



PETRA PEOPLE

AT THE OFFICE: BE THE ADULT IN THE ROOM



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LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

Office politics can be petty. It's amazing how small disagreements can quickly balloon into big misunderstandings. There's a reason people refer to the office as a "sandbox," because some folks refuse to act like adults. And, if the level of childish behavior rises to tantrum pitch and the culture becomes toxic, there's no chance for communication or growth. But, the office is not a playground, and we're not children. So, it's important that every day we enter into an "adult agreement" when we walk through the doors and begin our day.

When I work with companies looking to improve their business – whether it be culture, revenue, employee engagement or all of the above – I begin by explaining our joint agreements for the day. One of those is an adult agreement. It informs the work we do for the entire day, and hopefully beyond.

Here are five agreements to make sure you're acting your age in the workplace:

DON'T SHOOT EACH OTHER DOWN.

When a colleague brings an idea to the table – even if you disagree with it – don't shut her down just to be "right." If we want to be collaborative, we've got to consider that those around us have something valuable to offer. If you make it a habit to cut people off or discount what they're saying off-hand, you'll not only guarantee that they won't share their ideas with you again, but you'll likely miss out on insights that could help you and your company.

OWN UP TO MISTAKES AND BRING THEM TO THE TABLE.

Nobody is perfect. I'll say it again. Nobody is perfect – not you, not me, not Bill Gates or Mark Cuban or anyone you might admire in business. We all make mistakes, and the worst thing we can do is deny that they exist. Instead, own up to your mistakes and let everybody know what they are. We only grow and learn when we're vulnerable with each other. Admitting error is often considered a risk, but it's really an opportunity. Our mistakes let others understand who we are, what risks we're willing to take and what lessons we've had to learn. Share freely to engender trust and understanding among your teammates.



DON'T HIDE PROBLEMS.

Maybe you want to stay focused on the positive and don't want to highlight "problems." Wrong. You're not a negative person just because you bring problems to light or point out conflicts where they might exist. More likely, you're finally saying what everyone else is thinking and is afraid to say. Or, you're bringing something up that's important for everyone to understand in order to improve and move forward. Put problems up for discussion and brainstorm solutions. Hiding problems only makes them grow.

DON'T ARGUE WITH REALITY.

It's crucial, if we're going to be adults, that we get real. Is your company losing money because you're spending too much on payroll? Are your employees dissatisfied with the culture at your company and looking for a change? Maybe the industry is changing and your company is going in the opposite direction that it should be? Whatever the case, when reality is brought to your attention, don't argue with it. You might dispute the reasons something has happened, and that's okay – that's part of having a constructive adult conversation. Just don't stick your head in the sand and refuse to accept the truth. It will weaken you as a leader and cause your team to question your competence.

DON'T SHY AWAY.

We all have a part to play in the world and at work. And, your opinion should be as valued everyone else's in your company. Your experience is a unique one, but nobody will ever have the benefit from it if you shy away from sharing your ideas. Speak up. The adults around you will listen. For business owners and leaders, remember to encourage junior employees and those who might be naturally quieter to speak their mind. Let them know it's safe to be truthful, and they'll be more likely to give you their best ideas.

As you seek to master these five steps, remember one more thing: Adults don't crush each other just for acting like adults. We've got to support each other in our efforts to be truthful and vulnerable. A team is only as strong as it's weakest link, so it's critical that we lift each other up. When we act like adults – especially in the sandbox – we all win.

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THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.

Looking to change your business life - forever?

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

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