

# PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE LEADERS

USE CHALLENGES AS POSITIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, RATHER THAN BEING DRIVEN BY EMOTIONS

BY CHRIS 'CHUBBY' FREDERICK | CONTRIBUTOR

**HAVE** you ever wondered why some people are just lucky, and everything goes their way? They seem to win at everything they do, and never really fall upon hard times. They are the happy ones that make you feel good around them, and they usually don't ever have anything bad to say about anyone else. These people didn't just wake up one morning with a silver spoon in their mouth and a little pep in their step. They had to have something happen to them in their lives to show them that there is a better way to live. You, too, can be this person, but you will have to learn their secret.

Let's listen to Coach Bobby Poist explain what he sees in himself and his clients.

Many times in my career I have been challenged with the situational problems that require immediate action. I usually face them head-on unless I am not quite sure what to do. I feel that I should learn from every situation, so I may take some time to think about things before I respond. Other times I have reacted and then blown up, which usually does nothing for me — except destroy relationships that I had taken time to build.

This leads me to our discussion today. What type of leader are you? I try to ask myself this question on a daily basis. Usually we get caught up in the situation and react according to our feelings. If you had a bad morning in traffic, or a sick child at home, then you might think negatively. If you had



a great lunch or a conversation with an old friend, you might think positively. According to your feelings at the moment, you could be one of any given personalities at any given time.

## Are you reactive?

Are you a reactive leader? Most reactionary leaders will fly off the handle or be completely passive depending on what type of day they are having. They usually will respond to whatever challenge is presented to them with the mindset of their current situation. They will stifle themselves with wondering what to do and at times may do nothing. This is very hard on you, especially if you are the kind of person that just bottles things up. That makes the

explosion even more destructive when it happens. I have been in the automotive business for many years and have seen this type of leader all too many times. They will have had a bad morning and then an employee will present a challenge that just sends them over the edge. The situation may not have been that bad, but because of their feelings at the moment, it becomes a rant that sends every employee into a negative frame of mind. It also ruins credibility and good relationships for the manager!

## Are you proactive?

Are you a proactive leader? Proactive leaders spend their time getting to know their associates' weak points

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## “HOW CAN I GET MY ASSOCIATES TO LISTEN TO ME? ANSWER: START WITH A POPULAR PHRASE: ‘THEY DON’T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE ABOUT THEM!’”

-CHRIS ‘CHUBBY’ FREDERICK [CEO, AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING INSTITUTE]

and figuring out what they do best. Proactive leaders build upon the strengths of others so they usually don't have bad situational problems. They seem to think about the situation and go outside the box when it comes to solving problems. You never see them fly off the handle. And when they do have to solve an issue, people seem to come away from it with a different mindset and seem to have learned something. It's crazy how that works, huh? These guys and gals actually build relationships.

We are all challenged with life on a daily basis. The real leaders of the world will learn from their challenges and figure out how to turn negatives into positives. I bet you are wondering how you should go about doing this. I would offer counseling, but most people are not in need of a counselor. They merely require some sort of coaching. This coaching could come from a mentor, a peer, a life or business coach, and occasionally from an interaction with a stranger that shows a general interest in them.

I, too, am on a continuous quest to learn from life's challenges, and it hasn't always been easy. I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason, and while you don't have control of the world around you, you can take control of the way you view it! That is part of being a proactive leader. You can read self-enlightenment books, or listen to audio CDs. You can join a group of your peers who can help you to better yourself and deal with your challenges while you interact with them and help them with theirs. You can pay a lot of money to see a psychiatrist and sit on a couch while revealing your soul. There are many ways to do it, but the one common denominator is

your desire for change and the betterment of yourself. I do know that losing touch with your people is a huge leadership landmine. It will damage your credibility and destroy your influence.

### Avoid losing touch

1. Recognize the landmine. Take an honest approach to looking at your challenges. Take the time to figure out what is causing the problem and act accordingly. Understand that your approach to the situation is the first step in correcting it.

**“There are many ways to go about taking control of how you view the world, but one common denominator is your desire for change and the betterment of yourself.”**

— Chris “Chubby” Frederick

2. Value people. All leadership is influence. And what is influence if it doesn't involve other people? No matter what your organization produces or does, it needs people to function. YOU need people to lead. Leadership becomes effective when you acknowledge that people are your most significant asset and treat them accordingly.

3. Avoid positional thinking. Positional thinking is the belief that people must listen to you because you're the boss. Leadership is influence — nothing more, nothing less! Your goal as a leader should be the betterment of people. You don't necessarily have to be someone's boss to lead them. Everyone should always work together toward a common goal.

4. Genuinely care about the people you lead. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care! They can tell if you don't care

about them. Genuinely caring about people makes the difference in their willingness to follow you into anything, no matter how hard the battle!

5. Understand the Law of Significance. Consider the word “synergy”— the interaction of elements (people) that, when combined, produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements. If you can achieve your dream by yourself, your dream is too small! Build a team around you of knowledgeable people who share the same goals, and there is no limit to the potential of the group.

The most effective leaders stay connected to their people. This gives them the greatest amount of influence, and allows the leader and the team to achieve their big-picture goals together. Stay on the quest of self-betterment. If you do, I can guarantee you that people will start to look at you as that guy — the guy who always seems to have it under control and always seems to be the winner in life.

Do you want to know why you or members of your staff are resistant to change? Do you want to know the best way to address the situation? If you would like some help, for a limited time you can go to [www.atonlinetraining.com/2015-11](http://www.atonlinetraining.com/2015-11) for a Change Assessment Form that will help you find where the root cause of the problem is. **TL**



Chris “Chubby” Frederick is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI's 115 associates train and coach more than 1,400 shop owners every week across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. Our associates love helping shop owners who are having the same struggle as many of them have had, and who are looking for the same answers — and in some cases looking for a lifeline. This month's article was written with the help of Coach Bobby Poist.

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