

Reducing Conflict 27 Create Your Own Development Plan

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



One of the most helpful things you can do as a professional is to create your own development plan. There are several reasons for this that I will share in this article along with some tips on how to do it efficiently.

Focus On Your Own Development Needs

In any organization, it is easy for a professional to become fixated on what other people need to do to improve. We see the flaws in others clearly, so it is only natural to try to “fix” the other person to be more perfect, like you. Obviously, there is a false logic to this way of approaching other people.

Keeps You Humble

We all need to improve in some ways. By having a concrete plan to improve in areas where you need to, it keeps the focus on what is most important. Since we are rarely good at spotting our own deficiencies, the exercise of creating a development plan demonstrates humility rather than hubris.

Less Critical of Others

Having a plan that you willingly share with other people about how you are trying to improve yourself, means you have less mental energy focused on other people. This habit will endear you to the people around you as long as you are humble about it.

It is even helpful to verbalize your plan and ask for assistance. You might say to your officemate, “This month I am focusing on being less judgmental of other people. Let me know if you see the difference.”

Process to do It

To get a good development plan, you first need to know where you are deficient. Brainstorm ways you were critical of others in the past.

Often when you become annoyed with another person’s shortcomings, it is a reflection of your own deficiencies in that same area. This analysis requires deep soul-searching and brutal honesty. It may help to have a discussion with some friends or family about your intention to improve and request assistance in finding what areas need the most help.

Select One Thing at a Time to Improve

Don't try to tackle five different areas at once. That will be too hard and confusing. Pick one item on your list and focus on doing better in that area for the next month or so. When other people remark that you are much more robust in that area, you can move on to another opportunity.

Celebrate Your Growth

Sticking with these ideas may seem hard at first, but it will become more natural as you repeat the cycle after a few weeks with another area. Be sure to celebrate somehow in private or even in public, if the growth is evident to other people and can be done without being self-serving.

You might arrange for a special meal for you and your spouse. You might buy a particular garment you have been admiring for a while. Reinforcing yourself for a job well done will encourage you to put more energy into the next cycle.

Conclusion

Focusing energy on things where you can improve personally is a healthy habit. Not only will it lead to less conflict in your life, but you will be a more popular person in the minds of others.

Free Video

Here is a 3-minute video that contains more information on how to create your own development plan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rno1aGBrJq0>

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