

Humility, Faith, Optimism: 3 Surprising Career Boosters

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Job coach Nance Rosen hires people based on their resumes, but promotes them based on their personalities.

Talented employees who are pessimistic, doubtful, or put their needs before her company's don't get far.

"These people lacked the qualities that represent good character: Humility, faith, and optimism," she says. "The people I nurture, promote, and give the best work to are the people who have something I can't teach them: character."

But these virtues can be honed. Consider these suggestions for applying them in your workplace.

Humility

Few people became CEOs without supportive mentors, colleagues, and supervisors. To get that support, you can't hog the limelight and undermine coworkers, says Linda Seger, author of "Spiritual Steps on the Road to Success: Gaining the Goal Without Losing Your Soul."

Instead, advocate for your coworkers:

- Recommend them for jobs not right for you.
- Connect them to those who might advance their careers.
- Acknowledge and promote your coworker's successes as much as your own.

"That generates a lot of good will," she said. "As a result, coworkers will often also recommend you for jobs, because you are not overly prideful, and because you are humble enough to recognize the talents of others."

Faith

Have faith in your company's mission and its management, and you're more likely to avoid layoffs. But faith is more than believing in your company. It's trusting your career path, even if you aren't advancing at the pace you'd like.

"Exercising faith in the process of career advancement is believing that your career development unfolds in a series of challenges that equip you for a purpose higher than what you can see," says Shai Littlejohn, a career development coach from [Washington, D.C.](#) "These challenging situations very often require us to humbly serve others by helping in areas where they fall short."

Such faith frees you to take risks you wouldn't otherwise.

"You're far more likely to risk, to leap, if you have faith in where you're going," says Jackie Freiberg, coauthor of several books on successful companies. "You cannot succeed by waiting."

Optimism

It turns out that if Pollyanna were your coworker, she might have the fastest career advancement of anyone you know.

But optimism isn't just hoping for the best. It's a thought process. If you assume the best in a situation where you don't know the other person's motivation, you're optimistic, said Acacia Parks-Sheiner, a psychology lecturer and researcher at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ask yourself:

- When a coworker walks past without acknowledging you, do you assume she's distracted or she's mad at you?
- When a new boss gives you a negative performance evaluation, do you assume he's out to get you, or do you think there might be a miscommunication?

If you assume the best, you're probably going to get further in your career, Parks-Sheiner says, even if you're wrong.

"People who are more positive are viewed more positively by others," she says. "They get better performance reviews, their bosses like them better, colleagues like them better, and they're considered more competent."