WARM FUZZIES

Focus: Communication, Motivation

Time: 10 minutes

Objectives:

1. Recognize the importance of positive feedback
2. Understand the links between positive feedback, motivation, and positive behavior

Materials needed (optional):

- Sandpaper
- Cotton balls

Introduction:

Lord Chesterfield advised: “Make a person like him or herself a little better and I promise that he/she will like you very well indeed.” Adults need to know how they are doing in a work or learning situation. Additionally, good managers and instructors know that when people feel good about their performance they are more likely to repeat that type of behavior. The important principles of good feedback are: immediacy (feedback given immediately, or as soon as possible, after positive behavior occurs), specificity (feedback should be specific to the positive behavior; i.e. “your attention to detail on that report was impressive,” vs. “impressive job on that report”), solicit repeat of positive behavior, affirmation of overall performance.

Directions:

1. Distribute one cotton ball and a piece of the sandpaper to each participant.
2. Ask each participant to rub the sandpaper on one of their cheeks and to note the sensation. Repeat on the opposite cheek with the cotton ball.
3. Ask each participant to pair up with another individual.
4. Direct them to take turns praising (giving warm fuzzies) their partner for 30 seconds. The praise should be work related.
5. Ask participants to contrast the physical feelings of the sandpaper and cotton ball with the feelings experienced when one receives positive and negative feedback.
6. Use the discussion questions below to facilitate a follow-up discussion.

Discussion Questions:

1. How often do you offer positive feedback to your employees? Colleagues?
2. How often do you hear others doing it?
3. How often do you receive positive feedback? How do you feel?

4. What do you think employee expectations are for positive feedback?

5. Why do you think many managers/employees do not give positive feedback to employees/colleagues?

6. How can you change this?