

## Giving an 'A'

What if – you were always at the top of your game? What if – you could be everything required to do your job? And more? What if – you saw yourself as an A business owner – every day?

How can you be the best in your job? How can you build relationships and skills that allow you to be stellar in your business? You created your business with the background, capabilities and or vision to make it happen. You want be successful. How can you be an A performer? Let's look at an approach that honours you as the best you can be.

In their book, The Art of Possibility, Rosamund and Benjamin Zander, discuss the practice of giving an A to ourselves and those around us. Typically, a mark of 'A' in our society recognizes excellent performance, achievement of rigorous and demanding standards. The use of an 'A' here is to create a 'can do', positive, appreciative and abundant view of ourselves and those around us. Seeing yourself and your peers as A human beings is not about measurement but about living the A potential – you open yourselves, your staff and your clients to your creativity in living into the best you can be.

By giving A's, you operate in the belief that you will experience an A attitude from yourself and others. Using an A mindset, you live in the moment, you are not worried about 'what if' scenarios, you trust intentions and outcomes. In living as an A business person, with other A colleagues, you are in the presence of 'limitless possibility'.

You may have heard the adage that, what you expect is what you will receive. If you have a belief that all small dogs are yappy – you will always notice noisy small dogs – because they support your belief. Well-behaved little dogs will go unnoticed – because you are not looking for those kinds of dogs. Similarly, you will notice A behaviours - if you expect to see them.

Giving an A is a paradigm shift. You are no longer becoming excellent, you ARE excellent. You embody all that you imagine an A person is, as soon as you make that statement. You even get to describe the way you look as an A person.

The first step is for you and others with whom you work to imagine yourselves as A individuals. What is your attitude within your business? What are your feelings about being part of your industry? Who are you becoming in this job, in your organization, in your field? Capture this through journaling, discussions with colleagues/staff, writing and telling stories describing times you feel you are using your "limitless possibility". Involve others in your network in this process so that you get to experience the playfulness of possibility.

- I am an A business owner because people want my product, they refer others to me regularly and I make a good living at what I do. Our clients are very satisfied with our work.

- I am an A business owner because my staff enjoy working with me, we have a fun time, and we are constantly creating inventive ways to promote myself. I get a lot of satisfaction from my work.

These descriptions are written as if the A behaviour is happening right now. In writing the outcomes and feelings of A actions/beliefs, the writer starts to really see herself as a success and to see the responsibilities she has to live into to achieve her goals. A is the norm – setting the stage in the universe of possibility.

By having a vision and holding the attitude that you are an A, you can support others in being an A. As players in this game of A, you encourage and help bring out A behaviours. In so doing, you move from a hierarchical – “Thou shalt”, to a partnership of “tell me more about your situation”, “Let me show you.”, “How are you doing?” You expect and model A behaviours for those around you. In coaching for A behaviours, you and your staff and/or clients are a team. Living with A colleagues builds optimism in the workplace, results in greater listening and understanding, and says loudly and clearly, “I believe in you.”

As a business owner, it is difficult not to impose your views and standards onto your expectation of an A. For instance, an employee completes assigned work on the dot of the due date. As their manager, you might prefer they were completed a half day earlier – possibly so you can ensure the report is ready to go before it is sent out the door! By insisting on a timeframe – just in case – you do not give the trust due an A employee. The A belief is that the employee will accomplish agreed tasks. The A manager must clearly outline what you expect and trust that the A employee will meet his/her obligations. The opportunity for coaching comes when the employee does not meet the expectations. The manager can then examine with the employee all the options there are for learning to meet his/her work responsibilities. You now have an opportunity to coach your A employee about, for example, time management, about being part of a team, about commitment to promises, about project dynamics. You help them live A behaviour, knowing that they are an A.

“This A is not an expectation to live up to, but a possibility to live into.” R.& B.Zander

Ref: Zander, Rosamund S., Benjamin. *The Art of Possibility*. London, England: Penguin Books, 2002

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