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To : Seafarers                      Our Ref : Mentoring Letter 19 - Attitudes  
From : Marine Mentor              Date : 19 June 2020

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Dear Colleagues,

We are approaching the end of this series, and I thank those aboard IVS HIRONO for some inspiration for this letter! Looking back over a list of the topics, I can't help but think that although we've covered a lot of ground, we've also only done so superficially – or as we say, “scratched the surface.” Each topic covered is extremely important, and all need to be explored further by both Mentor and Mentee.

The last couple of letters have addressed some of the biggest barriers to mentoring, namely negativity and depression. These are destructive issues which stand in the way not only of our own motivation and general wellbeing, but can also affect others. Conversely, self-motivation and positivity are attitudes which can overcome these, while also combatting procrastination and other negative attitudes which as humans we are susceptible to, but which are self-defeating.

Attitudes are the 3<sup>rd</sup> leg of Learning, the other two being Knowledge and Skills. Mentoring must therefore reach beyond merely imparting experiential knowledge with others, to encouraging them to adopt positive attitudes and mind-sets. This is sometimes easier said than done, as it involves the manner in which a person may deal with things emotionally. This is inevitably reflected in their (or our) behaviour, and is either going to encourage or discourage people from developing a relationship with them. Humans are social beings, and without good relationships, all else fails. You cannot mentor without building a sound relationship. You can also not be mentored if your attitude is not what it should be, in which case a degree of counselling may be called for before the mentoring relationship can start. On the other hand, it may also be as simple as leading by example in the hope that your own attitude encourages others.

Clearly, a bad attitude, and the behaviours that accompany it, stand in the way of success, and we all thus need to be aware of our own attitude and resulting behaviours so that we can correct these. This is a non-negotiable.

Critically, we cannot lead unless we have sound relationships with our team. It is therefore a responsibility of every manager to resolve his own attitude issues and to avoid any behaviours that may get in the way of these relationships. How difficult is it to curb impatience? Intolerance? Irritation? We were not born perfect and are susceptible to displaying these, but I believe that an awareness of them is half the battle to overcoming them. All it calls for is a little self-reflection, so that we can get to work on our imperfections, after all, isn't this the purpose of life?

Take email for example, how difficult is it really to read our emails before we send them, to ensure that we haven't taken out our annoyance on the keyboard, and removed a stinging one-liner that only reveals a weakness on our own part? How difficult is it to think before we deliver a stinging rebuke that burns any chance we had of forming a good, working relationship with the other person instead of showing ourselves up as being arrogant and unable to control our emotions? Apologies may work the first time, after that our credibility is in question. Similarly, the Mentee. How difficult is it to require that the he/she shows some interest and takes some initiative in learning more about the subject we are mentoring him or her in. I'd say that on both scores, it's about as difficult as showing respect for ourselves, as well as for others.

As the crew of IVS HIRONO have shown, if life dishes you up lemons, make Mojito! Have fun!!

*Mike Melly*