

# adopt a winning attitude



Prepare yourself. No matter what you have achieved or how many glowing compliments you've been given, it's not unusual the evaluation to be a shock, particularly in the first year or two. The key to emerging with a stronger bond with the board is to be ready.

Before the meeting where your evaluation will be presented or the first meeting after you have read your evaluation, take a few moments to yourself to assume "The Attitude".

## **Begin with reminders**

Tell yourself that the way your board members see things can be very different and even difficult to understand. In general, unless they are very experienced, they cannot truly comprehend what you have faced, what you have overcome or the magnitude of your accomplishments.

Their viewpoints can be very narrow and focused on issues important to them or their neighbors or friends. One or more might subscribe to the notion that no one is perfect and it is a duty to point out ways you can improve. Another may take your major achievements for granted and spend the majority of the meeting time talking about minor or even irrelevant issues. If they are competitive they might try to out-do each other with "helpful" suggestions or demonstrate how much more they know about what you do. Nearly always you will leave wondering where something came from.

## **Establish your mindset**

What is absolutely essential is that you accept, internalize, and anticipate these very real

possibilities and that you are prepared to react positively effectively, to your benefit. Remind yourself that it will be natural to want to defend yourself and even counter each point, but you do not want to appear defensive. Sarcasm would be not only foolish, but disrespectful. Above all, you must not allow yourself to become argumentative.

Your goal is to gracefully accept any criticism, whether fair or unfair, and to display grace and professionalism and a sincere desire to meet your board's expectations.

## **Take notes and stay in control**

Have a pen and paper ready because surprising remarks can be disorienting. You not only want to remember key points, you want to convey to them that what they say is very important to you.

Do your best to convey interest and acceptance in your facial expressions. Be aware of your body language; lean forward and show them that you are sincere, actively involved and listening. Make eye contact; but never roll your eyes. Ask for clarifications to be sure you understand. Respond positively with comments such as "I didn't realize that" or "that's helpful because I was unaware".

## **You can do it**

If you are prepared and resolved to manage your emotions and your responses, you have the potential to turn an unpleasant situation into an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to meet the board's expectations as well as earn respect and appreciation.

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