

John C. Maxwell: 6 Tips to Develop and Model an Abundance Mindset

“There is enough pie to go around,” so discourage an attitude of scarcity because it can negatively affect your success. Find out how to spread a positive, plentiful mentality through your team.

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Imagine that you and I are walking down the street.

You breathe in. You breathe out. I breathe in. I breathe out. We both need oxygen to survive. Would you worry that there would not be enough oxygen for both of us? Of course not—air is abundant.

Now imagine we are scuba diving and my scuba tank starts to malfunction. I signal that I need to share the oxygen in your tank. Suddenly the air becomes a precious commodity. Its scarcity makes us worry. What if there isn't enough for both of us?

Our attitudes toward scarcity and abundance in other aspects of our lives greatly influence our success. Stephen Covey explains these concepts beautifully in his classic *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*^[1]. He writes:

Most people are deeply scripted in what I call the Scarcity Mentality. They see life as having only so much, as though there were only one pie out there. And if someone were to get a big piece of the pie, it would mean less for everybody else.

The Scarcity Mentality is the zero-sum paradigm of life. People with a Scarcity Mentality have a very difficult time sharing recognition and credit, power or profit—even with those who help in the production. They also have a hard time being genuinely happy for the success of other people^[2].

The Abundance Mentality, on the other hand, flows out of a deep inner sense of personal worth or security. It is the paradigm that there is plenty out there and enough to spare for everybody.

It results in the sharing of prestige, recognition, profits and decision-making. It opens possibilities, options, alternatives and creativity.

Covey tells us that when you live in a world of scarcity, you compete for available resources, even when there is an abundance of them.

When I speak to audiences across the country, I often hear about the challenges people face in the workplace. More often than not, these difficulties stem from a scarcity mindset.

Leaders who allow a scarcity mindset to work its way into their culture pay a high price. When resources (money, opportunity, recognition) are perceived to be limited, paranoia, fear and politics thrive. In this environment, people become nervous and afraid to make a mistake. As a result, teamwork and innovation^[3] suffer.

Effective leaders, on the other hand, develop and model an abundance mindset. By doing so, they create an environment where they can positively influence their team—and where their employees can thrive. Here's how to spread this positive mentality through your team.

Offer words of appreciation. Let people know how much you value their contributions. People want to know that their work matters. Your influence and happiness will increase in direct proportion to the appreciation that you show your team. I have found this to be one of the fastest and simplest ways to build a more abundant life.

Choose to see opportunity. The next time your team is faced with an obstacle, flip it around and consider it an opportunity. Face the challenge with optimism and make sure your team sees you modeling that attitude. You'll be surprised at how quickly problems dissolve and how soon optimism becomes your default mechanism.

Remind yourself that there is more than enough. As Covey said, there is enough pie to go around, so break that nasty habit of comparing yourself to others. Repeat after me: There is plenty for everyone. Say the sentence often enough, and it'll become second nature.

Carefully select the company you keep. Mindsets are contagious. Limit your time with “the-glass-is-half-empty” people.^[4]

Spend time in reflection. Learn to acknowledge and appreciate all the positives in your life and work. Gratitude is a powerful aspect of an abundant mindset. A grateful heart is at the center of an abundant life. In his book, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*^[5], coach and speaker Steve Maraboli says, “Those with a grateful mindset tend to see the message in the mess. And even though life may knock them down, the grateful find reasons, if even small ones, to get up.”

Give more of what you want. Although it may sound counterintuitive, one of the best ways to increase your abundance is to give. Don't feel like you have enough time? Slip away from your obligations, even if just for an hour, to help someone in need. Don't feel like you have enough money? Give to someone less fortunate. In other words, be a river, not a reservoir. Giving is sure to put you in a more abundant and appreciative frame of mind.

In *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*^[6], I wrote about The Law of the Mirror. It states that people do what people see. Reflect on the influence you have on your team. Which mindset do you model? Do you see a positive, abundant mentality reflected in your team leaders? Or are they pessimistic, stingy and competing among themselves for your attention? Remember, you set the tone for your organization.

I challenge you to foster an abundance-minded culture this month. Encourage people to see options and opportunity when they face obstacles or challenges. Express appreciation regularly, and recognize others who do the same. Communicate and share your hopes for yourself and your team.

Remember, we are all leaders. Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less. We influence the people around us wherever we are, whether it's at home, at work, on the highway or in the checkout line. As you build an authentic and sincere abundance mindset, you will find that your positive outlook can spill over and influence the people around you.

William James said, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind." Let your mindset be your biggest asset!

Need an attitude adjustment? Find out how to use your words to change your perspective on a challenging situation.^[7]

Links

1. <http://store.success.com/the-7-habits-of-highly-effective-people-by-stephen-r-covey.html>
2. <http://success.com/article/4-steps-to-stop-comparing-your-success-to-others>
3. <http://success.com/article/john-c-maxwell-how-to-create-a-culture-of-innovation>
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6. http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0785288376/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0785288376&linkCode=as2&tag=sm0fe-20&linkId=WDUBISLCPLH2XNYS
7. <http://success.com/blog/attitude-adjustment-101-say-it-out-loud-with-me>