock it.”

Dennis Keating

Do you see a “Sewer Monkey” in the mirror?

Whenever I speak of “Sewer Monkey” attitudes, it’s very common for those listening to ask me, or someone else later, if they think they, themselves, are sometimes a “Sewer Monkey”. So let’s also sharpen our skills and sensitivity at identifying “Sewer Monkey” tendencies in ourselves. How can we recognize if we’ve become a mental downer for those around us at work and even to those most important to us in our personal lives?

It is most helpful if you candidly answer the question within the grid that follows with reference to your communication habits. It’s common for us

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to be “over kind to ourselves”, or even fool ourselves into thinking we’re more positive than we really are. Did you know that as a general rule, honest to goodness “Sewer Monkeys” think they are positive thinkers while we know that they obviously are not? Keep in mind that others evaluate us by our words and actions, not by our (good) intentions.

While it is normally easy to spot shortcomings in others, many times it’s hard to identify our own not so stellar attributes. For those exceedingly serious about enriching and sustaining a positive attitude, have someone else help you answer the “Am I a “Sewer Monkey” survey. Have them be completely honest as they translate what they have observed, particularly concerning your communication behavior in each of the various categories.

To get the most out of an exercise like this, you want to make sure you possess a teachable attitude during the process. Once we identify our rough edges, there will be a need to doggedly address the blemishes. It’s best to address one or two at a time, versus trying to force a complete and extreme makeover. The key is to develop an ongoing habit of examining the wellbeing of your mental attitude, while fostering improvement. It’s a worthwhile undertaking with a large payback.

Fasten your seat belt, this scrutiny might provide a bumpy ride and be a hard knocks lesson. Yet,

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enjoy the process because you'll ultimately be pleased with your continuing development. And so will those around you.

	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
I read inspirational and self-improvement books				
My boss says I'm a positive person				
My peers say I'm a positive person				
My thoughts about work are positive				
I'm not a perfectionist				
I look for ways to compliment my boss				
My thoughts about others are positive				
Negative thinking is a daily inner battle				
In the morning I look forward to the day				
I catch myself making positive comments				
I get jealous of others' success				
My family members say I'm a positive person				
I post inspirational sayings near me				
I look for ways to compliment others				

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	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
I enjoy reading about how to gain positive attitudes and get rid of negative ones				
I regularly work mentally to sustain a positive attitude				
Circumstances don't affect my mental attitude in negative ways				
I have a book or friend to turn to when I need help				
I have a positive friend/co-worker I go to when I need encouragement				
People ask how I always keep a positive attitude				

To some extent, everyone is personally inflicted with the “Sewer Monkey” syndrome at varying levels. Be honest with yourself and review the self-evaluation grid. Those categories where you selected one of the last two boxes (far right) are areas for you to consider addressing immediately. Those areas where you selected the first two boxes (far left) are where you want to spend a life time guarding. You’ll realize as you face day-to-day circumstances, these attributes are a valuable asset in forming your

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current character; the core of your thinking and behavior.

There is no good reason for you to allow those areas to be compromised and controlled by other individuals or circumstances. We all want to get to an emotional platform where we have a desire to control and overcome situations that have the potential to harm our outlook on life.

Internal “Sewer Monkey” hideouts

There are several ways we view circumstances that we encounter, and we also assess individuals that we come into contact with on a daily basis. Whenever you get the impression that you may be negatively influenced by an outside source or event, look to see if you have a “Sewer Monkey” attribute or response mechanism that has cultivated from within.

Anxiety, frustration, or worry left unchecked can overtake us when our plans are obstructed by something or someone. It’s highly likely we have the potential to turn into a “Sewer Monkey” ourselves. Yes, much like the mild mannered man who turned into the vicious werewolf once the full moon appeared. While the werewolf myth isn’t a real concern, it’s very possible to lose control and

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have our behaviors unexpectedly turn into “Sewer Monkey” territory. That can be disquieting.

Be on the lookout! Impatience and resentment cunningly turn into secret, or not so secret, complaints. These complaints then often promote additional negative thoughts or behavior. Perhaps you’re familiar with the well-known cliché “making a mountain out of a mole hill”. At times like these, we must fight the urge to set into motion overthinking a particular circumstance or condition with “ingrown eyeballs”. We have an obligation to protect our minds from a belief system that “this is our planet” and everyone else should go about life with “me” top-of-mind.

The following truth should make us stop to contemplate our own self-important motives. Have you ever thought about the fact that *you don’t need a manual to teach children to be selfish*, that they do a good enough job teaching themselves the art of self-centeredness? On the one hand, that’s a humorous statement as we think about the many examples where we have observed that truth. However, it is helpful for each of us to look into the mirror, discover our own blemished self-centered attributes, and make the proper adjustments for our own good, along with the good of others. After all, kids are only human like me and You!

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How painful can it be?

We need to be aware that damaging mind-sets have the potential to take over the course of our thinking while infecting our thought process. Our mind can be wooed away from solid, healthy, and logical productive thinking. Wrong attitudes can often overwhelm you, and take control, before you realize something has happened. Therefore, if you're ill-prepared by not being armed with some defensive positive thinking skills, a "Sewer Monkey" by means of just a few words or actions can greatly influence the direction of your mind. You can go from being completely satisfied to the other side of the spectrum where all of a sudden you become grumpy and crabby. Your once-content spirit transforms to a troublesome, judgmental, and mean force. You can almost literally feel your moral fiber being ripped apart. Sour patterns begin to take the place of your high standards. Like the Incredible Hulk's challenge, you lose control of your core thinking process as you become overrun by a new forceful creature.

Can discontent be a good thing?

Before we continue, we must recognize it can be a good thing when we have healthy reactions to some forms of discontent. Unlike what is described in the previous paragraph, it's a good thing when we

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snap ourselves out of a lethargic stupor when we've accepted a lower standard of behavior for ourselves. Coming to a realization that we should improve a particular area of our life is honorable. It's sometimes selfishness and laziness that has made us stubborn enough to believe that "I'm this way, and if others don't like it that's their tough luck". Throughout our lifetime we should all be looking for ways to improve our physical, technical and mental skills. This book is one means of doing just that. Consider it a personal commitment to continue on the path of self-improvement for the rest of your own life.

Now, back to some dangers!

It's a wake-up call to observe how unthankful many Americans and visitors to our country are today. In America, we have moved from a people primarily of necessity, to a community of unending consuming luxury. Think about this! Our ancestors generally lived uncomplicated lives through means of simple pleasures. Today if we don't have something exciting happening in the next couple of hours, we are overcome by bitterness, self-entitlement, and become anxious for immediate self-indulgence.

To combat this egocentric albatross, it's very beneficial to set aside some time to think about all the things you are truly thankful for, and what you appreciate most. In your life cause every day to be

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a form of Thanksgiving Day! We want these grateful thoughts always “top of mind” so we can replace the unthankful insurgences we’re bound to face. We need this mental strength for the times that “Sewer Monkeys” (or even ourselves) start pouring on the “woe is me” chatter. Once you get in the habit of doing the appreciative exercise, you will have taken meaningful steps to store up positive mental lines of reasoning that will help you self-manage and overcome those nasty negative moments. If you’re not prepared, you may end up living in the toxic land of negativity. Can you stop right now for a few moments and write down what you are thankful for on the margins of this page or a separate piece of paper?

Beware! When we lack mental self-control we become an easy target for “Sewer Monkeys”. An undisciplined mental approach to life means others have the potential to take over, and begin to control part of our thinking process. Ultimately, our thinking routine greatly impacts our behavior patterns. Therefore, if we aren’t careful, others can begin to establish a viewpoint that we mindlessly embrace and fail to properly filter with our own values and priorities. Our self-control is weakened if we jump from one philosophy to another without thinking through the ramifications. This wavering practice can diminish and foster an attitude of negative discontent which can cause damage to our lives and to others we touch. It can be serious, as the results can have both internal and external consequences.

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Is your Pleasantville perfect?

It's not an easy undertaking to admit how reluctant we may be to identify and address our own internal negative producing issues. As the saying that was slightly adjusted by Henry Rollins goes, "Sometimes the truth hurts. And sometimes it feels real good." For a quick gut check on this maxim, let's uncover some possibly touchy subjects. Do any of these following points touch a sensitive nerve as you read them?

Similar to a "Sewer Monkey's" behavior:

- Do you find yourself resisting authority for no apparent reason?
- Do you sometimes exhibit a high pride factor at the expense of others around you?
- Are you forever thinking selfishly with a "me first" mentality, causing grief to others?
- Do you project a self-appointed "know-it-all" attitude, believing you have an answer for everything, when in reality you don't have either the experience or knowledge to do so?
- Do you have to "win at any cost"?

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To some extent we all have examples where horrible characteristics like those listed above have surfaced in our life. Now fasten your seat belt and get ready for a bumpy comment. Have you ever noticed how often we tolerate these shortcomings in ourselves, but are really bothered when we see them in others? The truth is, it takes fortitude and it is an arduous ongoing task to defeat our own mental deficiencies like these. However, the long term results are usually well worth the efforts!

Rather than masking the problem by making excuses, one must first admit the troubling issues, and then address the internal demons head on. It's required if you want to avoid personal negative destruction and if you expect to see positive measurable progress.

Hmm, how about moving on to a less painful subject matter - that of "others"? Just like we should establish a process to evaluate our own behavior to strengthen our character, we also need guidelines on how to fairly assess others by pushing our personal emotions aside. Yet remember! No one is perfect. So often, the stuff that bothers us the most about others' behavior is like stoking a fire, because they remind us of our own weaknesses.

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Chapter 3



Identifying a “Sewer Monkey” Plus

“A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.”

Hugh Downs

“Danger, Danger, Danger” was an often repeated warning from the late Steve Irwin, better known as The Crocodile Hunter. And so it is with the art of identifying “Sewer Monkeys”. It’s adventuresome with a hint of risk. You don’t want to make a mistake by mislabeling an individual and getting yourself into jeopardy.

Benefit big time!

You can learn and profit from an incredibly valuable “Sewer Monkey Locator” evaluation process. When you have the skill set, and capability, to pinpoint the personality style of each

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individual you suspect of being a “Sewer Monkey”, you have a wonderful secret weapon. In the next several pages, we’ll provide a process summary on how to evaluate individuals by observing how one prefers to communicate, how they say particular things, and how they behave in certain circumstances. It’s very important to take each individual’s particular style into consideration when you’re attempting to determine if someone is, or is NOT, properly labeled “Sewer Monkey”.

There is real danger taking the easy way out. It can be risky attempting to evaluate others using just your comfort levels and perspective as a compass. Each person’s personality style (defined in this context as their natural communication and behavior style) ought to be taken into consideration. It’s a disservice, and misleading, to label someone as a “Sewer Monkey”, just because they think or do things differently than you. Carl Jung (1875 – 1961), regarded by many as the original developer of personality profiling warned, *“If one does not understand a person, one tends to regard him as a fool.”* What a great statement to motivate us to learn how to identify personality diversity, understand why others behave in the way they do, and discover what can naturally be expected from the communication and behavioral styles of others.

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You think you know, but you don't!

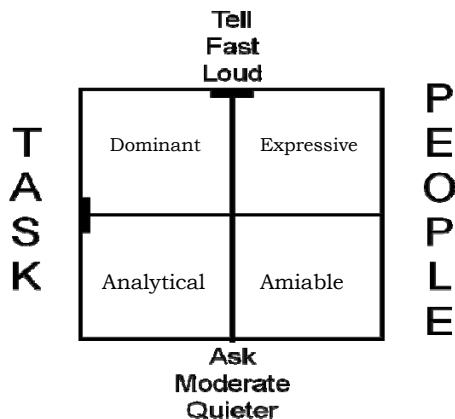
Accurate personality identification requires a little selective patience and logical thinking. By using a couple of straightforward tools, you can skillfully educate yourself to be an effective evaluator of the four styles. Many people get deceived by the simplicity of the process we're about to review. While many professionals have had exposure to personality style principles, not many take the time required to fully understand them. My experience has been that there is a significant difference between those who intellectually know the rules, versus those who know how to properly apply them effectively and consistently. Many times I have been told by someone "I know the personality principles", or "I've been through the personality program before". However, it turns out they don't truly realize how to properly apply and productively use that knowledge.

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Uncomplicated grid very helpful!

Assertiveness and Responsiveness



To gain a better understanding of an individual (or potential “Sewer Monkeys”) thought process, begin by identifying their horizontal axis *behavioral* position. You do that by Evaluating if they are primarily “task” oriented-or- “people” focused. In other words, do they approach daily life more from the perspective of things that need to be accomplished, or do they excel in relationship building with others? Is their main focus on task accomplishments, or do they put a priority on getting along with other people? By referring back to the chart on the previous page, you’ll notice that it illustrates that Dominant and Analytical personalities have a tendency to focus on “task” accomplishments. On the other half of that same grid you’ll see that Expressive and Amiable

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personalities lean more towards being “people” or relationship oriented.

The second set of observations you want to consider is their *communication* style shown on the vertical axis position. You want to contemplate if the person has a tendency to speak in a “tell, fast and loud” fashion or is their speech more “ask, slow, and quiet’ in manner. By referring once again back to the chart, you’ll notice that the Dominant and Expressive style personalities have a tendency to speak more direct, quickly and with a louder tone. On the other hand, Analytical and Amiable individuals are more likely to speak in a question oriented, moderate and unhurried manner.

Once you grasp these simple identifying concepts, you’ll be incredibly empowered to understand, and more likely tolerate, the behavior of others. So again, referring to the chart, you can pinpoint a person’s personality trait with an 80 percent or better accuracy once you become familiar with the following:

- Dominant behavioral and communication traits are **Task** oriented and **Fast Paced**
- Expressive behavioral and communication traits are **People** oriented and **Fast Paced**
- Analytical behavioral and communication traits are **Task** oriented and **Slower Paced**
- Amiable behavioral and communication traits are **People** oriented and **Slower Paced**

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Memorize or refer back to the grid regularly so you'll be equipped to drill down as you evaluate and identify a person's personality style. By practicing these skills and identifying others who you know well, you'll find that it will help fine-tune your identifying skills. By practicing, you will be honing your skill sets so you'll become a master at identifying the personality style of those around you.

By reviewing the past couple of pages, in combination with the next several paragraphs, you'll have enough information to develop your own systematic process to identify personality styles. You will benefit greatly as you use the powerful identification system. You'll be properly evaluating others to correctly identify personality styles. Those findings then will further help you know if you are dealing with a true "Sewer Monkey". Equally important, this step will also reveal when it might be appropriate to stop to review if the subject may be acting naturally (for instance, in a factual way) and isn't really a true "Sewer Monkey".

Honesty versus scheming!

By following the evaluation steps mentioned up to this point, you've been able to identify an individual's personality style. The next part of the process is to gain a clear understanding on how to

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decipher between naturally-based comments and behaviors versus “Sewer Monkey” slop.

As we’ve said before, we want to make sure we have our facts together so we don’t falsely label someone as a “Sewer Monkey”. The next step allows you to properly evaluate someone’s comments and most likely gain some insight into their motives. This is a method that can help you appraise between someone who is communicating and behaving naturally; or when someone is being self important and possibly scheming through negative comments to cause a premeditated reaction from hearers for their cause. In other words, are their comments and behavior being dictated by their personality style preferences, or are they just exhibiting a disruptive self-created attitude, therefore properly earning the “Sewer Monkey” label.

The following summaries should help you during your personal evaluation process of others.

Dominant – When those with a natural dominant style are being critical, seem self-righteous, and project a “better than others” attitude, believe it or not, this does not usually qualify them to be labeled as a “Sewer Monkey”. Their comments sometimes may be offensive and even hard to listen to for an extended period of time. If their complaints or corrections are based on bottom line improvements and efficiencies, keep in mind they are only

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speaking their mind which is a natural communication behavior for the Dominant style. They are consistently proficient at getting a job done quickly and efficiently so they can move on to the next task. Typically, they are professional with their behavior and have a hard time understanding why others don't consistently act in a professional manner as well.

When a Dominant is being critical about a specific individual's character, or exasperated with another's ineptness, they are moving quickly into "Sewer Monkey" territory. Or when they are verbally blasting away about the workplace because "nothing is done right", again they are being ape-like while also spreading destructive criticism. Since their critical comments are amazingly accurate, many people have a hard time calling them on their antagonistic verbal binge. Certainly it can be a little extra difficult to address, because their banter is typically based more on facts than it is emotion. That said, often they go over the line, and you should be aware when the "Sewer Monkey" beast takes over in the Dominant.

Expressive - When they are being passionate and a bit disruptive by saying some negative things about a project or others, this does not necessarily qualify the Expressive to be labeled as a "Sewer Monkey". They may appear to be off track because they regularly get emotional when they articulate their thoughts. If their complaints or corrections are

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based on a strong desire to succeed, they are naturally speaking their mind. They are skillful at getting jobs done quickly so they can move on to another activity that is more fun. This desire to have fun in the workplace is natural for them, and even when they waste others' time pursuing enjoyment, it's not a "Sewer Monkey" attribute. They are professionals and have a real desire to receive compliments from others on their personal work and accomplishments.

Be on the alert when an Expressive is trying to drum up support by using their natural persuasive skills while also being critical about a specific project or individual. When this takes place, they are over-the-line and likely moving toward "Sewer Monkey" tendencies. When they have allowed their personal sentiments to override their logical thinking concerning another person or a particular situation, watch out! There can be a lot of "Sewer Monkey" passion in action, and their likeability becomes part of their persuasion.

Analytical – This personality type is the one most often, immediately and incorrectly, labeled as a "Sewer Monkey". When they are being critical and appear nit-picky, it does not necessarily qualify them to be labeled as a "Sewer Monkey" at all. It may be frustrating to listen to them at times, and one can almost be driven crazy by all the specific details they tend to dwell upon. When their complaints or corrections are accurate, and you

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can see their logic has merit, then most likely your just observing their natural thinking process. The Analytical mantra is, *“if it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right the first time”*. The step-by-step process followed correctly is just as important as doing the entire job right, in their opinion. They get great satisfaction when things are done right the first time. They have natural difficulty understanding people or projects that fail to value the importance of detailed planning and processes.

When an Analytical continues to be critical about a specific individual or project after having a chance to express their concerns, they are moving quickly into “Sewer Monkey” territory. If they can’t get past the shortcomings of others, or seek perfection from everyone involved in a project, then you need to be on the lookout for “Sewer Monkey” behavior.

Amiable - When an Amiable personality becomes vocal about how others are being treated unfairly, or that the team hasn’t been properly recognized, they are revealing their natural tendencies. In these cases it would be incorrect to label them as a “Sewer Monkey”. Usually, Amiable personalities are careful not to voice an opinion that could be considered controversial unless they believe circumstances have gone way too far beyond being fair. They are naturally attuned to how other individuals or circumstances are impacting members of their work team. They are always trying to do things as a team and carry an “all-for-

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one, and one-for-all” attitude. Amiable personalities always have a need to gain input from others in the group ... at times, to a fault. They are natural supporters of others behind the scenes trying to keep peace in the workplace. They will usually go way out of their way to avoid conflict.

When an Amiable continues to complain without reservation or caution, they are moving quickly into “Sewer Monkey” territory. If they seem to get stuck on a couple of issues and won’t let go, they have gone too far. When you sense an Amiable has lost the “nice” persona, and they begin to show anger or resentment on a regular basis, appear a bit unsteady or seem out of their normal character, the “Sewer Monkey” infection has taken effect.

So now you’ve reviewed some natural and unnatural traits to keep an eye out for in others based upon their personality style. Be careful not to allow one style’s specifics (excuses) to slip over to another during your evaluation process. If you do, there is a chance you’ll allow a “Sewer Monkey” to go undetected.

Catch friends early in the process!

It’s much easier to save a person early on from the grasp of the negative “Sewer Monkey” underworld as opposed to waiting so long you have to drag

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them completely out of the unconstructive abyss. Here are some thought starters on how you can help a well-meaning person avoid slipping into the “Sewer Monkey” syndrome. It is possible that you can be a source of encouragement for a complainer and help lead them to become ultimately a productive solution provider for everyone around them! Yes, you can help establish a workplace culture where others realize they may be an unwitting contributor to the problem, versus being either a passive or active contributor to the workplace negativity.

When dealing with a Dominant personality: Encourage them to help lead workplace activities toward a productive direction. Provide them a clear, bottom-line perspective of the situation and how the right solution can help make the workplace more productive. Motivate them by pointing out to them how they can help things (or people) in the place of work by providing and supporting fruitful solutions. Explain how their ideas and actions have the potential to quickly improve the overall culture.

When dealing with an Expressive personality: Encourage them to take their good ideas to the appropriate individual(s) as opposed to “chitchatting” with others who don’t have the authority to do anything productive about the issue, thereby reducing the tension in the workplace. Motivate them by pointing out to them

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how much more fun work can be if only the problems they have identified in the workplace are addressed appropriately.

When dealing with an Analytical personality: Encourage them to write down their ideas point-by-point so they can take the logical ideas to the proper individuals for consideration. Motivate them by pointing out to them how much more efficient and error free the workplace can become with their good ideas in place.

When dealing with an Amiable personality: Encourage them to take their solutions to the appropriate person as the end result will really help the team. Motivate them by pointing out to them that their ideas can help each individual and bring back some harmony in the workplace.

If the individual refuses and they are not willing to share their concerns and solutions with those who have the authority to address the issues, then you no longer need to be a receiver of their gripes. If they won't take the appropriate steps for a proper solution, and they insist on still belly aching, in your mind they can officially become a "Sewer Monkey".

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“If you don't like something change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it”.

Mary Englebreit

While you ultimately cannot change another person's mind against their will, you can control who you will listen to so you don't become mentally entrapped in negative hogwash.

Approaching those in authority!

Words of wisdom: How the person who is in authority is successfully approached about negative workplace issues depends very much on their own personality communication style. An individual's personality style also gives you tremendous insight on how they prefer to receive information they may consider negative or hear about problems in the workplace.

For the Dominant personality: Make it factual, to the point and bottom line focused. Don't go into too much detail. It is better that you just state the issues and immediately start providing potential solutions for their consideration. Start and end by mentioning you want a more productive work place.

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For the Expressive personality: Keep the discussion professional and personal. Ask them for their help, and inquire how they feel about each point, before moving on to the next issue. Point out that when these delicate issues are addressed, it will help make the workplace less stressful and more enjoyable.

For the Analytical personality: Make your points in a logical format doing so verbally and in writing. Show how the solutions can make the workplace less susceptible to errors and more prone to getting things done correctly. Show interest in the process and details. Finish each point with ‘do you have any questions?’ before moving on to the next issue.

For the Amiable personality: Make it all about the interest of doing the right thing for the team. Describe how the solutions will have a positive impact on each individual and foster a stronger sense of team work in the workplace.

These personality based recommendations and skill sets will help you improve your effectiveness in identifying “Sewer Monkeys”, dealing with troublesome situations, and rescuing others from becoming a problematic chimpanzee. Little did you realize before you picked up this book that in addition to developing you own strong mental attitude, you can have a tremendously positive impact in your workplace and in other individual’s

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lives. Master these points and you and your peers will be impressed at how influential you can become while avoiding some “negative” casualties along the way. Help them all to be an optimistic solution provider just like you! Workplace cultures can be changed one individual at a time.

“I am an optimist. It does not seem too much use being anything else.”

Winston Churchill

In many workplaces, today’s pay raises are limited or scarce; and guaranteed job security is susceptible to unstable economic conditions. Therefore, becoming an ongoing positive influence within your own workplace adds value to your peers, the boss, and to the company overall. People who bring positive value to the workplace improve the chances that good things will happen with their career as well.

Consider this for your future career advancement positioning. There are two attributes that stand out and have a high chance of gaining recognition when the leaders of your organization evaluate individuals for potential raises or lay-offs. First up, they look for individuals that have a consistently high quality of production, as defined by the position. Second, are those team members who consistently display a loyal and positive attitude.

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When you're seen as a team player, and a productive solution provider, you're in a great category.

We should always strive to be a top producer plus one who stands out within the organization as a "best practice" professional. You and others will enjoy many benefits when you have a reputation as someone with a great attitude. It seems so right, and it's fulfilling to do your daily activities in a positive manner and to the highest levels of your capability. You want to learn to overcome any obstacles that keep you from possessing an ongoing positive attitude, or go find another job (but don't be surprised if that negative attitude shows up in your new workplace too).

Earn the reputation for being an encourager, a company supporter, and someone who is constantly upbeat. Accomplish this, and it's reasonable to conclude that you are more likely positioning yourself as a candidate for upcoming promotion opportunities.

A positive mental attitude isn't an emotional sensation or feeling. It's also not the result of a string of windfall opportunities in one's life. To be consistently upbeat, you want to be committed to staying positive yourself without being overtaken by the negative influencing factors that are also lurking around you. The next few chapters reveal

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how you can take control of your mind's positive destiny and what it takes to be a proactive positive contributor in your own world.

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Chapter 4



“No” Tolerance

Surrounded by people who love life, you love it too; surrounded by people who don't, you don't.

Mignon McLaughlin

As we've experienced, it's not hard to unearth several "Sewer Monkeys" in our lives and throughout the workplace. Isn't it amazing, that even when we aren't looking for these negative critters, they have the knack to find us with their negative input regardless of our overwhelming desire to avoid them? We have our work cut out for us if we want to protect our minds and keep ourselves out of the depressing mental sewers.

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Just say “No”!

You must learn to say “No” when you have the misfortune of stumbling across those “Sewer Monkeys”. For sanity’s sake, when you realize you’re a victim of their schemes and you’re caught in their clutches, realize that radical action is required to stop the nonsense. You need to become the aggressor to ensure you and others don’t get caught in their nasty negative web. If you’re a team member, or manager of the workplace, it’s your obligation to address the issue head on. You want to do so early, before the negative issue becomes an everyday element of your work culture. In addition to the harmful cultural influence, someone may at the same time be placing the company in a compromising legal position, or even causing its integrity to be questioned. Allowing “Sewer Monkeys” to run unchecked in an organization is unwise.

It’s not all about me!

Today’s all-so-prevalent entitlement worldview has become a perfect breeding ground for self-important agendas that often foster damaging impact to team-based cultures as well as destroying the well-being that is bred in a supportive work environment. Work environments nationwide, and the people in them are craving for leaders who cultivate self-

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respect and cooperation in the workplace. Away with entitlement - and replace that nasty 21st century assertion with the traditional “looking out for the good of others” through responsibility and accountability ideals!

It's not popular to declare a thought-provoking statement like this one from Jane Haddam in our “it's all about me” society, but I can't resist.

“In my day, we didn't have self-esteem, we had self-respect, and no more of it than we had earned”.

Jane Haddam

A word to leaders, this means war!

One of the strongest self-respecting signals a leader can send in the workplace is to declare an all out war on “Sewer Monkeys”. Let everyone who will listen hear that you're on a mission to eliminate the “grungy” slop that has customarily tainted the workplace. Yell it from the roof tops, as this announcement and commanding leadership step is very important to a company's (and your) long term success. It's a major part of any leader's responsibility to hold those they lead accountable for their behavior. At the same time, it's each of

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our duties to positively self-manage and accept ownership for our personal attitudes and behavior.

The Chronic Complainer!

“You’ll hear the Chronic Complainer (C.C.) before you actually see her. She’s the one making a mountain out of a molehill, throwing a major fit over a minor infraction, or stirring the pot in general. You’ll also catch her complaining about -- gasp! -- being asked to do her job. If you’ve had to work with her on even the most pleasant project, you probably found yourself counting the days until it was complete, as she pointed out every problem with the project, and all shortcomings of the company.”

“Employees like this help create a toxic work environment and make those of us who like our jobs feel silly for it. Even if your job is far from perfect, you should always look on the bright side of things (while looking for another job).”

“The best way to handle C.C. is total avoidance. If that’s not possible, do not

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indulge her grouching. That will only fuel the fire. Remain as silent, or neutral as possible, and see your supervisor about working independently or alongside others in the future.”

Caroline Potter

Real life example!

Employee focus and trustworthy leadership can have a transforming influence on nearly every workplace. Revolutionary change can overwhelm the “Sewer Monkeys”. A workplace will eventually get to the point where most team members have had enough from the few negative influencers who have been left alone to set the pace for everyone else. Things can improve for the vast majority like it did in a 300 person sales and support services department in San Diego. A clear message was simultaneously delivered to all, the managers were no longer going to babysit the non-producers in the department. An employee morale evaluation previously revealed that there was resentment because several managers were spending a large share of their work time engulfed in, and with, “Sewer Monkeys” issues. This took valuable time away from the positive productive team members who would have taken advantage of the support and strategy times with their leaders. Managers were documenting starting times, break lengths, end of day times, disciplining offenders, making

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sure various rules were being followed, and enforcing regulations. Imagine the wrong messages that the managers' behavior inadvertently sent to the majority of team members. There was a small group of "misfits" who received a large share of their manager's attention, but a large part of the team wanting to advance the company's efforts were not receiving the support required to do so. Manager's had little time for those who were doing things right!

Actively ignore "Sewer Monkeys"!

Therefore a group announcement made it clear that the managers were going to begin at once to concentrate on those team members with the right behavior and attitude. That is, those who sincerely wanted to grow professionally and had a genuine desire to make the organization's customers more successful. Managers were instructed to quit babysitting those whose actions didn't reflect the new culture. One astonishing result, several months into the new "leadership program," the employees voted to remove a Guild (Union) that had represented them for 61-years! The organization's revenue went to all-time high levels during a slow economic time. "Sewer Monkeys" began to leave the organization because they were no longer coddled and frankly, they were no longer the center of their managers' or their team members' attention.

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Large cultural changes are possible!

Consequently, examples like the one above reveal it is possible to establish and experience a new culture where “Sewer Monkeys” can begin to be held accountable by their peers. We are discussing an environment where they can anticipate peer confrontation whenever they start spewing unnecessary negative comments. A backlash, anytime things are stated for the sake of what appeared to be disruptive purposes. Peer group pressure is a very loud and effective cure to wild “Sewer Monkey” behavior. The majority should no longer be stagnant victims or enablers allowing negativism to grow. The issues can and must be dealt with directly.

So the San Diego workplace where “Sewer Monkey” antics were once actually enabled suddenly transformed into a positive-results workplace! No longer was it considered professional to run amok spreading negative messages at the expense of others while also exhibiting unproductive behavior that showed disrespect to peers and the company. The previous culture had the wrong team members stealing the majority of the managers’ time. Suddenly ignoring and saying “no” to negative behavior transformed the negative culture into a much more positive “we can do it together” team - focused workplace.

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Some people like to “share”!

Somewhere along the line, spinsters have changed the nasty practice of gossip and by slight-of-hand turned it into a softer sounding word, “sharing”. Would you like to hear an effective way to address these individuals at those special moments? Let’s say a “Sewer Monkey” is talking about Robert and is “sharing” very non-supportive comments. Once they complete their little tear down tirade, why don’t you simply say something back to them such as:

“Wow that is really interesting, have you talked to Robert about those issues? I’m sure Robert would be very interested in your thoughts!”

Try it! Be serious and then let your question just hang there as they attempt to come back with a reasonable response. No need for you to take a passive part during a verbal attack on someone else’s reputation. The one sharing had no interest in improving the workplace with their comments.

Of course, if you’re in a bold mood, you can even be more direct and say something like, “I really don’t feel comfortable listening to this; let’s switch the subject to something more positive, shall we?”

See how interesting a “Sewer Monkey” safari can be as you track down, expose and then address the

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culprits? You will experience freedom when you come to the realization you don't have to be entrapped in a "Sewer Monkey's" cesspool that is filled with insensitive comments and negative philosophies.

Chapter 5



Tolerance Philosophy Misused

“Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns; I am thankful that thorns have roses.”

Alphonse Karr

There is another popular philosophy and self-centered sentiment that has become acceptable in today's culture. For our society and business world's good, this core value malfunction needs to be addressed head-on. It harms the majority of the workplaces in America. We have allowed the pendulum to swing so far, that now we accept this idea that *tolerance is a virtue*, and everyone's opinions have an equal right to be considered truth.

To a point, it is reasonable that everyone should be heard. Sadly, however, we've lost the common sense benchmarks to test theories and thoughts that others utter. Instead of testing others'

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comments, the weak at heart fall back on a statement like “if that works for you, then it’s ok”. The outcry of “who made you judge” has eliminated most people from standing up for the values that they believe in. So what happens many times is the majority sit back quietly while “Sewer Monkey” propaganda replaces the very values and virtues that have made America great.

Now before you revolt against the philosophy that is being introduced here, consider its implications in the following terms. The next obvious question that needs to be asked (come on leaders, take charge here) is, “When does someone’s constant negative griping and complaining go against my rights to work in a positive work culture?” There is a sad answer to this question. Our existing cultural philosophy (and in some cases, laws) protect the “Sewer Monkeys” and punish the majority of the individuals who want a positive work environment. Shame on us for allowing this negative tide to drown out our affirmative wishes!

Imagine if all leaders and others in the workplace took a stand and made it clear that it’s everyone’s right to work in a positive work environment. Better yet, it’s everyone’s responsibility in the organization to guard the culture from negative influences for the common good of the majority. In my opinion, this is a concept that needs to be reinstated immediately in organizations nationwide. Why do we allow attorneys and courtrooms to steal

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our freedom for a positive workplace? When one (or a few) individuals' rights override the desire of the masses, aren't we falling away from democracy? Sounds like we have some upside down thinking and "Sewer Monkey" business, doesn't it?

Responsibility and accountability!

So let's back up for a moment to the practical matter. Certainly all managers and employees should promote to build and foster an encouraging culture. Most people want a better workplace for everyone collectively. Here's the responsibility factor that most leaders have a tough time executing. Every team player in the workplace should have respect for themselves and others when an opinion is provided, even when it's counter to our own thinking. In place of vicious criticism on leaders, organizations and peers; how about holding everyone accountable to providing constructive criticism and forward-thinking solutions in the same sentence when they state a perceived problem? That would strangle most "Sewer Monkey" issues.

Dialogue that is solution-oriented affirms that a positive environment is helpful in nurturing the organization's, employees', and customers' common good and long-term well-being. Imagine replacing habitual personal agendas with constructive

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solutions that limit a tendency towards nurturing destructive gossip, to a more profitable professional buzz providing positive solutions to workplace challenges. In other words, support an environment that breeds respect and admiration for all. It also requires a workplace that acknowledges that we all have a right to agree to disagree until those disagreements turn into solutions for the common good.

How about you?

Wow, what would that kind of turnaround do for your workplace? Does it stand to reason that an all-out assault against the “Sewer Monkeys” in your world would overcome their negative influence? Your bold and constructive push can protect your right (and everyone else’s) to a positive workplace that you can look forward to coming to each day. Isn’t your life and workplace worth making the appropriate efforts to enhance and mold the expectation levels for an upbeat culture?

Beware “Sewer Monkeys”, your cage is about to be rattled.

“How much easier it is to be critical than to be correct.”

Benjamin Disraeli

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“Sewer Monkey” declarations:

- ✓ Can you think of ways that you enable the “Sewer Monkeys” in your world to thrive? What can you do about that? How much more damage has to take place before you take personal responsibility for doing something about them?

- ✓ Do you see the benefit and need to declare war on the “Sewer Monkeys” in your world? What does your implementation plan look like?

- ✓ As you continue to read the upcoming chapters look for things to add to your specific implementation plan.

- ✓ Define “self-esteem” and “self-worth.” Do you understand the difference? Do you see the importance of being in a work culture where self-worth can prosper for you and for those you come in contact with on a daily basis?

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Chapter 6



Winning Ways Work Best

“Things turn out best for the people who make the best out of the way things turn out.”

Art Linkletter

When there is an opportunity to win at something, we typically focus and work hard to be the winner. Winning is almost always more fun and productive. Sure, there are exceptions, but establishing ongoing winning ways is generally good for the long-term success for both you and your organization.

Looking for a few pointers to pick you up and get your thinking in the right direction? Add your own thoughts to these recommendations.

- 👉 Enjoy the simple things. You’ll find there is so much to be thankful for in your work and life in general.

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- 👉 Throw away non-essential numbers such as age, weight, waist size, height, blood pressure and cholesterol. Let your doctors worry about those, that's why you pay them. (OK, that was a joke.)
- 👉 Maintain and nurture relationships with people you enjoy. Encourage and scrutinize their outlook on a regular basis so you can learn from and emulate their optimism. Maintaining friendships with people who are typically positive thinkers makes work (and life in general) much easier. It's worth the effort to grow close to positive people.
- 👉 Laugh a lot, and laugh often while you enjoy the freedom of not being susceptible to anger and negative moods. It's hard to remain gloomy while you are chuckling at humorous things and witty comments from others. Learn to smile over and over again.
- 👉 Make ongoing learning a motivating factor in your daily routine. You don't want to allow idle time to negatively influence your attitude. Search for new hobbies or discover additional ways to use your computer to learn. A learning mind has a much better chance of fostering positive thinking.

WIN – WIN – WIN!

Winners have a way of attracting winners ... losers draw the opposite. Positive people don't mix particularly well with "Sewer Monkeys". And

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negative thinkers don't blend exceptionally well with positive attitudes. You get the idea. As discussed earlier, when we allow harmful attitudes to go uncontested, we can easily become victims of their depressive abyss. If we're not careful, our affirmative base which acts as our foundation can be chipped away as we deal with the challenging experiences of everyday life.

Establishing a Champion Mindset!

Just how important is your career success and a positive attitude to you? Do you truly care or is your job "just a job"? Are you willing to invest in the ongoing development of your positive mental outlook? The fact that you're reading this page within a chapter titled "Winning Ways Work Best" is a solid indication that you most likely already have a desire to do what you can to enhance an optimistic and professional thinking process. Good for you! That places you in a winner's category!

Positive is Realistic!

To clarify: When we consider positive thinking "stuff" it doesn't happen by simply filling up a bucket with non-relevant syrupy quotes that don't really fit within our real world situations. Great care has been taken to place quotes in this book

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that help those of us who want practical assistance to deal directly with the challenges we face. Properly applied inspirational quotes act as a mental assistant for us in the workplace right where “the rubber meets the road”; gaining insight from others’ wise sayings and life experiences. If you know how, edit your computer’s screen saver with motivational citations or inspirational sayings. Scatter a quote or two on your desk or on the wall of your work space. These are then utilizing a simple fundamental and effective method to ensure that you receive positive input at opportune moments throughout the day.

Guarding your mind!

So, how can you guard your mind from negative onslaughts? Surrounding yourself with positive thinkers, and reading or listening to something that is uplifting and educational every single day is an excellent start. Don’t worry about becoming too upbeat, there will be plenty of unconstructive input throughout your workday to more than balance your well-intended efforts to seek positive input.

There is a real life quote from my good friend Bob Brown, a leader of hundreds of employees, and additional responsibilities with other properties in different parts of the country. Bob’s advice can be very insightful as we develop our own plan to

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conquer negative input and keep positive messages as our primary influence day-to-day:

“Every day people were complaining, and in some cases, dumping negative thoughts all over me. All this ‘stuff’ piled up. So I started a habit of reading inspirational books in the morning. On a particularly bad day, it is 30 minutes of reading before bed.”

Bob Brown

A reading plan like the one just mentioned above takes a little discipline and discernment to select a couple of great books. But once you begin the habit, it's highly likely you will look forward to the reading to help prepare you for your next day's war against negativity and a good night's sleep.

Every professional should consider the value of having a voracious appetite to learn. A true professional must know how to seek out productive input that will add positive essentials to their thinking process. Why mold your thinking positively? Since our thinking ultimately leads to a behavioral response, a disciplined reading program can do much to improve our actions. At first, your reading may not provide you with the results you're after. But over time you'll be rewarded for your work because life-changing reading is a life-long

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labor. Knowledge will be the result and the more of that you gain, the more you'll want to continue.

Preparing yourself mentally in a positive manner can help make you a superstar performer. It will ultimately make a real difference in your outlook on the day-to-day challenges you face. What freedom it is when you position yourself above the "Sewer Monkey" nonsense that inevitably leaks into your workplace! If you want to enhance your professional life, you must develop the discipline of consistent reading so you begin to think in a constructive manner. The result of this is that adapting your behavior to match the challenges of the moment will become second-nature to you.

Virtually everyone wants to perform at awesome levels, but few will do what it takes to make that desire a reality in their life.

Can a retired ballplayer teach us how to improve our work ethic?

Here is one of my favorite "professionalism" examples. One man stood out from the rest because he was dedicated to keeping himself on top of his game. It's about a baseball player, but it is not really a baseball story. It is a story of a professional's professionalism.

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In San Diego we had the privilege of watching Tony Gwynn play his entire career with the San Diego Padres (1982-2001). Tony was elected to the All-Star team 15 times (reserved for only the best players), He was a five-time Gold Glove winner (best defensive player at his position), seven-time Silver Bat Award winner (tied for most seasons all-time with the best batting average in the National League), and was elected to the Hall of Fame the first year he was eligible (the 7th highest vote all-time by a player - 97.61%). He is also in the top 20 (17th) for lifetime batting average of all-time at .338. In other words, he performed his profession of hitting and fielding at the highest level.

One day on a San Diego television show Tony Gwynn was interviewed. After some small talk the interviewer made a complimentary statement that embarrassed this humble professional baseball player who quickly switched the conversation to a very interesting topic. It went something like this:

“Tony, you are the most natural hitter in baseball today and perhaps the most natural hitter since Ted Williams during his playing time back in the 50’s”. (Williams had a .334 lifetime batting average, is 7th all-time in career batting average and is considered by many to be the most natural hitter who ever lived).

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Tony Gwynn laughed a little nervously and responded humbly,

“I’ll tell you how natural hitting is for me, do you know what time I came to the ball park today for tonight’s game (the contest would begin at 7:05 p.m.)?”

“No,” responded the interviewer.

“10:15 a.m.” said Tony. “I always get here early in the morning.”

At this point, it’s worth mentioning that during his career, one thing was consistent by the media. Year in and year out it was reported that Tony went to Spring Training overweight. Every year we read that there was no way Tony could handle the tough physical abusiveness of an entire season. Of course Tony proved writers wrong season-after-season due to his unwavering commitment to do his very best.

“So what do you do at the ball park so early before a game?” Tony was asked.

Gwynn went on to explain that there were batting cages under the stands and out-of-sight at the stadium. He would take two bags of balls (100

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baseballs per bag). One-by-one he would place a baseball on a tee (just like the tees that five and six year olds use in those drawn out pre-little league games). Tony would work on his swing hitting the balls off the tee into the batting cage nets. That's how serious Tony was to perfect his hitting skills.

Then he would have the batting cage machines revved up and strategically set to pitch to an area where he was having the most difficulty hitting, for example, low and inside. You and I want the batting machine to lob it over the middle of the plate. He would hit over 100-200 batting machine pitched balls at over 90 miles per hour to perfect his skills at hitting balls that were pitched at his most troublesome spot at the time. If you've ever hit baseballs in a batting cage you have an idea of how your hands start to sting after only a couple pitches, Tony hit hundreds of high-speed pitches – every day.

It's after noon by then, so he heads to the clubhouse to clean up and wait for his teammates to arrive. Now wait a minute, Tony would arrive at work at least a couple hours before most other professionals showed up? Wow! After a team meeting, Tony and the group would go out and take (you guessed it) batting practice. Yes, even after the morning batting ritual, Tony would bat with the others off live pitching in the afternoon, and then they would also take fielding practice. Back to the clubhouse to clean up, put on the game uniform,

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have a final meeting, and then go back out to the field to warm up for the 7:05 game time. Then Tony performed at a legend-like level in a physically and mentally challenging game at the world's most intense and competitive level. After the game, under normal circumstances, Tony would complete a shower and head to his Poway home about 25 minutes from the ballpark.

Once home, certainly Tony would relax and enjoy a late meal? No such chance. His wife, Alicia, would have video tapes ready for Tony to review so he could perfect his swing and study the scheduled pitcher for the next day. This now-common practice of utilizing videos wasn't used by most players at that time.

It was only then he relaxed a bit at night and started the same routine the next day. That is how Tony Gwynn became a "natural hitter". During his career, Tony's impeccable work ethic remained a secret to most people besides his teammates. Yet, for Tony, the many high achieving moments in the spotlight were due to his behind-the-scenes work ethic that had him mentally tough and physically ready to perform at the highest level at any given moment.

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“The biggest thing is being consistent--consistent with your work ethic, consistent with your preparation, consistent with your approach. If you are able to be consistent, then you have a chance to be successful.”

Tony Gwynn

Are you courageous enough to attack your profession to the depth Tony Gwynn did? If Tony were in your profession, how would he approach work? What time would he show up in the morning compared to the time you stumble in the office? Do you think he'd make it a habit to study professional books and be diligent to possess a positive attitude?

Are you the Tony Gwynn of your company? Would you be in the Hall of Fame of your profession? Is it possible that you're on the edge with the organization's "Sewer Monkeys" and you deserve the "Hall-of-Shame"? Are you addicted to mediocrity and compare yourself with others who are just so-so? Perhaps you make fun of those who are dedicated to their profession and have disciplines in place so they learn-learn-learn. Or maybe you are near the top of your class, I hope so.

Now back to this idea about taking your professional career serious enough to read books that can help you be mentally prepared for an

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intense day's work. As I travel around the country speaking to teams and groups, some common retorts to the challenge of establishing a personal reading plan include:

✓ **“I don't like to read”**

Reading isn't reserved only for those who gain pleasure as they read or study. Regardless of our propensity to read, it's ultimately for our edification and well-being. It's wise to flood our minds with solid, positive and logical input, so the unanticipated attacks we get exposed to don't have a chance to survive long enough to infect our minds. Positive thoughts can, and will, kill negative thoughts if you have a trained thinking process to do so. Try it!

✓ **“I don't have the time to read”**

Take an inventory on how you spend your leisure time. Are you being productive or do you major in the art of relaxation? Self-examination will reveal what you value more than winning the battle for your mind. Do you place learning books next to your bed, in the bathroom (sorry), near your TV chair, or marked as “favorites” on your computer. Do you listen to educational CDs or hook up your iPod in your car? Redeem your time and use it wisely. Take a look at the history button on your

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computer and look how much of your time is spent away from edifying activities that can impact your professional growth. Do you agree that positive development has a high payback once you discipline yourself to redirect how you spend some of your free moments?

✓ **“I don’t know what to read”**

There are many professional sites that have recommended reading lists including my company’s. Check out www.insightedge.com and click on reading list. Ask your friends what educational books they like to read and what they liked about the books or authors they recommend. Check out the business book top sellers on www.amazon.com.

✓ **Read with a purpose**

The following examples are just that, a few illustrations on how you can get the most of what’s available on the marketplace. You can select from fresh new resources or legendary books that have been around a bit longer. As you invest your time in a book, magazine, or website article, attempt to select two key principles from that author that you’ll implement somehow in your life. Below you’ll find examples (those items that stand out and are meaningful as you read). Then you’ll see illustrated

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application examples noted after “Life lesson principle learned and applied”. By reading with a purpose you can learn to take full advantage of your reading time and add to your professional growth, positively.

✓ **Read with a purpose and pen**

- Underline or highlight important sentences you want to review when you pick up the book later.
- Mark a exclamation mark “!” next to any sentence that’s meaningful to you and you really want to review later.
- Mark two exclamation marks “!!” next to any sentence that’s very meaningful to you and you really, really want to review later.
- Mark three exclamation marks “!!!” next to any sentence that is an “oh WOW!” statement and you want to review it again and again.

The “!” system helps you become an active and alert reader. A person who reads with impact and purpose redeems their time and puts it to great use. A well marked book also allows you to review the golden nuggets and key points in a short period of time. You can also write the key points you discover reading on the front inside flap for easy reference in the future.

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Let's examine a few examples on the following pages. Perhaps you'll want to add one or more of these books to your own library. Note that several books that are mentioned have been around for some time and offer wisdom principles that are timeless.

“The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.”

Mark Twain, attributed

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Good to Great by Jim Collins
Management Category Book

“Good is the enemy of great!” Page 1

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: I will not be content with being just “good”. I will challenge the status quo and attempt to excel to greatness in all that I do.

“The only way to deliver to the people who are achieving is to not burden them with the people who are not achieving.” I will begin as a manager with the following, *“I will not bother the producers with the same minimum standards I will require of the non-producers.”* Page 53

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: When leading a group of professionals, I’m always going to make it clear the focus will be on those who want to do well and “Sewer Monkeys” will not be pandered to, will not soak up all the manager’s attention, or even be a welcomed partner in the positive work environment.

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Differentiate or Die by Jack Trout

Marketing Category Book

“That means finding a point of differentiation unique (and meaningful) in their industry. Strategy is choosing to run a different race because it’s the one you’ve set yourself up to win.” Page 34

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: Discover what makes our company special and get that word out to our team members, existing, and potential clients. Emphasize the unique features.

“What makes a company strong is not the product or the service. It’s the position it holds in the mind (of customers).” Page 112

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: I will be focused on earning the right to be top of mind as a credible solution provider in our specialty fields. It’s important that I know my products completely, utilizing knowledge and familiarity, as I’m ready to prove their value from the prospect’s perspective.

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SPIN Selling by Neil Rackham

Sales Category Book

“I realized that my hesitation was that I wasn’t so much buying a product as entering a relationship”.
Page 10

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: Sell the personal value and service I provide to clients along with my product’s solution capabilities. The long range relationship is more important than any initial sale.

“Skilled people receive fewer objections because they have learned objection prevention, not objection handling.” Page 118

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: Anticipate and be prepared to go over the most likely objections early and when possible before the customer brings them up during the sales process. 80% of the time the objections will be something like “too expensive”, “not in the budget” or “don’t need it”.

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Customer Satisfaction is Worthless, Customer Loyalty is Priceless by Jeffery Gitomer

Customer Service Category Book

“You’re fired by the real boss, your customer.” Page 59

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: Keep in mind that the customer is the reason for our work life, not a distraction to it. Build a stronger tolerance for client requests. Treat each client most respectfully because they, in essence, are “THE BOSS”.

“The secret to successful customer service is ... start with ‘YES!’” Page 85

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: I can almost always find a way to fulfill a customer’s need, even if the solution is a bit different than originally anticipated.

To protect your mind from becoming pessimistic and “Sewer Monkey” prone, you can also benefit immensely by inspirational books. (At any given time, I personally like to have one business and one inspirational book in progress.) Depending on my mood when I make time to read, I choose the book that will be most rewarding and helpful.

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The following are some inspirational reading summary examples also for your consideration.

English Standard Version Study Bible

Inspirational Category Book

“Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.” ESV Bible Psalm 139:16

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: *“When something or someone tends to frustrate me, I actually quote Psalm 139:16 to myself and then say to God, “This circumstance is part of Your plan for my life today. Help me to respond in faith and in a God-honoring way to Your providential will. And then please give wisdom to know how to address the situation that tends to cause me frustration.”* Jerry Bridges

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” ESV Bible Ephesians 4:29

“Sewer Monkey” NOT - Life lesson principle learned and applied: The way for me to guard

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myself from subtly becoming a “Sewer Monkey” is to take more time to think before I speak. I need to ask myself, is what I’m about to say just scandalous gossip or demeaning conversation that’s better left unsaid? Is what I’m about to say harmful to the listener to where they will begin to struggle more with the situation or person that is being referred? Is there another way I can change the direction of the conversation so the condition or individual can actually be uplifted or thought of more highly? Finally, are the negative comments necessary right at the moment? If yes, proceed. If no, then change direction.

Right reading = Right mind!

Reading books with substance is an excellent way to improve your mental attitude while preparing you for the work and personal challenges you’ll face in the future. Go for books with a theme that you have a genuine interest in exploring. The proper book will stimulate your thinking, challenge the status quo we begin to accept in our lives, and potentially steer you in a better direction.

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.”

Joseph Addison

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Chapter 7



Encouraging Habits

“A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.”

Herm Albright

“Sewer Monkeys” dislike and will many times flee from intensely successful work cultures that encourage a team to seek a consistently optimistic outlook. The reason is simple. Peer pressure based on principles that contradict pointless negativity squash “Sewer Monkeys” destructive activities and mischievousness.

They become outcasts, non-team players, and are avoided by those who like to win, and consequently lose ears that will listen to their disgusting comments. When peers will address their unwelcomed comments directly, it shuts down much of the out of line depressing input before it can take hold on others. This is why a positive work

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environment is so valuable. It is a tremendously solid and profitable investment of your time to win the battle in, and for, your positive mind.

Be prepared for the driver's seat!

The previous chapter provided suggestions on reading and listening disciplines that can fill your mind with productive ideas and keep you on guard for your mental well-being. You were also provided with an aggressive reading process with a purpose that leads to next steps that you can assertively put into action:

Read Positively – Target Positive Goals – Positively Do - now that's a positive three step process!

This is a great method that allows you to gain control while conditioning your mind so that you're protected, trained, and focused, on practical aspects that encourage and sustain positive growth within your work place.

“A champion needs a motivation above and beyond winning.”

Pat Riley

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It may be hard for you to grasp, but you can help others greatly by your own commitment and self-motivation to be upbeat whenever possible. Common everyday people become champions by influencing others, including “Sewer Monkeys”, with the right approach to their basic day-to-day responsibilities. Your influence either helps or hinders those around you. You can be a huge contributor to a healthy work environment. You are surrounded by many people who struggle with establishing and keeping a positive mindset. The good news is that they are trying, and the better news is that you can become their model for success! A great easy-read book on this subject, *The Fred Factor* by Mark Sanborn, asks a great question, “Do you move your organization closer to or further from its goals?”

Bad attitudes are seen a mile away!

And that’s how far you want bad attitudes away from you, figuratively speaking - a mile away.

As was mentioned earlier, it’s really hard to imagine how we’ve allowed laws in our country to swing so far from the line of common sense reasoning, but there are several established state and federal employment laws that protect “Sewer Monkeys”. Human Resource professionals many times adhere to the idea that “you can’t measure a bad attitude, so don’t even try.”

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Well, one thing is for certain, you know a bad attitude when you see it, right? An easy to remember application when you encounter a bad attitude is to associate it with a foul smell that is invading your nostrils. Why? Merely because that bad attitude is aggressively invading your work environment while also smelling up your healthy mental space.

Nine simple encouraging steps:

You have heard before that helping establish and sustain a positive workplace isn't the sole responsibility of the managers. Everyone in the organization including you should play a part in promoting a constructive workplace. It's amazing how one encouraging word leads to another and ultimately to more positive behavior in the workplace. So give consideration to how you can put these steps into action:

1. Think of others' well being over your own.
2. Be on the lookout for opportunities to point out small and large victories experienced by your co-workers.
3. Find others doing things right and give them credit in front of others.

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4. Remind others of their own positive successes from the past.
5. Ask others specifically for details about how they achieve success, and then listen carefully.
6. Tell others about the victories of their peers.
7. Notify your boss concerning the positive activities and achievements of your peers.
8. Write “thank you” notes to your peers when they do something positive for you.
9. Tell a co-worker how much you appreciate working with them.

“You need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everybody wins.”

Jim Stovall

What a quote with impact! Jim helps professionals and organizations “change their life by changing their mind”. By the way Jim is legally blind and a world-renown author and speaker. He’s positive despite of the challenges he must overcome moment-by- moment. Are you?

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When you gain a reputation of doing positive things, over time, like the nine steps for encouragers on the previous page, you'll become known as a positive team member and a genuine encourager. By the way, not only are these things fun to do, but they help improve your own mental attitude as well. It is amazing that such simple steps can transform people's attitudes and create a workplace you'll truly enjoy. Give it a try!

Chapter 8



When King Kong is a “Sewer Monkey”

“Gentlemen, enlisted men may be entitled to morale problems, but officers are not ... I expect all officers in this department to take care of their own morale. No one is taking care of my morale.”

George Marshall

The quote above is one of my very favorite to deliver during a business speaking or training engagement. It places the ultimate responsibility for a proper mental attitude right where it belongs ... back on the individual. It certainly is a plus when we have a leader who is supportive and encouraging our every step along the way. Chances are, you've had a boss who you enjoyed having around, and he or she really did make a significant difference on how you perceive the workplace and your tasks. That is

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special when your boss really does consider it important to be a positive encourager and coach.

Yet, many times we do not have the luxury of having a boss who consistently practices great leadership skills and really knows how to guide a positive workplace. It's highly likely during our career that we will at one time or another be aligned with a nightmarish leader who can be a bully and seems to get satisfaction in maintaining a negative and "I'm going to get you" culture. This can be very challenging to say the least.

It can be difficult to comprehend how leaders can survive today while wielding a negative outlook. However we must come to grips that even these poor leaders will be allowed to continue to exist if the company goals are consistently met. Think about how successful those leaders would be if they learned a little emotional intelligence. Common knowledge would lead one to believe that leaders who stimulate confidence, not fear or pessimism, are on their way to establishing a trustworthy culture. Unfortunately, creating a positive work experience is not the goal of many managers.

No simple task living near Kong!

It is easy to imagine the original King Kong (1933 version) which portrayed that gigantic island-

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dwelling ape running through the jungle and leaving destruction behind with every stride. Anyone or anything that gets in the way is smashed to its simplest form (except for Fay Wray of course). King Kong loves to hear his voice and watch the fearful reactions of those within ear shot. Likewise, the louder and ruder a “Sewer Monkey” becomes, the more negative the impact on the workplace. There doesn’t seem to be much peace time without havoc, and the more havoc Kong causes, the happier (s)he is. The resulting “what if’s” sometimes cause as much destruction by way of mental anguish as actual damage that is done to the workplace.

Yes, just thinking about the next time King Kong may go on a rampage can be more destructive than the assault itself. The outcome with this sort of abusive culture, other than Kong’s self gratification, is a more intolerable workplace for the majority of the team members including you. Your experience might be a horror movie of its own!

Run for your life or can you?

So what can one do when they are faced with a “Sewer Monkey” who also happens to be in charge? Is there a strategy that can be established to help survive and thrive while dealing directly with a leader who seems to be addicted to destructive leadership tactics? When all seems hopeless, and

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the powers that be seem to be against your well-being, what can you do?

The most drastic step is to flee. It happens all the time. Good and great people leave an organization to escape from the King Kong tactics of a leader who is out-of-control and unleashed. The worker's mental well-being, along with their peace, ultimately becomes more important to them than the compensation, satisfaction and benefits received if they chose to remain with the company who empowers Kong. There are numerous complications you'll face when you select a fleeing strategy.

Thankfully we don't live in a slavery-condoning culture where we must stay with abusive bosses. We can move on regardless of whether our boss is a charming King or a spiteful Kong. Yet, with freedom comes responsibility, yes, even in today's America where accountability and responsibility seem to be virtues of the past and most people don't believe they have to answer for the results of their decisions or action.

Questions beyond wondering if my running shoes are snug and ready!

There are many questions you will want to answer before leaving a workplace. Keep in mind that it is

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far easier to get another job offer while you're still employed. Make sure though that if you do a job search while you're employed, you don't do so on your existing company's time or using their resources.

Are you financially set so you can afford to make the change? Are the adjustments you and others who may rely on your income have to make worth getting rid of the "Sewer Monkey" anxiety you're leaving behind?

Do you lose important benefits that can't easily be replaced? Your vacation time, retirement, health care, and stock options may cause you to experience the golden handcuff syndrome where benefits are so good that you're psychologically chained to your current employer.

Are you willing to let go of, or limit, the friendships and relationships you have with your current work peers? Being associated with special people is also a great benefit of working for an organization. As you've built relationships with your peers, you've established a support group of sorts, and the value of those associations is often overlooked until a change is made and then it's too late.

Will the job switch reflect poorly on your work history? Leaving a job because the boss was unfair or makes you uncomfortable is not a good thing to

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place on a résumé or mention in a job interview. Your work history is an important selling point and while it's in your control, you want to manage your job changes to reflect a move upward when possible; financially and responsibly.

Are you willing to do what it takes to enter into another work environment that may, or may not, be a better workplace? Every workplace has its plusses and minuses. "Sewer Monkeys" lurk and thrive in other hallways as well. What you don't know about a potential employer's workplace can potentially harm you big time. After making a change you might find a different herd of "Sewer Monkeys". What happens if you make a job change and find out you have another King Kong boss?

Less extreme options:

"A boss creates fear, a leader confidence. A boss fixes blame, a leader corrects mistakes. A boss knows all, a leader asks questions. A boss makes work drudgery, a leader makes it interesting."

Russell H. Irving

So if you have a King Kong boss who doesn't practice leadership proficiency and fleeing doesn't appeal to you, there are other options.

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Speak to King Kong's King / Queen!

Losing sleep due to work challenges brought on by a “loose cannon” boss can be tiring and trying at best. You certainly want to win back your sleep and once again enjoy peace of mind. In drastic situations you may feel compelled to seek legal advice and be on a solid foundation when dealing with a boss crisis. Short of that you certainly have a right to speak directly with your boss's superior or your human resource department ... but this approach is potentially lethal and can be career suicide. Of course, the politically correct answer is that you have every right to go to your boss's boss ... but beware.

Self-deception can lead to ghastly results. How many times have you heard or considered “if only the company knew how King Kong was misbehaving they would do something about it”? Sadly, there is an excellent chance the organization already knows or has a general idea of what is going on. Even if you are convinced the company core values don't match the boss's behavior that assessment doesn't ensure that you've got a good case. Think twice before you talk yourself into believing that you're doing all your co-workers a favor by blowing the whistle on the boss. Misleading yourself into building your legacy as a bold and daring individual willing to sacrifice all you have for the good of the team has handed many their own head on a platter.

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One of the last things you want to have take place is that King Kong hears from someone else that you think they are a “Sewer Monkey”. That type of rumor will drive Kong bananas and that won’t help your cause.

Go directly to Kong!

Even though it can be intimidating and initially out of the question, one of the best methods is to ask for time to speak with King Kong in his/her own cage (office). Many times, one-on-one, out of sight, and beyond hearing range from the rest of the team takes the edge off the conversation. Be prepared with a handful of questions for Kong and take notes. Here are some questions to get you thinking in the right direction:

1. What are some things I should improve on, because like you, I want to be as productive and successful as possible?
2. When you’re not pleased with my effort and you call me on it, how would you like me to respond to you?
3. What would you like to see different from me in the workplace?
4. What worries you most about the workplace, or what work issues keep you up at night?

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5. What business book would you recommend I read for professional improvement?
6. What are your top three objectives for us during the next four weeks? I realize you've stated goals lately but I want to fully understand what they are.

This manner of questioning can be disarming and helps King Kong realize that you're serious about your job and career. Asking for an audience and direction from the boss may change how King Kong perceives you after your assertive request.

The session also has the potential to provide you a different perspective of Kong and possibly help you build a new-found tolerance for the unconventional leader. Imagine if your ability to cope with King Kong in the workplace is primarily based on your lack of understanding on what makes Kong tick. Stranger things have happened and it certainly is worth a try. And make sure you take Kong's answers to your questions seriously. Let Kong know of your progress when it's appropriate. Who knows, you might even begin to like the big ape.

Take comments seriously!

Another powerful tool is learning how to limit the force and impact of Kong's words towards you. Listen carefully to what is being said. If there is

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something that is directed specifically at you or your work performance, and the charge has credibility, do whatever is necessary to change your behavior. When Kong's comments are appropriate, you should respect that correctional comment even if the manner in which King Kong delivered the message was savage at best. If the remarks are generic in nature, then remove the sting by not allowing the carelessly flung words to harm you; the thought wasn't properly delivered or accurate at that. Ultimately you want to be in control on what you allow to bother you.

The challenging circumstance you may be faced with involving King Kong won't always be a picnic. However, this hippie ex-rocker puts it well,

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.”

Ambrose Redmoon

Your personal well-being is more important than fear indeed!

Chapter 9



A Few Words for the Leaders in Your Life

“You will find no better way to coach employees on what the new culture must look like than by how you carry yourself”

High-Velocity Culture Change

Recently, after bringing up the “Sewer Monkey” topic while speaking to a group of western state sales leaders, I was asked by a manager in the audience the following question:

“What do you do if the “Sewer Monkey” is your top producer?”

The room was silent for about fifteen seconds (eternity) and then I responded, “Fire them”. That particular manager and the rest of the room of leaders were caught by surprise. After all, top

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performers in many sales work settings get special perks and are excused for non-traditional behavior as long as they continue to produce. Then I proceeded to ask the group a few questions. As the discussion continued they began to understand the reasoning behind my somewhat edgy response. The following questions were used to drive home the point:

- *“Right at this moment, while you’re away at this conference, is the “Sewer Monkey” back in your office supporting your trip as you learn how to improve your business, or are they undermining your efforts?”*
- *“How many people does the “Sewer Monkey” negatively impact on a daily basis? 5? 10? 15? 20? Whatever the number, does this individual producer consistently do the work of say 10 people?”*
- *“How much time do you have to spend each week knowingly, or unknowingly, unwinding negative driven issues in your workplace because of your top producing “Sewer Monkey”?”*
- *“Is your top producing “Sewer Monkey” equally as successful spreading pessimistic ideals to your other team members, and throughout the balance of your entire organization? How does their negative influence reflect back to your customers and your work culture?”*

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By now you should be getting the idea that a “Sewer Monkey” can harm the positive culture, productivity, camaraderie, long-term results, position a tolerating leader (perhaps like you) to eventually lose other productive team members, and run customers away to competitors. Managers who turn their head on a “Sewer Monkey’s” negative influence don’t always recognize the reality that they are risking their entire career, and the professional future of others they lead, by doing so. Such reaction is not the way to lead a team towards a healthy, pro-active and productive culture.

Have you ever noticed that individuals normally don’t resign due to a company’s inherent shortcomings? However, good employees do often quit from the influences, or lack thereof, of a deficient boss. A leader who is slow or remiss to address the negative factors within an organization is neglecting a very important part of their responsibility to those they lead and to their company. Somehow, many leaders underestimate the emotional intellect of their team. Your team members know all too well who the “Sewer Monkeys” are in your office and eyes are wide open in observation of how leaders respond to their disruptive behavior. Initially, as unsettling activities take place, employees will observe how their leaders will react to the negative stench. After a short while they will begin to wonder why “Sewer Monkeys” are given a free pass to continue

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shoveling along their pessimistic garbage and propaganda.

Left undisciplined, many team members will most likely begin to acknowledge the “Sewer Monkey” input as acceptable and true. Imagine the impression on others as that negative influence becomes a stronger factor in molding the work culture than the influences of the assigned leader. When that happens, the culture is in danger of becoming overwhelmed and captive by less productive behavior, pessimistic communication and potential mutiny.

“Sewer Monkeys” breed more “Sewer Monkeys” or they die; they require an audience to succeed as they seek out additional chorus members to sing out their disturbing causes. It’s amazing how unaware many leaders are as their authority and respect levels are undermined by unsupervised activities taking place with their “Sewer Monkeys”. These misguided leaders believe they call the shots, while their embedded “Sewer Monkeys” transform themselves into the unassigned culture builders within the organization. Non-leaders can be incredibly effective at molding their peer’s minds and thinking process. The ultimate fallout rarely matches up to the manager’s principles and standards.

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So what now?

Leaders may finally get to a point where they are not going to take the abusive and rebellious attitudes any longer. At last they come to the conclusion that stronger leadership is necessary to bring back a positive work atmosphere. No longer are they going to allow or encourage “Sewer Monkeys” to nest and flourish in the department. Previous chapters in this book are loaded with action steps that you as a peer or as the leader can take to address the challenge. The proper method is to implement hard-hitting activities to address the philosophical hostile takeover that was allowed to develop. Encouraging those you lead to get personally involved to win back control of the culture and drive out the negative influences is a key first step to this process.

It not easy to address the smart “Sewer Monkeys” who arrive to work on time, follow company procedures, do their job and toe the line on workplace policies. There is a need to make it clear that tangible and non-tangible contributions become a standard part of the assessment process. Human Resource experts can help provide the roadmap to do this appropriately.

Here are recommendations that we designed to aggressively address the challenges in the workplace:

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- Declare war on “Sewer Monkeys”.
- Consistently award your team member’s positive attitudes and behavior.
- Ignore the “Sewer Monkeys” by shifting their time that was traditionally tying up the leader dealing with discipline items, to those on their team who want the leader’s time so they can learn more to positively succeed on a daily basis.
- Educate their team on how to deal with “Sewer Monkeys” themselves by providing others a copy of this book, additional positive thinking books, and/or ideas that encourage them to do the right things that lead towards improving the workplace environment.
- Leaders must make sure they avoid “Sewer Monkey” talk by not speaking negatively about other departments, leaders, or the corporate office, in front of their team members.
- Leaders need to endure and stay committed to the moment-by-moment cause. They must be perceived as leaders with strength who encourage positive success, and consistently reward upbeat performances in individual and group settings.

A very critical point is that leaders must make it safe for their team members to go against the previously acceptable flow. With a war on winning

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back a positive culture, those supporting the program will initially experience verbal attacks and backlash from the “Sewer Monkeys”. Leaders must understand the peer pressure realities and protect those who need confirmation. Leaders must also keep the following in mind in workplace settings that have “Sewer Monkey” issues:

“The old culture is designed to protect itself, not to bring about its own demise.”

High-Velocity Culture Change

Embracing a “must win” agenda requires consistency to the processes and ideas that can help overcome the powerfully negative “Sewer Monkey” influences. When negative behavior is replaced with positive ways it becomes addictive in a sense for most everyone else; it’s a wonderful experience when the positive momentum overcomes the negative nonsense.

As you’ve been contemplating these principles, I have no doubt that you’ve wondered if it is really possible to reduce or eradicate the influence brought on by “Sewer Monkeys”. Absolutely! The great news is that it can begin immediately.

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How important is hiring/training?

Encourage your manager to make a pledge to exclusively hire people with positive attitudes. We can always train people with work and behavior skill sets that advance a positive platform, but it's a tremendous challenge to alter a "Sewer Monkey's" naturally sour attitude. When you stop to consider the consequences, it's amazing how many problems could be avoided with the right hiring process. How often have we set ourselves up for ongoing issues that are detrimental to the department by a poor hiring decision? Ask your managers what attributes they look for to measure an applicant's positive or negative attitude. Encourage your managers to ask applicants how they personally keep a positive attitude each day. Seek examples of what the applicant does to keep in the right frame of mind during the workday. By listening carefully to the response, your managers will be on the alert for the best hire for your positive culture. When an organization is checking references, they should ask for ways the applicant had a positive impact on the other team members where they were previously employed. If the answer is unimpressive, that is a warning sign to pass on that particular person. When your company gets in the habit of bringing positive people on board, everyone wins. The positive culture improves by hiring one good person at a time.

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Help your company see the value of a hiring process that is committed to making sure interviews focus on “company fit” issues. People who are positive will fit well in a positive work environment. Those with a bad attitude are a deterrent to maintaining a reasonably and sensibly optimistic culture. Some companies use an introductory training program that immediately helps instill productive company values. Low tolerance expectation levels for “Sewer Monkey” shenanigans should be established, and clearly articulated to the newcomers, so they realize early on that there are penalties to those that decide not to adhere to the company’s value system. How about this??? There are a few companies that offer new employees \$2,000 to quit during the initial couple of months if they can’t commit to being a positive part of the work culture by upholding the institute’s core values - Ritz Carlton and zippo.com to name two! How’s that for getting a message to everyone in a work group? The \$2,000 ante may be a very low price to pay versus the damage a “Sewer Monkey” can create with a company. Are you and your company committed to positive core values to the point that you will hire and fire by those types of ideals?

There are souls in this world which have the gift of finding joy everywhere and of leaving it behind them when they go.

Frederick Faber

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Chapter 10



A Few Final Thoughts

“If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm.”

Vince Lombardi

After reading over 120 pages on the “Sewer Monkey” subject, it’s time to pause and evaluate yourself once again. Are you mentally and seriously prepared to put the “Sewer Monkey” monsters that are in your life in their proper place? Have you been convinced that ongoing negative input has an impact on your attitude too? Have you thought of the consequences of others viewing you as a “Sewer Monkey”? Do you acknowledge that many times it’s easier to endure those with negative attitudes than it is to confront them head-on and potentially harm the relationship? Do you believe your known association with a “Sewer Monkey” can bring harm to your career and impact other personal relationships? These are tough, but necessary, questions for you to consider.

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There is spectacular advice within this one liner:

“No life is so hard that you can't make it easier by the way you take it.”

Ellen Glasgow

There come certain meaningful moments that can literally have tremendous impact and change one's life. Carried out properly, the skill sets in this book can have you well on your way to a more positive attitude in the workplace and at home. By implementing your own self-improvement strategy, you can raise your value to any company. Positive thinking leads the way to productive behavior and boosts productivity, your mental health, and perhaps even your physical health.

Ultimately, the inspiration and motivation to make progress against the “Sewer Monkeys” in your life must come from within you. You're at a crossroads now that you've selected and researched the subject by reading through this book. Now you need to give some thought as to how important you think it is to control the negative input that you're exposed to on a daily basis.

How much of your time each week do you imagine is influenced negatively by “Sewer Monkeys”? Work out a plan to reduce or eliminate their manipulative tactics. In addition to their physical

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presence, as they speak directly to you, keep in mind phone calls, emails, tweeter messages, and other technology that “Sewer Monkeys” use to pass along their pessimistic propaganda. Take the appropriate steps to limit the assault.

A unique kind of Affirmative Action!

Excellent communication is imperative to your organization and it’s also important to you. Since people have a short attention span, make an effort to control the vast majority of your comments by making them from a positive perspective. Aim to be upbeat whenever possible so you earn the reputation of being a supportive team member and nothing at all like the company “Sewer Monkeys”. Encourage others by your speech and actions. When someone makes a negative comment, think of a positive comment to give back in response. You want people in the workplace to think of you as a positive and upbeat team member. This will help you more than you may think.

How discourteous and rude it is when a “Sewer Monkey” will impose their negative views on us! Is it possible that our own do-nothing-about-it tolerance level has welcomed the negative input? The “Sewer Monkey” virus comes along as a silent positive attitude killer and it cleverly overtakes us if we aren’t on the watch. It’s usually not an attitude that we immediately, knowingly or unknowingly,

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chose or select. Sometimes we become victims even if we wouldn't normally subscribe to their viewpoint and stinky values.

This book is sounding the alarm and provides positive solutions for those who are interested. "Sewer Monkey" compromise and hypocrisy can easily ooze into our thinking. It can rub off on us, and its effects can't easily be avoided or washed away. The "Sewer Monkey's" subtle and seductive words can be extremely effective in a bad way. The result is that we can stumble right along with them if we're mentally careless.

Eventually we can find ourselves accepting the depressing outlook on an otherwise bearable situation. We lose the mental and moral muscle to resist the urge to start believing we deserve more from our boss, more from our company, a broader fairness in a given situation, or even entitlement attitudes about our family members when things are actually OK. This is called resentment, a positive attitude killer.

What do we deserve anyway?

Why should we expect that everything is fair in life? Some of our greatest moments and victories in life come after what appears to have been undeserving circumstances. Left unchecked, "woe is us"

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attitudes can influence us to the point where our work integrity and effectiveness begins to slip. We begin to grasp for external excuses while we stifle solutions that we are capable of implementing. In place of developing resolutions we can find ourselves wallowing in the sewer of despair and non-productive pity parties.

Misperception can be more powerful than reality. At times it seems we are hopelessly programmed to see life from a pessimistic viewpoint even when we'd rather not. This can unconsciously lead us into our own "Sewer Monkey" cage where we undoubtedly become one of those creatures ourselves. You hear creative words like "differentiation" or "worker's rights" to describe a situation. It paints a picture in such a way in which the traditional company is positioned to lose its authority or ability to watch out for the common good of the masses for the organization as a whole. Our self-centered society has subtly shifted from an "all for one and one for all" worldview to "all for me and me equals all".

Undermined syndrome!

Once you think about it, you will get the drift of how "Sewer Monkeys" can get their claws into your thinking process. If we aren't careful, we'll begin to think that the non-productive negative thinking atmosphere is natural and arguably necessary. The damage can be done just by distorting the perceived

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intent of the circumstances around you. Distorting truth has been a sad practice for mankind since Adam and Eve. Today there is a large dose of tolerance cultivating a mood which allows flagrant nonsense or error to be stated without challenge and then ultimately led to be believed as true. This keeps the work culture and us vulnerable to attack without recourse. A decisive point causing stress for you, your organization, leader, co-worker, or family member is having their perceived image tarnished. Even an organization's, or individual's, compelling feature can become an unguarded front that can be easily dismantled to destroy their perceived worth. Once someone's image is tainted by a negative attack that takes away their good reputation, other problems will arise for the victim. Plus it can be a hard and dismal road to recovery.

Survey jungle!

We are a culture that has a fixation on surveys and statistics. Entire books are published based on surveys and their results. I find myself being influenced by the outcome or perceived story which is drawn from number crunching. In spite of that, we all realize that assumptions can conceal the real picture of what is going on around us.

Out of curiosity, I placed the following question on LinkedIn.com, currently a very popular business

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social network. I received 157 unique responses (each person could respond only once).

“My company holds employees accountable for their poor or negative attitudes that are detrimental to others in the workplace.”

36% Yes

33% Sometimes

23% No, wish they would

7% No, you can't measure attitude

Some interesting comments were posted on the online message board providing a wide range of opinions on the “Sewer Monkey” subject. Here are some unedited comments that you'll find interesting.

“Organizations that struggle with poor attitudes usually deal with a poor organizational culture. There will always (be) those that disagree with organizational direction, but if the culture is crafted to deal with disagreement, it can have a positive outcome.”

Mary Jurkonis
Sales Agent
Dickson Realty

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“I believe there is a positive and productive way to handle every situation. A “Sewer Monkey” will always be a “Sewer Monkey” and work hard at destroying all positive people that you have. I really believe that at this day and time when jobs are at a lower number, we need personality adjustments even more, if we want to be productive as a group. I don’t believe it is ever too late to change “who you” are to be a winner in business or your personal life.”

Renee Quietmeyer

Marketing Director Upper Shore Pubs.

Chesapeake Publishing & Printing

“We probably take it to the extreme, but there just isn’t any room for negative attitudes and ego-driven posturing in the work we do. In helping other companies change in that way is a large part of what we do.”

Mark M Stacey

Executive Ops & Rev. Development Expert

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“Whether positive or negative, attitude can be difficult to objectively evaluate, but it is usually demonstrated by behavior. I've found that behavior can more easily be identified and managed.”

Randall Brant

Sales and Marketing Executive

“Attitude relates more to a person’s disposition or feelings, too subjective to address as a performance issue in today’s business environment. However, any resulting poor behaviors or actions can and should be dealt with as soon as possible.”

Diane Hanson

Advertising Operations Manager

The Press Enterprise

“This is a difficult HR issue, many folks when confronted with this charge will claim you are attacking their personalities, they will say, ‘It’s who I am.’”

Dan Patio Dalton

Executive Vice President

Content That Works

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“According to the British, the Founding Fathers had a bad attitude. According to the Chinese government, any independent thinker has a bad attitude. According to the inquisitors, Galileo has a bad attitude. A bad attitude can be very constructive or destructive. It is not the attitude; it is the result.”

Bill Tanner

Senior Director Strategic Research

The Dallas Morning News

My primary client is a very successful auto dealer. The owner and his management staff create an atmosphere that breeds positive attitudes and actions. When they see a problem, they address it, they do not simply let the person go, they first try to get buy in from the individual. Generally employees will leave on their own if they don't like the environment. The owner is very clear about his expectations making it easy for his staff to support his goals.

Scott Titensor

Owner

Automotive Advertising

Planet of the Sewer Monkeys

Overcoming Negative People in Your Life

“I see this played out in many different ways, I think the most successful will have a culture that encourages and allows opinions, but will not tolerate bad attitudes that can literally border on insubordination! I believe the best way to deal with this is education. Educate the organization on how to value diverse ideas and opinions and that will take a lot of the "attitude" out of the equation. Have an educational process that puts attitude in its place.”

Darrell Kunken

The Sacramento Bee

“Positive attitudes are reflected in the internal environment and the external communications. It is vital to the success of the organization. Poor or bad attitudes have the direct opposite impact. The employee with an "attitude" needs to understand the impact of their actions. Management needs to work with that employee to change the attitude or more drastic measures need to be taken. Every effort should be made to improve and/or address the situation.”

Phil Booth

Senior Executive in Sales and Marketing

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“We’ve probably all heard, ‘Don’t judge the attitude, judge the performance’. Wrong! If you believe that, read the book Monday Morning Leadership, which discusses what happens when you let ONE bad-attitude, a problematical employee stay on board. Obviously you must go through due process these days, but you can’t live with poor/negative attitudes in any department! It starts with the hiring process. Dig deep to try and determine do you have not only a knowledgeable person here, but someone who will fit the culture of your team ... someone with a sense of humor, that will help both in the office and in the field.

Doc Croucher

Marketing Director, BCI Communications

“I would define someone with a bad attitude as a person who always sees the problem but can never identify a solution. People who think differently from me are not people with bad attitudes, people who complain about the way things are and do nothing to solve the "problem" are people with bad attitudes. People who forge change by disrupting the status quo are not people with bad attitudes - they are innovators. Managers who can

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channel potentially harmful attitudes by empowering their staff with the ability to effect change will find a productive and successful environment where people will look forward to coming to work.”

Debbie Stremmel
General Manager

You can see by the insightful comments above that there is much to consider when it comes to “Sewer Monkey” issues in contrast to the importance of having a positive work environment.

Preserve a positive culture, you win!

Just how important is it for you to protect your professional culture and personal way of life? How about the following philosophy:

When you get the culture around you right, most everything else falls into place!

It becomes much easier to go to work, personal life is simplified, and it’s likely you’ll spend most of your thinking and down time on mostly positive and productive things. This is another reason why it’s to your advantage to seize control of the impact

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that “Sewer Monkeys” have on your life. No longer do you have to be held captive by the drivers of smelly attitudes. Why be forced to work in an environment where “Sewer Monkeys” are allowed to speak with words that have the potential to stain the hearer?

When positive attitudes are nurtured, *what* an impact it has on an organization’s goals and others who touch those companies! Loyalty-oriented customer service becomes the norm, team work between peers abounds, and accomplishments are celebrated more often. Work life won’t be perfect, but it will be superior. It’s like obtaining the brass ring on a merry-go-round, or being the holder of the winning lottery ticket. Imagine a group of workers who have an obsession to help in the success of their organization, each other, and customers! That’s first-class!

Do you choose to live in the slums that are associated with a “Sewer Monkey” infestation, or do you choose to enjoy the riches that come with a winning positive attitude? Do you want to be a self-driven leader or a victim? Who is ultimately responsible for developing and sustaining your positive attitude?

You, my friend!

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About the Author

Gary Moore is Insight Edge, Inc. President and co-founder along with his oldest son Eric. Insight Edge has worked with over 1,000 companies nationwide. They provide a broad range of training, advertising consulting services, marketing support strategies, executive search and Net University an e-learning 24/7 sales training service.

Gary has 35 years of newspaper, television and digital advertising experience. In addition to Insight Edge responsibilities, this past decade Gary has served as the interim Vice President Advertising for The Dallas Morning News (2002-2003) and the following year interim ad director for Quick (130,000 circulation free daily) and Al Dia (a Spanish daily) for the Belo Corporation. He also served as interim ad director for the Victoria Advocate (Tx 2006), VP Advertising Verticals and Interactive Dallas Morning News (2008), VP Advertising for the Press Enterprise (Riverside, California, 2008) and Chief Revenue Officer for the Victoria Advocate (TX 2009).

Prior to establishing Insight Edge, he was Advertising Director of the San Diego Union-Tribune. Before that he spent ten years with McClatchy Newspapers including Sr. Vice President of The Newspaper Network, Classified, National, and Retail Manager of The Sacramento Bee and Ad Director of The Modesto Bee. He also served as Classified Director at newspapers in Houston, West Los Angeles, and Oceanside, California.

Gary is the only sales executive to receive both the Howard Grothe Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the California Newspaper Advertising Executive Association and the Dick MacDonald Lifetime Achievement Classified Award. He has served as President of the California Classified Advertising Executive's Association, Vice President of the California Newspaper Advertising Executive's Association North and numerous committee and board activities with the California Newspaper Publisher's Association and Newspaper Association of America. He is a regular speaker nationwide on media ad sales and management topics. For the past seven years he has also served as the co-dean of the annual New York State Broadcasters Association Sales School.

Gary's best friend for the past 37 years is his wife, Ann. He dedicates this book and his career to her faithfulness as a loving wife and mother. They live in the San Diego area and have eleven children and (as of this writing) eleven grandchildren. This book is also dedicated to his mom, the best writer on the planet.
