



Give People Time to Enjoy the Win

Description

As leaders, we know that praise, compliments, and “thank-yous” are important for many reasons. They fill people’s emotional bank accounts. They improve engagement and morale. Also, they build confidence and momentum so the employee will keep the good work coming. What gets recognized gets repeated.

But sometimes, if we’re not careful, we can suck the life out of the compliment by rushing through those good feelings and focusing on the next task too quickly.

Here’s an example. A person works for an organization and is very talented. He writes his supervisor a nice note showing some increase in social media views. With good intentions, the person’s leader replies, “That’s good (the views), but how do we build revenue with these views?”—a good thought.

My suggestion is to let the person enjoy the positive progress in views. Then, in a few weeks or so, say, “Great job on the views. Now that you have the views up, take some time to look at ways to optimize the views to increase revenue. Again, great job increasing the views.” Let the person enjoy the win.

To clarify, there is nothing wrong with asking what’s next or how to leverage a win. It’s a good question. In fact, it’s the leader’s job. But maybe it’s a conversation for another time.

I am fortunate to work with many executives. These are very results-oriented people with urgency in their DNA. A trait they need to be sensitive to is closing a positive message with a message that can reduce the positive.

When an email or video message goes out to the workforce about the excellent progress being made, end with a thank-you. Be careful not to rush to the close: “And I know we can do better. Let’s not rest on our laurels.” Please do not interpret this as “don’t say those things.” My message is one of timing.

Let people enjoy the moment. We are in the midst of college football. When a team wins, they celebrate on the field and really celebrate in the locker room. There is dancing, singing, recognition. The coach lets the team enjoy the victory. Yes, they will soon start preparing for the next game—but

not right away.

What if as soon as the team went into the locker room, the coach said, “That game is over; let’s get ready for the next game”? The players’ excitement would be drained. Let people enjoy the moment. As a leader, the timing of the message can be as important as the message itself.

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