



## Pro Activity

If you think that people succeed through luck, inheritances, by accident, or by hoping their way to success, think again. Some people have drive, some have vision, some an incredible amount of mental acuity and others have an innate amount of tenacity. For every individual who has a powerful impact in their world or the world at large, there are key personality traits they possess that aid them in achieving their goals and fulfilling their intentions.

The amount of people that succeed through blind luck, etc. is less than 3.5% of the total success population. Actually 96.5% of the most successful people's (ranked by high income, goals achieved, leadership accomplishments or impact to the world) success has been achieved through certain specific behaviors; one of the top rated being pro activity. Pro Activity rates as one of the, if not, the ultimate behavior of highly effective people.

In reading several books on leadership, motivation and success, what I keep running into over and over again is an emphasis on the behavior of 'pro activity.' Some of the definitions that I have seen to describe 'pro activity' are the ability to act before you are acted upon, a positive mental attitude, as well as the desire to plan and picture the future, and then stay the course towards that intended future, even in the face of obstacles. In my opinion, I find the third to be the epitome of being 'pro active.'

In Covey's 7 Habits, he speaks of pro activity being the fundamental and foundational behavior to effectiveness. In Patrick Lencioni's 5 Temptations of a CEO, he speaks about staying true to the purpose of your leadership; achieving the goals you have been hired to achieve. Being the cause in the matter of success for yourself or for your organization. In John C. Maxwell's book on leadership, The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader, he talks about initiative – continuing to have it, calling on it, and acting on it. The more I read and study, the more I am clear that the habits and successes of a great leader are the same habits that ANY successful person would want to adopt and master.

When I read these books, I was looking for some evidence that I could be and would be a great leader of my organization, in the business community, for women, for my children, even for my friends. One trait that I am clear that I possess and that I am continuing to nurture and bring mastery to, is the trait of being pro active. It is the number one trait that I look for in a new hire and the



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number one trait that I emphasize to the people in my office in their personal development of being effective through working smarter not harder.

### **So, what are real life examples of being pro active?**

For an individual contributor: setting goals-in writing, reviewing your goals monthly, hiring and taking the advice of a coach (admitting you are playing a game that you may not know how to win alone), reading or taking a course (opening your mind to learning something new), choosing to get better at something, preparing and planning, not playing the blame game. Taking full responsibility for your life, even when it is not working, living a healthy lifestyle, exercising, eating right, doing what you say you will and being honest.

\*For a parent, setting boundaries and sticking to them, saying no, acknowledging your kids for their unique contribution to your life and to the world. Establish individual and group responsibilities for household chores. Teach your children to be responsible and accountable. Give your kids choices, and then have them own the consequence/reward of those choices. Saying I love you. Scheduling and honoring one-on-one time. Demonstrating patience even when it is the toughest thing to do. Sharing as many heartfelt hugs as you can get in without the kids screaming for mercy. Being consistent.

\*(modify for friendships, relationships, etc.)

For a person in a leadership role: spending time with the top 80%, asking your top people what they need & want, hiring right, defining and communicating clear performance expectations, having a crystal clear vision/mission and sticking to it. Lead an organization that honors integrity and doing the right thing. Develop other leaders. Build trust - be honest, straight and forthright. Play to your employees' strengths; build high performance teams. Get rid of employees who are lousy performers, self-serving, negative, anti-team and anti-company.

In conclusion, whether you are an individual, living on your own, working on your own, working for someone or a group of some ones, supervising people, leading people, interested in developing long standing relationships, raising kids, or raising a company, taking on the way of being pro active will offer you a multitude of benefits from being happy and fulfilled, achieving your



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goals, looking and feeling better, reducing stress at work/home, to making more money in less time. So, try on mastering and being 'pro active' and see how it fits.

Best of Success,

**Margaret Graziano, CPC, CTS, CERS**



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