



ARE YOU USING INITIATIVE WITH CONFIDENCE?

Whether I'm coaching clients applying for new positions, exploring opportunities in changing careers or coaching people within their workplace, there are two positive qualities that stand out as being, not only important and positive, but very empowering too. They are also two qualities that are often missing and which most employers and leaders in positive work environments look for more of in their staff. When recruiting, regardless of the position or the age of the candidates, these qualities are also sought after.

Those two qualities are initiative and confidence. The dictionary defines INITIATIVE as "the ability to act independently and with a fresh approach; the power or opportunity to act before other people do; a new development or approach to a problem."

CONFIDENCE is defined as "faith in someone or something; a positive feeling gained from a belief in your own ability to do things well; a feeling of certainty about something."

Synonyms for confidence are: assertiveness, self-belief. Synonyms for initiative are: resourcefulness, imagination, ingenuity, creativity.

Of course, having these two qualities goes much further than our working lives. Confidence and initiative play a big role in our private and community lives too.

It's perhaps a chicken and egg situation. Which comes first - Confidence or Initiative? It's different for different people and I know that both are able to be learnt and success breeds more success. One will naturally follow the other no matter where you start. It doesn't matter if you are extroverted or introverted. Confidence and initiative will be demonstrated in very different, but equally effective, ways.

Being confident is being able to share an idea with one or more people, to make that phone call, to stand up in front of a group or to speak at a small meeting, to try something that you haven't done before, to travel to a new place, to apply for a job outside your comfort zone, to go to university, to start a business, to close a business that's not working, to compliment or thank someone, to handle conflict, to take up a new sport or interest, to start a new relationship or end one that's not working, to walk into a crowded room, to move to another state or country. The list is endless.

Some of us will be more naturally confident and comfortable in our own skins whilst, for others, opening themselves up to the possibility of being authentically confident can be more challenging for a wide variety of real or perceived positive or negative life and work experiences.

Some of the many strategies that I have used in my many years of coaching, take only a couple of minutes to learn and put in place; others require much more time and commitment. I have seen how positively life opens up for clients who embrace confidence as part of their personal development.

Some people are very happy to simply do the work required of them and every workplace needs such people. Others like to push the boundaries and implement new ideas. Proactive, competitive businesses and organisations will also welcome initiative and confidence in the employees who display those qualities.

Think how fantastic you feel when a suggestion you make at work is taken up and works! Your self-confidence receives a real boost. On the other hand, you are more likely to make the suggestion in the first place when you have good self-belief and confidence that your suggestion will work even before you suggest it. Chicken and egg!

Your work and life will take on much more meaning and a sense of purpose and fulfilment when you are doing work you enjoy and where you are actively engaged at whatever your comfort level, rather than being a spectator in your own life.

Many people who complain and feel disempowered at work overlook how they, themselves, are contributing to that disempowerment by not being fully committed – by not using their initiative – their resourcefulness, creativity, imagination and ingenuity when there are opportunities within the scope of their job to do so.

If you see others receiving accolades and acknowledgement at work and would also like that level of engagement, look at how you can use your initiative to create win/win situations in your workplace.

On the other hand, if your confidence is being eroded through others in your workplace either taking credit for your ideas and initiatives or constantly refusing to listen to your ideas, perhaps it's time to start considering other ideas and options. We are all happiest in work where our natural talents, as well as our developed skills, knowledge, motivators and values are fully engaged.