



BOOK REVIEW

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Whale Done! The power of positive relationships

Ken Blanchard, Thad Lacinak, Chuck Tompkins and Jim Ballard

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Blanchard, Kenneth., Lacinak, Thad., Tompkins, Chuck., and Ballard, Jim. (2010, Rprint), Whale Done!: The Power of Positive Relationships, Nicholas Brealey Publishing. ISBN: 0743251776, 9780743251778

About the Author

Ken Blanchard writes about the power of positive relationship and the need to catch people doing things right in order to develop productive work and home environments. The author is fully convinced that punishment is harmful to human relationships. The book draws a slimily between ‘killer whales’ training and ‘people’ training.

Review

As I started reading the first chapter of the book, my curiosity to know how killer whales-the most feared predators in the ocean, are trained to perform various acrobatic leaps and dives, began to really scale up. I understood the key principle in training these mammoth creatures is to first build ‘trust’ with them and no harm is caused to them. It takes a long time to build trust and friendship with whales and requires tremendous patience. They can perform any acrobat if they completely lose the fear of trainers. The same holds truth when we deal with human beings too! The mantra is “Accentuate the positive”. This means stressing on positives and not the negatives helps in building “trust”. The example cited to prove this point made me really think.

“When people do something that displeases, we pay lots of attention to it and tell them you did not like what they did or warn them about doing it again.... This is like accentuating the negative. When dealing with people, an important concept to remember is that “the more attention we pay to a behavior, the more it will be repeated!” If lot of attention is given to what people did right, they do the right thing more often!

Chapter 1 proves a very powerful rule “if we don’t want to encourage poor behavior, we shouldn’t spend a lot of time on it”. When mistakes occur, redirect the energy.

Chapter-2 highlights the ABC’s of performance.

- A = Activator; whatever gets performance going.
- B = Behaviour; the performance that occurs
- C = Consequence; your response to the performance

Four kinds of consequences have been identified. Viz,

- a) No response
- b) Negative response
- c) Redirection
- d) Positive response

Redirection and Positive response are the most powerful and are least used.

The author brings out the “**WHALE DONE**” response. It includes

- praise people immediately
- be specific about what they did right
- share your positive feelings about what they did
- encourage them to keep up the good work

By Reading Chapter-3, I became aware Whale Done only works when we are 'sincere and honest'. The chapter also cites some Whale Done responses at work and at home.

Chapters 4 and 5 stress the power of relationships at home and at work respectively. Many examples are cited to prove this point. One aspect that I appreciated is "Once a commitment is made to a relationship, we can take on any problem or issue without fear".

The concluding chapter speaks about a business case where "sales figures are dropping". A manager who used to jump all over people when they made a mistake and would take it for 'granted' when they did something right, implements the Whale Done technique by getting along much better with all of them.

Indeed an excellent book to read, implement and re-read!

Author's Profile

Dr. Dattakumar is Senior Manager, Recruitment Academy, Talent Transformation, Wipro Technologies, Electronics City, Bangalore. He holds a Bachelors Degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Masters Degree in Management from the University of Mysore. Later he obtained PhD from the University of Mysore in the area of Quality Management. For about two decades Dr. Dattakumar was a faculty in an engineering college excelling himself as a teacher as well as Placement Officer playing a stellar role in enhancing the career opportunities for the outgoing graduates. After joining Wipro, Dr. Dattakumar has extensively traveled across the country conducting a series of training and skill building programs for the faculty and administrators from engineering colleges under the prestigious "Mission10 X" program and has enabled better service outputs from participating institutions. His areas of interest and expertise include Quality in Education, Training and Placement, Soft Skills Development, and Benchmarking for quality improvement. He can be contacted at: dattakumar.ramachandra@wipro.com