

THE APPRECIATE LEADER - CREATING CHANGE WITHOUT A BUDGET

A leadership article written by Gervase R. Bushe Ph.D.
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Gervase Bushe is a Professor in the Faculty of Business at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver and works in association with [performgroup](#) and our business partner, Apis Consulting Group. Gervase has published extensively in the areas of leadership and organisational change. He published a book titled Clear Leadership in 2001.

Earlier this year, Gervase published an inspiring article called the Appreciate Leader which is about a very different leadership paradigm where the focus shifts from problem solving to solutions. Leaders who practice the Appreciate Process are constantly looking for instances of where things are going right and then finding ways to amplify these.

Instead of criticising and punishing, the Appreciative Leader praises and rewards. Bushe suggests that by managing people through appreciative processes, leaders can use less energy and have a more positive impact on motivation levels.

His position is that we are all heirs to a 'deficit mindset' and our society trains us to see the glass half empty. My experience in management is that we are very 'gap' oriented. Comparing the 'ideal' to current performance immediately puts us in a 'not good enough' frame of mind.

Over time this creates a Pygmalion effect: 'you are what you believe you are'. This in turn damages self esteem and creates what Bushe refers to as 'pervasive sense of inferiority'. He rightly stresses that you can't create a climate of continuous learning and improvement in a problem oriented culture. Bushe's Appreciative Leadership framework consists of four steps which help leaders see and amplify positive social realities.

APPRECIATIVE LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK Seeing and Amplifying Positive Social Realities

1. The Appreciative Mind-Set

The point Bushe makes is that using the Appreciative process will lead to a bias of seeing the best in people and invariably the best is what you get – WE GET MORE OF WHATEVER WE PAY ATTENTION TO. He stresses that we should let go of the deficit mindset and start to see

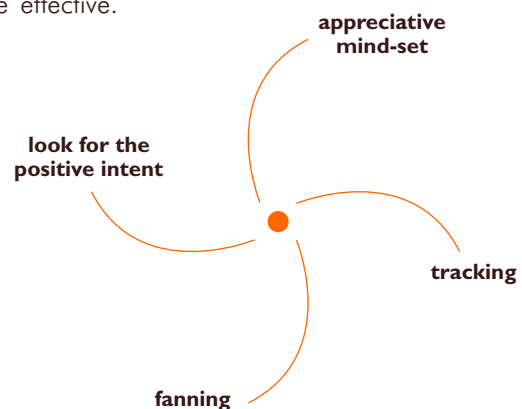
organisations as people and relationships capable of limitless capacity and potential to achieve whatever the human imagination can yearn for.

2. Tracking

Once you know what you want more of then you start 'tracking' it. The Appreciative leader begins with the assumption that whatever he or she wants more of already exists, if only in small quantities. Bushe believes that this is often the toughest part of the process and sometimes you just have to take a leap of faith. The clues are not always obvious and require high levels of observation.

3. Fanning

Fanning is paying more attention to that which you want more of. Bushe uses the metaphor of blowing air on a small fire to turn it into a roaring blaze. In addition to paying attention to what you want more of you can fan through praise or reinforcement by simply asking for more. Bushe stresses that the fanning must be sincere and genuine to be effective.



In summary, Bushe makes the point that Appreciative Leaders are not adverse to problem solving, its just that they recognise that their effort and impact is greater if they leave the problem solving to the people doing the work and use their own attention differently.

An appreciative mind-set is focused not on identifying and fixing what we want less of, but on tracking and fanning what we want more of. If you would like a full copy of Gervase Bushe's article contact Chantal Lester on 03 9602 3206 or send an email to admin@performgroup.com.au