

openmindedness



the willingness to search for evidence against one's favored beliefs, plans, or goals, and to weigh such evidence fairly when it is available

Much of our education teaches us to think linearly—we focus on getting from Point A to Point B along the path of least resistance; doing what we've always done, especially if it has "worked in the past".

But in changing times, this approach may not be the best.

Having an open mind helps us think more critically, especially when faced with unpredictable circumstances. It helps us see the bigger picture and think more laterally about how best to solve a problem not only in the short term, but in the long term too. No two problems will ever be the same, but an open mind makes us more adaptable to finding solutions.

The world of work is changing. These changes come with the new millennium: the increasing competitiveness of other companies, generational shifts in the workplace, and the rate of technological change.

To borrow from Marshall Goldsmith's great book, **What Got You Here**—to the success and accomplishments you have achieved up until now—**is Not Going to Get You There.**

"One of the greatest mistakes of successful people is the assumption, "I behave this way, and I achieve results. Therefore, I must be achieving results because I behave this way."

BENEFITS OF OPENMINDEDNESS

Better communication. You appreciate what you know but are open to the fact that you do not know everything.

Better solutions. You search for the best solutions, rather than "the way things have always been done".

Better approachability. People feel they can come to you because you listen and want the *best* solutions.

HOW TO BE MORE OPEN-MINDED

Practice your listening skills. Make sure to let your colleagues or employees know that you are there to hear them out and actually care about what they have to say. Don't rebuke suggestions from the start, instead offer other options and explain why, despite their opinions, things will take another course. But if they offer valid insight, take it and apply it to the situation at hand.

Ask questions. Don't just assume you know what the other person meant, why the situation happened or what must be done in a certain case. You might gain superior understanding and make better decisions if you avoid speculation, but inquire others and accept different perspectives.

Forget about black or white thinking. Although you may sometimes be convinced that you hold the absolute truth, try to accept that things might actually be the other way around. Maybe you don't have all the facts, there are things you didn't even take into consideration or certain details have changed in the meantime — life is all about shades of grey.

Take lessons from everyone. Collect all the available information and get in contact with as many people as possible, in view of obtaining it. Develop a thirst for learning, peak your curiosity and don't be afraid to say "I don't know". An open-minded person understands that there is no end to the journey of knowledge and exploration.