

Are Small Opportunities Worthwhile?

Exercise

Description

As you read in the related article, taking advantage of seemingly small opportunities allows you to increase your influence. Let's take a look at influence itself, and consider more ways you can maximize it for greater success in your relationships, projects, career and life!

Situations

This activity can be used by anyone who needs to influence others more effectively, such as

- senior managers involved in changing the culture of the organization;
- managers trying to introduce different ways of working;
- individuals hoping to influence policies and practices.

Objectives

- To identify some of the skills and qualities needed to influence others.
- To recognize the negative and positive aspects of influence.
- To develop strategies for acquiring and/or improving the skills/qualities needed for effectively influencing others.

For the Trainer:

Method

1. Ask the participants to think about someone they feel has greatly influenced them, or others, in a favorable or unfavorable way. This could be a famous person (Margaret Thatcher, Mikhail Gorbachev, a film star, etc.) or someone close to them (a parent, partner, friend, etc). Then ask participants to brainstorm the qualities, skills and behaviors demonstrated by the people who influenced them favorably followed by the same exercise for those who influenced them unfavorably.

For example:

Favorable: example, encouragement, etc.

Unfavorable: fear, power, etc.

Lead a discussion on the differences and similarities displayed by both groups and what this tells us about influence.

2. Divide participants into small groups and ask them individually to complete the Spheres of Influence table. Instruct them to discuss and share areas/situations when they succeeded in influencing and how it felt. Also discuss and share areas/situations when they failed to influence and how that felt. Record (on a flipchart) common feelings in both successful and failed influencing situations.

Bring participants together and ask each group to report back on their discussions, using their flipcharts. Follow this with a discussion on common areas and sharing of key learning gained from this exercise.

3. Produce a checklist of Do's and Don'ts of influencing. You may wish to have the list reproduced as a handout for the participants.

My Spheres of Influence

My family/friends My work colleagues Others

When I

influence or have influenced

How I

influence or have influenced

Why I

influence or have influenced

Where I

influence or have influenced