

# The Words We Use, The Stories We Tell, The Heroes We Celebrate: Effective Tools for a Healthy Workplace Culture

918.232.7265 918.938.5593

Chris Zervas

[Chris@ChrisZervas.com](mailto:Chris@ChrisZervas.com)



# Groups of 3 or 4

Who was the best leader/teacher/coach you have ever had?

What words did they use that were special? What do you remember about what they said?

What stories did they tell?

What heroes did they celebrate?

# Marshal Ferdinand Foch



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND

# Attack Workplace Culture

**The Words We Use**

**The Stories We Tell**

**The Heroes We Celebrate**



# The Power of Praise

Dr. Elizabeth Hurlock-designed a study to explore what would happen when 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders in math class received different types of feedback



# The Power of Praise

- 1<sup>st</sup> Group-identified by name-praised
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Group-identified by name-criticized
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Group-ignored-present to hear responses to other students
- 4<sup>th</sup> Group-removed-received no comments on work



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND

# The Power of Praise

Students in Groups 1 & 2 did  
better after the 1<sup>st</sup> day --

then performance dramatically  
changed





# The Power of Praise

The overall improvement of each Group:

- Group 1-Praised-                   ? %
- Group 2-Criticized-               ?%
- Group 3-Ignored-                 ?%





# The Power of Praise

The overall improvement of each Group:

- Group 1-Praised- 71%
- Group 2-Criticized-19%
- Group 3-Ignored- 5%



## Those who receive regular recognition and praise:

- increase their individual productivity
- increase engagement among their colleagues
- are more likely to stay with their organization
- receive higher loyalty and satisfaction scores from customers
- have better safety records and fewer accidents on the job

Based on research by Gallup of more than 4,000,000 employees

# The Power of Praise

**3:1**

**VS.**

**13:1**

Fredrickson and Losada

*Wounds from a friend can be trusted,  
but an enemy multiplies kisses.*

*Proverb*

THE POWER OF LIFE AND  
DEATH IS IN THE TONGUE.

King Solomon





Act NOW

Send a Text to an  
employee who  
has done  
excellent work  
and encourage  
them.



# Attack Workplace Culture

**The Words We Use**

**The Stories We Tell**

**The Heroes We Celebrate**



This photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND













# Who in your life should you short- rope with?

---

How often do you sit down with  
those who know you well?

Who should you reach out to  
that knows and loves you?

Life is relationships: the rest is  
details.



# Attack Workplace Culture

**The Words We Use**

**The Stories We Tell**

**The Heroes We Celebrate**



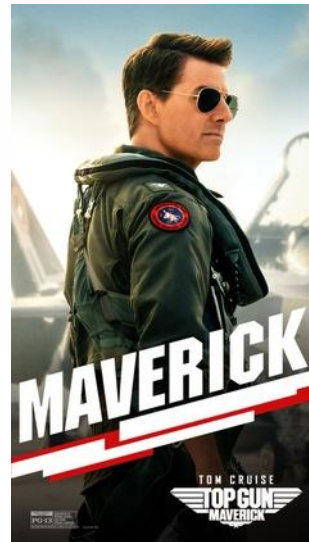
## **Social Awareness**

There is nothing that people are so interested in as themselves, their own problems, and the way to solve them.

Harry Emerson Fosdick



# Be a Guide



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

New York Times Bestselling Author  
DONALD MILLER

**BUILDING  
A STORY  
BRAND**



Use the 7 Elements of Great Storytelling to Grow Your Business

Who in your workplace should  
you make a hero of?



Close the day with an AHA slides Quiz

# **Application Ideas**

What is one mindset shift you should make?

What do you need to do differently to retain millennials as employees?

# Connection Before Content



## Start communication Richly

### Start with:

- Face to Face
- Video Call
- Phone Call

### By Products:

- Connection
- Information and
- Relationship - Building
- Trust



## Confirm Communication Dehydratedly

### Confirm Message:

- Email
- Text
- Instant Message

### By Products:

- Record of it
- Confirmation
- Clarity





In an average conversation at work, rate yourself on a scale of 1 – 10. 10 being highest.

How do you rate your conversations related to:

- Connection?
- Sharing Knowledge?
- Encouraging the wanted behavior?

Share with a neighbor about your scores.



**If confusion, frustration or misunderstanding  
happens after 2 or 3 emails . . .**

**Move quickly to richer  
communication**

