

Activity 16

Influencing the state of others

Purpose

To give participants an insight into the importance of influencing the states of others.

FOR PREVIEW ONLY
NOT FOR TRAINING

Activity 16

Influencing the state of others

Introduction

Great leaders have the ability to influence the states of others – to have them feeling brave, determined, appreciated – whatever is appropriate to the situation. This activity gives the participants some insights into how to do this.

Purpose

To give participants an insight into the importance of influencing the states of others.

Application

This activity is relevant at any time in a Leadership Development programme. It follows on logically from *Activity 15 Managing your own state*, and is a good precursor to any activities about influencing skills (*Activities 17 to 23*).

This activity is also useful as a part of training courses on Influencing Skills, Management Skills, and Managing Change.

What happens

Participants work in groups to identify the characteristics of the radiators (people who make us feel good) and the drains (people who make us feel bad). They then apply these ideas to identify ways they can put their own team into more resourceful states. Finally, the participants practise changing the state of a group with just a few simple words.

Time

Overall time required: 1 hour 20 minutes

- The radiators and the drains: 35 minutes
- Leaders as state changers: 15 minutes
- Just a few words will do it: 30 minutes

Materials & resources

- 2 Handout masters:
 - 16.1** *Ways to make your people feel good*
 - 16.2** *Changing states with words*
- 1 Trainer's brief:
 - 16.3** *State cards*
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- Marker pens for trainer
- Paper and pens for participants
- Thin card

In preparation

Photocopy **Trainer's brief 16.3 State cards**, on to thin card and cut the cards out ready for the 'Just a few words will do it' exercise. You will need one card per participant.

How do I do it?



TRAINER'S TIP

If you are giving people the message that their state affects other people, it is clear that your state will affect the participants on this course! Pay particular attention to your emotional state during this activity.

THE RADIATORS AND THE DRAINS

Introduce the topic by asking participants if they know anyone like this: As soon as you start talking to them they will start to moan, complain and generally tell you how awful things are. Suggest that these people are drains, because they drain energy and enthusiasm from other people around them. After just a few minutes in their company, you start to feel depressed.

Most participants are familiar with this kind of person. Now ask them if they know anyone who generally gets them to feel upbeat and positive? We call these people radiators, because they radiate energy and enthusiasm. This is less common but most participants will have met people who do this at least some of the time. Explain that, although

each individual ultimately decides what state they will be in, other people can have an effect. What do the drains do to make people feel bad and what do the radiators do to help people to feel good?

Divide the participants into small groups. Ask half the groups to work on what the drains do to make people feel bad and the other half to work on what the radiators do to help people to feel good. Allow about 10 minutes and then ask for feedback from each group. This exercise should take no longer than 35 minutes.

LEADERS AS STATE CHANGERS

Now tell the participants the bad news – that some of the time they are drains. Watch out for rueful admissions of guilt at this point! Explain that you are telling them this not to make them feel guilty and bad but to make the point that we all have the capacity to make people around us feel good or bad. If you want to be a leader, you're more likely to be successful if you find ways to make people feel good.



Distribute Handout 16.1

Ways to make your people feel good

Ask the participants to work in pairs to complete the exercise on the handout and remind them that they have 10 minutes for this.

JUST A FEW WORDS WILL DO IT

Explain that being a leader isn't just about making people feel good. Sometimes a leader needs to get people to feel brave, or determined, or passionate, or angry or a host of other states.



Distribute Handout 16.2

Changing states with words

Ask participants to read the handout and then to share other examples of how they have personally experienced a change of state as a result of what someone else has said.

Make the point that they too have this ability to change the states of others, using just a few words. Explain that they are now going to practise doing this. Give each participant one of the cards you have prepared from **Trainer's brief 16.3 State cards**. Ask them to read their card, without revealing it to the others.

Now, each participant in turn must imagine that they are starting a team meeting. Using only a sentence or two, they must put everyone else in the state written on their card. When they have finished, the rest of the group must guess what state they were trying to elicit.

Conclude by asking every participant to sum up what they have learned in this session.

Allow a total of 30 minutes for this exercise.

Ways to make your people feel good

Here's a list of ways to make people feel good.

First, go through the list and tick any methods you personally have used in the past week. Then, go through the list again and tick any methods you could use in the future.

Add any ideas of your own. You have 10 minutes to complete the exercise.

	This week	In the future
1. Tell them they've done a good job		
2. Send them a handwritten note to thank them		
3. Send them an e-mail to thank them, copied to their boss and their boss's boss		
4. Tell their boss they've done a good job		
5. Ask their boss to thank them or send them a note		
6. Send a note of appreciation to their home address		
7. Give them a small gift – flowers, gift token, and so on		
8. Buy all the team a small gift		
9. Take the team out and pay for their lunch		

Continued ...



16.1

Ways to make your people feel good

... continued

	This week	In the future
10. Put something about the person or team on the notice board		
11. Have a picture taken of them and put in the office/meeting room		
12. Let them go home early		
13. Find opportunities to praise your people in front of visiting customers		
14. Start a team newsletter and feature individual team members		
15. Give special assignments to people who deserve them		
16.		
17.		
18.		





Changing states with words

This handout is about the way words can change states. When you have read it, think of examples from your own personal experience of how someone you know has used words to change states.

All great leaders are adept at influencing the mental and emotional states of others. One way of doing this is to reframe the situation – to show people a different way of looking at things.

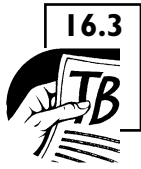
Just before the battle of Agincourt, Henry V's nobles were lamenting the fact that they were outnumbered five to one by the French foe 'What a pity that there are men back in England who are doing nothing today and who could be helping us in this battle'.

Henry interrupted his nobles and reframed the situation 'If we are fated to lose, then we all die anyway; but if we are fated to win "the fewer the men, the greater the share of honour"'. He then went on to make one of the most inspirational leadership speeches in history, the Saint Crispian Day speech. The basic theme was that any Englishman who isn't here today to share in the glory of defeating the French against such great odds will regret it for the rest of his life.

This speech so inspired Churchill that he asked Laurence Olivier to make a film of Shakespeare's *Henry V* as a morale booster during the Second World War.

When giant Proctor & Gamble muscled into the paper-based consumer business, Scott Paper, then the market leader, resigned itself to second place, but Kimberley Clark rose to the challenge. How did CEO Darwin Smith motivate his troops? By pointing out that it was a blessing to have such a powerful competitor as P&G because it would force Kimberley Clark to become an outstanding company if it was to survive. Did this tactic work? During his tenure as CEO, Kimberley Clark's shares performed 4.1 times better than the general stock market, beating both Scott Paper and P&G in terms of shareholder value.

Reframing is one way of changing other people's state, painting vivid images in their minds is another – as Martin Luther King did with his 'I have a dream' speech.



State cards

Happy	Worried	Appreciated
Angry	Excited	Grateful
Curious	Determined	Relaxed
Confused	Brave	Relieved

