Community of Practice

FACILITATION GUIDE

Inspiring and enabling leaders to build high-performing organizations that bring out the best in people.

CENTER FOR
POSITIVE
ORGANIZATIONS

The Center for Positive Organizations inspires and enables leaders to build high-performing organizations that bring out the best in people.

In support of this goal, we encourage business leaders, practitioners and organizational consultants to share strategies and practices for creating successful and flourishing workplaces. The Community of Practice Facilitation Guide is designed to support such gatherings with informed advice and curated resources—such as research, journal articles, interviews with experts, inspiring practices, and provocative musings—to prompt engaged and enlivened discussion in your group. It is our hope that your Community of Practice will be a home to learn and grow with peers and help advance positive business practices.

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Why a Community of Practice?

THE WORKPLACE IS CHANGING. With technology advances, dispersed work teams, and new expectations from a multigenerational workforce, our organizations require new ways of thinking and leading.

The emergence of Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) is perfectly timed to help influence the future workplace. POS research provides evidence that nurturing qualities such as compassion, civility, ethical behavior, and vitality matter. They matter not just for employee wellbeing, but they also significantly impact organization performance and productivity.

POS sheds light on overlooked or undervalued practices such as reciprocity, high-quality connections, mindfulness, gratitude, and the expression of positive emotion. When thoughtfully implemented, these practices create workplaces where employees are more likely to flourish. If successful, the spillover effect to family, friends, and neighbors offers an elevated purpose for business of all kinds—positively impacting society.

Commonly defined, a Community of Practice is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do. The group meets regularly to learn and support each other. Communities of Practice exist in many professions and have been proven to be an important source of learning and professional growth.

A **Community of Practice focused on Positive Organizational Scholarship offers an opportunity to bring together leaders, practitioners, consultants, and others in your city or local region in order to:**

▷ Learn about the breadth of research in Positive Organizational Scholarship

▷ Share stories, strategies, and resources for creating positive change

▷ Learn about best practices in the field

▷ Support each other in introducing and advancing positive practices in organizations

There is a rich and deep pool of resources to ignite this work, drawing heavily upon the decades of research conducted by faculty at the Center for Positive Organizations at the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan, and its global Community of Scholars. The Community of Practice structure creates a means to distribute and leverage these insights for positive action.

Join the movement of people interested in creating more positive and humane workplaces!

f ✈ in You Tube

READ ON to learn how to launch a Community of Practice and energize your own work, your workplace, and your professional network.

Email us at cpo-copcoaches@umich.edu to let us know how we can support your efforts.

You can also join our mailing list to get updates on events sponsored by the Center for Positive Organizations.

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The Center for Positive Organizations

The Center for Positive Organizations (CPO) was founded in 2002 by Professors Jane Dutton, Kim Cameron, and Robert Quinn at Michigan Ross. They knew the field of positive psychology had a powerful parallel opportunity to consider the individual in the context of groups and teams. More than a decade later, the Center has won awards from the Academy of Management and impacted thousands of lives around the world.

The mission of the Center is to inspire and enable leaders to build high-performing organizations that bring out the best in people. CPO is a catalyst for the creation and growth of positive organizations and is a hub for a growing community of researchers, teachers, students, business leaders, practitioners, and consultants engaged in the work of transforming organizations.

The Center's work includes:

- Creating the science of positive organizations with rigorous research by hundreds of faculty and research partners around the globe

- Hosting the biennial Positive Organizational Scholarship Research Conference

- Translating high-impact research into inspiring and practical insights through the Positive Links Speaker Series

- Engaging undergraduate and graduate students in its popular +LAB Fellows program

- Delivering the Magnify program: a best-in-class immersive and action-learning course in the foundations of Positive Organizational Scholarship

- Creating and co-leading the Michigan Ross Positive Business Conference

- Hosting organizational change leaders to meet and learn together in a Positive Organizations Consortium

- Offering research-based products and tools to support positive organizing in the workplace

The Center is now proud to add this Community of Practice Facilitation Guide to its offerings.
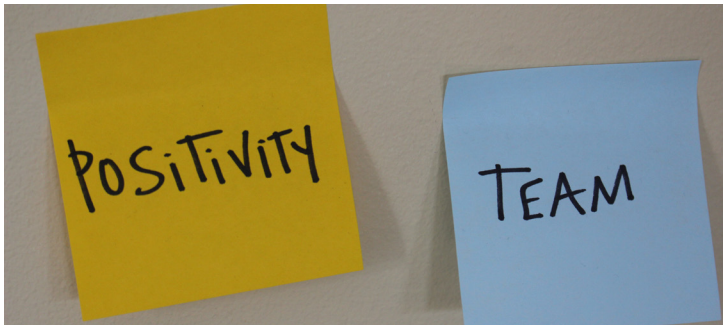
Introduction to Positive Organizational Scholarship

In an early description of Positive Organizational Scholarship, the Center's founders refer to POS as a particular orientation toward organizations that focuses on dynamics fostering human strengths, vitality, and flourishing. These dynamics enable new possibilities for resilience, thriving, and performance—unlocking potential in organizations that is otherwise latent or inaccessible. Scholars invested in this field focus on patterns of excellence and ask what enables extraordinary human accomplishment.

What makes employees feel like they're thriving?

How can I bring my organization through difficult times stronger than before?

What creates the positive energy a team needs to be successful?

Since those early days of research, POS has grown in both scholarly engagement and in the support it offers to those seeking to put the findings into action. *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship,* published in 2011, brings together 80 chapters that define the landscape for this burgeoning field.

POS is an umbrella for many research interests. Some of the largest areas of POS, which are foundational elements of a flourishing organization, include:

1. Positive Leadership	How can we bring out the best in others within our organization, as both human beings and as contributors to the organization?

2. Positive Meaning and Purpose	How do we identify a higher purpose for our business? How do we infuse this into our organization?

3. Positive Ethics and Virtues	How do we cultivate attributes such as generosity, forgiveness, and compassion in our organization? What is the relationship between these attributes and organizational performance? How do we inspire people toward doing "more good," not simply "less bad?"

4. Positive Relationships	How do we create energizing, generative relationships in our workplace?

5. Positive Culture	How do we build high-performing cultures of thriving (high degrees of learning and vitality)? How do we build high-performing cultures of flourishing (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment)?

These areas are a helpful starting point for those seeking to understand the research. Faculty and thought leaders associated with the Center often specialize in one or more of these areas. The products of their efforts—influential research, journal articles, videos, practice tools, and more—are available through the Center's website.

Introduction to a Positive Organizational Scholarship Community of Practice

The Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) Community of Practice is a platform designed to help organization leaders, practitioners, consultants, and others learn about the influential research of the Center for Positive Organizations. It creates a forum for engaging with others interested in learning about and spreading the principles and practices of POS.

Our first experiment with a Community of Practice began in 2013 with Paul and Diane Jones in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Paul and Diane are longtime friends of the Center, and sponsors of the popular Positive Links Speaker Series. With encouragement from the Center, Paul and Diane initiated a discussion group with about 10 participants that met monthly in Grand Rapids.

The invitation to participants was the opportunity to reflect, discuss, and encourage action using positive organizational practices. Paul and Diane started the group with a three-month trial period after which participants could opt out. Their group met for a full year, which offered proof that there existed some degree of interest in this approach.
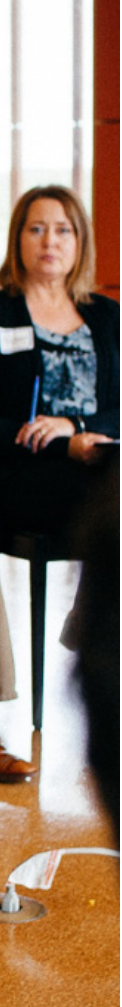
Participants helped lead discussions, host meetings in their offices/homes, and co-created a very lively, informative, and engaged experience. Given this success, Paul and Diane officially launched the first official POS Community of Practice in 2014, and their group continues to this day.

We invite leaders around the globe to consider starting similar groups to enhance their leadership knowledge and practice. This Guide has been designed to help you form and lead a POS Community of Practice.

The Guide is organized into five thematic areas. Within each area we provide a selection of discussion topics or activities from which to choose, designed to ignite conversation about various aspects of the focus area (as shown in the diagram below). Groups can start anywhere, choosing activities from any point in the Guide. In addition to the content provided, groups can also select content of their own, drawing from resources and other research in the field. The ultimate goal is to create engaged conversation about POS and support collective learning and practice.

#1 Choose Focus Area & Topic/Activity

- **Community of Practice Kickoff**
- **Positive Leadership**
- **Positive Meaning and Purpose.**
- **Positive Ethics and Virtues**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Positive Culture**

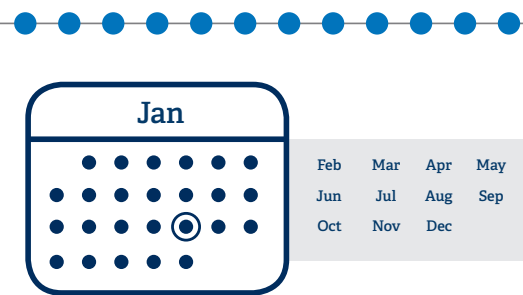**Discussion Topic/Activity content sourced by a group member**

#2 Follow Activity Structure

- **PRACTICE CHECK-IN**
- **READ or WATCH**
- **SET-UP/CONTEXT**
- **REFLECT & SHARE**
- **DISCUSS/PRACTICE**
- **CLOSE**

#3 Create Consistency

12 months / 1 day a month

| Jan				
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
	Oct	Nov	Dec	

Guiding Principles for Starting a Community of Practice

Leading and sustaining a Community of Practice can be challenging. Setting clear intentions for the group and gaining commitment from participants are keys to success.

From our experience, four principles create the foundation for a successful and sustained group experience:
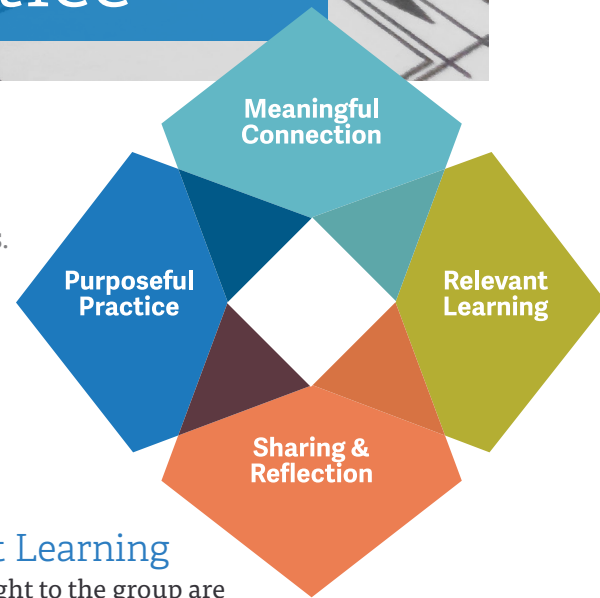
Connection

Creating a rich opportunity for people interested in POS to gather and connect. If meaningful, connections made in the group will extend beyond the boundaries of the group and flourish into long and valuable professional and personal relationships.

Relevant Learning

Topics brought to the group are relevant, useful for day-to-day application, and speak to individual interests and real challenges faced by leaders and practitioners.

Purposeful Practice

The group provides tangible ways to take insights or new ideas and put them into practice both in the group and in day-to-day work, using the group to share and reflect on learning and refine practice.

Sharing and Reflection

Research conducted by Google has shown that psychological safety, which allows for vulnerability, brings people in groups closer together. As members share personal stories about what's working (and what is not) and reflect on their learning, a powerful action-learning loop is put into practice.

Success in these four areas creates a sweet spot of engagement and learning where participants are enlivened by the group's meetings, inspired to experiment with new practices, and moved to share what they are learning with others. A successful Community of Practice grows as people who find value in the community widen the circle to others who can benefit from joining in and practicing positive organizational principles.

Leading and Sustaining a Community of Practice

Like many things in life, creating and sustaining a successful Community of Practice is both an art and a science. Leading these groups takes commitment and a substantial investment of time and energy. Here are some suggestions for setting up and successfully maintaining your group, based on experiences so far[1]:

Be clear about your intention to start and lead a Community of Practice

- Do you realistically have the time and energy to take this on?
- Do you have the temperament and skills to facilitate a diverse group with diverse communication styles?
- Who in the group can share leadership responsibilities?

Structure of successful communities

- Timing and frequency. A group should commit to meeting regularly. We recommend monthly meetings, up to a one-year total period, with each meeting at least 90 minutes in duration. Twelve months of meetings creates twelve touchpoints, which support high-quality connections and relationship building. A reliable structure also helps people engage in meaningful learning.

- Group size. A total group size of 10-15 is ideal. There will always be some absences at each meeting so this group size supports intimacy and openness. If your group gets too large, discussion can be unintentionally thwarted. Consider breaking into two smaller groups if one group becomes too large.

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1 Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner are globally recognized leaders in the fields of social learning and Communities of Practice. Their research and wisdom on forming, leading, and sustaining effective communities of practice can be accessed at myumi.ch/abRWK.

- Group composition. Diversity of the group membership is desirable. Consider inviting participants from different types and sizes of organizations, different roles and levels within organizations, internal practitioners and external consultants, gender and ethnic diversity, introverts and extroverts, etc. Welcoming this diversity and facilitating conversation so that all voices can be heard will deepen your experience.

- Shared responsibility. Call upon the group to help with sustaining the group's efforts: help with organizing (i.e., sending meeting invites, securing meeting venues, distributing pre-meeting materials), facilitating activities, or other tasks throughout the lifetime of the group.

Facilitation skills are crucial

- Decide whether there will be one facilitator for the duration of the group or whether the facilitator role will rotate month to month or topic to topic.

- Consider writing a role description for the facilitator so that everyone understands the facilitator's job. If the role becomes too complex, consider breaking it up into multiple roles such as timekeeper, offering a starting connection activity, discussion facilitator, offering a closing reflection, etc.

- The topic of each meeting can be decided by the group or by the facilitator. Ensure some amount of input on the topics to preserve a diversity of interests.

- Be clear about who will be responsible for setting the agenda, collecting resources, distributing pre-work, etc. In some cases, this may be the facilitator, but the group may also divide these responsibilities.

- Allow conversation to flow organically. Start with the scheduled topic but be open to following the energy and interest of the group for the evening's conversation. Curiosity and exploration may take the group to new places!

- Create some structure for conversation to allow for an even distribution of talking. You might begin your meeting with a simple question and then have each member briefly answer in a go-around. This gets everyone's voice in the room right away and encourages participation throughout the evening. If you notice that some members are quiet, gently invite them to offer a comment about what they might have to add to the conversation or check in with them outside of the meeting.

Food and space make a difference to the quality of the experience

- Food (particularly tasty food) is often a great motivator in gatherings.

- The space where your group meets affects the quality of your group's experience. A quiet, private, and comfortable space is likely to encourage more authentic conversation.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

MEETING CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES

Summary

In this Guide, we have curated content around five areas of Positive Organizational Scholarship: Positive Leadership, Meaning and Purpose, Ethics and Virtues, Relationships, and Culture. A number of activities are provided within each area so that groups can choose the areas that address their interests.

A Word About Activity Structure

The activities offered under each focus area are organized to be easily accessible. Activities are structured in the following way to make them simple to facilitate:

- To support the intention of the Community of Practice, each meeting starts with a **PRACTICE CHECK-IN** to provide an opportunity for the group to reflect together on the practices they experimented with from the previous meeting.

- Each activity offers a pre-meeting learning–something to **READ** or **WATCH** that will frame the meeting and help participants get an intro to the meeting topic. The pre-meeting materials were intentionally chosen to be accessible and short in duration.

- Some activities offer a quote or statement, **SET-UP/CONTEXT,** to kick off the conversation. Feel free to use this or your own commentary to start the meeting.

- We have provided prompts for each activity under **REFLECT & SHARE**. These questions can be posed for individual reflection. They are also suitable for asking participants to share one at a time in a go-around.

- Questions listed under **DISCUSS/PRACTICE** are intended for open discussion about the topic or about ways to apply the learning in the workplace.

- Finally, in the **CLOSE** we have provided questions to help debrief the experience of the meeting and offer additional resources for anyone who might be interested in exploring the topic further.

> In addition to the resources provided here, a vast array of content—blog posts, videos, recorded lectures, and talks, etc.—is readily available online from universities, professional associations, online groups, lay and business journals, or from local experts. Your group should pick and choose resources (whether directly from the Center or from other sources) they think will spark the most generative conversation and robust collective learning.

POS Community of Practice Kickoff

Beginnings are important rituals in any group. What happens early matters! How a beginning is handled transmits what is valuable to a group and what the experience holds and sets a trajectory for the growth and development of the group. In a Community of Practice, the word "community" is also intentional and communicates the value of participation and co-creation.

The following activities represent an array of ways both to introduce the group to the concept of positive organizations and positive organizing, as well as the opportunity to meet and begin to create meaningful bonds with each other. We recommend starting with **Connection and Intention** to kick off your group and then following with one or more of the other activities.

Connection and Intention

WELCOME

Prior to the first meeting send a welcome message to your group, reminding them of the meeting details. You can also share participant names, titles and organizations, and, if possible, links to their bios or online profiles (e.g., LinkedIn) so participants get a chance to see whom else is in the group.

SET-UP/CONTEXT

At the start of the first meeting, warmly welcome the group, sharing why you (the group's leader) were inspired to start the group and your own hopes for the Community of Practice.

REFLECT & SHARE

In a go-around ask participants to respond briefly (approximately two minutes per person) to the following questions:

- What inspired you to attend this gathering?
- Why is this topic important to you?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

As a group, discuss one of the following questions and come up with agreements to structure the group's time together:

- What do you hope to gain from your experience in this group?
- As a group, what do we see as the core intention of our time together?
- Share an area of practice you would like to explore and/or develop in your leadership.
- What practices might we take on to support our group's intentions and bring out the best experience and outcomes for all of us?
- How can we all support the success of our Community of Practice, e.g., sharing responsibility for managing the group?

CLOSE

- What topic would we like to discuss at our next meeting? Who would like to facilitate the session?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Deeper Connection

Your Community of Practice likely includes a diverse group of professionals and rich source of knowledge and experience. If you would like to create the opportunity to learn more about participants, additional check-in activities can catalyze deeper connections.

The Check-In Deck, developed by staff at HopeLab, provides 19 creative check-in exercises organized in the following categories:

- Getting Acquainted
- Inviting Presence
- Diving Deeper
- Reflecting and Closing

Peruse the Deck and choose an activity that you think will enliven your group!

SET-UP/CONTEXT
Each activity in the Check-In Deck provides instructions for prep, set-up, and facilitation.

REFLECT & SHARE
Following the activity, invite the group to reflect on the following:
- What did you learn about yourself in this activity?
- What did you learn about other participants?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE
- Where can check-in activities be plugged in at work?
- What might be the usefulness of activities like these in your workplace?
- What is the difference, in your view, between meaningful check-in activities and the typical "ice breakers" that some facilitators use?

CLOSE
- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

An Introduction to Positive Organizational Scholarship

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Positive Organizational Scholarship: Meet the Movement"
An Interview with Kim Cameron, Jane Dutton, and Robert Quinn
By Susan D. Bernstein, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, April 2003
myumi.ch/aKqoP

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In a 2003 interview Kim Cameron, from Michigan Ross, describes Positive Organizational Scholarship as a new field that "represents a particular way of thinking, a value orientation, and a posture toward organizational research. It focuses on the dynamics in organizations that lead to the development of human strength, foster vitality and flourishing in employees, make possible resilience and restoration, and cultivate extraordinary individual and organizational performance."

REFLECT & SHARE

- What in particular resonates most for you in this definition of POS or from what you learned in the reading distributed before the meeting?

- Where in your life do you see these kinds of positive practices occurring? What impact do you see from these practices?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- How might these concepts become more widely known and practiced in the business world?

- What is one thing you can do in the next month to bring more attention to this research and these practices?

- What is one thing that sparks your curiosity to learn more about these practices or this field?

CLOSE

- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?

- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Your Reflected Best Self

In traditional feedback processes, the focus of attention (intentionally or unintentionally) is often on weaknesses and growth areas. Most 360-degree feedback processes are also typically anonymous; as such, observations provided lose some meaning in interpretation.

Imagine a process that was designed to illuminate what you do well in both content and context. The Reflected Best Self Exercise™ (RBSE™) from the Center for Positive Organizations is designed to do just that. It enables participants to have their unique strengths reflected back to them through stories provided non-anonymously by colleagues, friends, and family members.

This session may require additional time to process the RBSE reports.

At least two months prior to your meeting, have participants purchase and complete the RBSE and review their reports. The pre-meeting reading listed below will help set context for the RBSE and the meeting's discussion.

NOTE: The Center for Positive Organizations can support the administration of the RBSE for your group for a fee. Contact them for assistance.

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ
"How to Play to Your Strengths"
By Laura Morgan Roberts, Gretchen Spreitzer, Jane Dutton, Robert Quinn, Emily Heaphy, and Brianna Barker, *Harvard Business Review*, January 2005
myumi.ch/L35Am

PRACTICE CHECK-IN
- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In this article, the authors note that while people remember criticism, and are even wired to pay particular attention to negative information, awareness of faults doesn't necessarily translate into better performance. Based on that understanding, the Reflected Best Self Exercise helps you remember your strengths—and construct a plan to build upon them.

REFLECT & SHARE

- From the perspective of your friends and colleagues, what is one of your greatest strengths?

- What other themes surfaced from all of the stories submitted? Do these themes resonate with how you understand yourself? How or how not?

- Did any of the stories surprise you? Why or why not?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- How does providing feedback on one's best self differ from your experience of traditional feedback tools or practices?

- How might you use your RBSE results? What support will help you enhance your practice?

- How can the notion of one's best self be supported in the workplace?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?

- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Positive Leadership

Leaders play a critical role in the success of their organizations. Positive leaders pay attention not only to the success of the business but also to the flourishing of their employees and the communities in which their businesses operate.

Positive leadership refers to the application of principles arising from the fields of positive organizational scholarship, positive psychology, and the positive change literature. The concept of positive has at least three connotations:

1. A focus on positively deviant performance, or successful performance that dramatically exceeds the norm in a positive direction;

2. An affirmative bias, or an orientation toward, for example, strengths rather than weaknesses, optimism rather than pessimism, supportive rather than critical communication; and

3. A focus on virtuousness, on the best of the human condition and that which human beings consider to be inherently good.

In this sense, the concept of "positive" possesses the attributes of the heliotropic effect. This effect is defined as the tendency in all living systems toward that which gives life and away from that which depletes life—toward positive energy and away from negative energy. All living systems have an inclination toward the positive. For example, plants lean toward the light, people learn and remember positive information faster and better than negative information, positive words predominate over negative words in all languages, all life forms from bacteria to mammals possess an inclination toward positive energy, so strategies that capitalize on the positive similarly tend to produce life-giving, flourishing outcomes in individuals and organizations.

A focus on the positive is life giving for individuals and organizations in the same way that positive energy in nature enhances thriving in living organisms.

Positive leaders focus on this primary question:

How can we bring the best out in others in our organization, as both human beings and as contributors to the business?

Drawn from *Positive Leadership: Strategies for Extraordinary Performance* by Kim Cameron and *The Pollyanna Principle: Selectivity in Language, Memory, and Thought* by Margaret Matlin and David Stang.

Leading During Difficult Times

RELEVANT LEARNING: WATCH
"Can a Divided America Heal?" (20:17)
An interview with Jonathan Haidt
TEDx New York City, November 2016
myumi.ch/6xRO9

PRACTICE CHECK-IN
- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT
In this interview conducted by Chris Anderson, Jonathan Haidt says, "Survey research by Pew Research shows that the degree to which we feel that the other side is not just... we don't just dislike them; we strongly dislike them, and we think that they are a threat to the nation. Those numbers have been going up and up, and those are over 50 percent now on both sides. People are scared because it feels like this is different than before. It's much more intense."

Our workplaces likely contain a diversity of political opinion. After the conclusion of the 2016 election, our employees likely have a variety of emotions in reaction to the election results. This can potentially lead to conflict or an environment where true feelings are kept beneath the surface.

REFLECT & SHARE
- When you personally imagine engaging someone with a different political view than yours, what emotions come up for you?

- What kind of "matrix" bubble does your organization live within?
- How have you created safe space for others to express their opinions?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE
- What specifically can leaders do to create connection between employees with divergent views?
- What practices have you seen succeed or fail?
- In this particular context, what can you try within the next month to support connection, curiosity, and empathy in your teams?

CLOSE
- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Giving Everyone an A?

RELEVANT LEARNING: WATCH

"How to Give an A" (watch through 07:00)
Talk by Benjamin Zander, renowned conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra
Teachers TV, February 26, 2012
myumi.ch/a0rO4

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In the video of Benjamin Zander, he refers to a quote by Michelangelo: "Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it."

REFLECT & SHARE

- What meaning does this quote have for you and your own leadership approach?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- How might Zander's philosophy of "giving an A" be applied to the workplace? To a workplace practice like Performance Management?
- Think of a time when you brought out the best in someone else. What did you do and how did you do it? Is there someone who you can help tomorrow?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life
By Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander
Penguin Books, reprint edition 2002
The chapter, "Giving an A" provides some stories that could also be useful to set the context for group discussion.
myumi.ch/LR78E

Re-Imagining Performance Management

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"How Adobe Scrapped its Performance Review System and Why It Worked"

By David Burkus, *Forbes*, June 2016

myumi.ch/LPj0P

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In 2015, under the leadership of then head of human resources, Donna Morris, Adobe took the lead as a large corporation abolishing its traditional performance appraisal process. Heralded as extraordinary by some and as foolish by others, Adobe nonetheless created a necessary stir in the business world catalyzing conversation about the intentions of corporate performance management systems and whether age-old practices are actually delivering what is expected.

REFLECT & SHARE

- What are your reactions to Adobe's move to abolish performance appraisals?
- As a participant in a performance process like this, what might be the impact on you— as a manager or as an employee?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- In your experience, are traditional performance management systems positive or negative? What makes them so?
- Given what you have learned from Adobe's example and from today's conversation, how could your organization's performance management practices be improved to better support thriving?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

"Ditching Performance Reviews for Authentic Conversations"

By Chris Murchison

HopeLab, January 8, 2015

myumi.ch/LrRA2

Manager vs. Leader

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Leaders vs. Managers: 17 Traits That Set Them Apart"
By Lisa McKale
ResourcefulManager, March 6, 2016
myumi.ch/J2jPX

"The Difference Between a Leader and a Manager"
By Ron Alvesteffer, 2012
myumi.ch/6jz4o

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In his blog post, Ron Alvesteffer says, "Managers are, by design, implementers of rules, organizers of details, and they ensure compliance. Leaders are challengers of rules, casters of vision, and they define purpose."

REFLECT & SHARE

- Are you more a manager or a leader?
- Are you happy with your answer? Why or why not?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- In what ways do organizations support the distinction between leader and manager?
- Is this distinction helpful? Can one be both a leader and a manager?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Additional resources available from the Center for Positive Organizations at:
myumi.ch/65wOr

Positive Meaning and Purpose

If bosses want to motivate workers, conventional wisdom dictates a simple solution: offer a clear path to a raise, promotion, or other reward. But psychologist Barry Schwartz argues that such tactics can actually hurt performance.

The most valuable employees, he writes, are those who work because they want to do well, not to check boxes: great teachers don't just "teach to the test," great doctors don't just order profitable procedures. It's on managers, then, to foster that impulse—keeping job descriptions general, for example, so workers think holistically about their goals. Of course, good work should be rewarded, financially or otherwise. But, Schwartz continues, "There is no substitute for the integrity that inspires people" to go above and beyond on their own.

Employees in today's workforce are increasingly looking for meaning and purpose in their roles and in their companies. Without it, many are choosing to move on. Creating opportunities for positive meaning and purpose at work enhances learning and goal achievement on the job.

Positive organizations must ask themselves:
How do we identify a higher purpose for our business? How do we infuse this into our organization in ways that genuinely inspire and motivate?

Exploring Purpose through Artifact

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Why You Need a Purpose in Life"
An interview with Victor Strecher
Wall Street Journal, March 30, 2014
myumi.ch/J7lk0

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

Prior to the meeting ask each participant to bring a small object that represents something or someone in his or her life that holds great meaning.

Introduce the meeting, saying that today we are going to create an experience of purpose through a fun activity.

SHARE & REFLECT

- Divide the group into pairs.
- In each pair, Partner A first shares her/his artifact and tells a story about why it is so meaningful to them. Partner B listens actively and graciously.
- When Partner A is finished, Partner B thanks them and then reflects back to Partner A what they heard that impacted them.
- Partner B then shares a story of their own, catalyzed by something Partner A just shared.
- Repeat, now with Partner B sharing her/his artifact and telling a story about why it is so meaningful to them and so on.

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- What was your experience of this exercise? How did it make you feel? What was it like to be listened to by your partner? What was it like to share a story of your own, provoked by something you heard your partner say?
- How does your artifact reflect your sense of purpose in life? What about at work?
- What's one way you can more actively or intentionally connect to your purpose at your work tomorrow or next week?

CLOSE

- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Life on Purpose: How Living for What Matters Most Changes Everything
By Victor Strecher
HarperOne, 2016
myumi.ch/6wRxQ

The Future of Work

RELEVANT LEARNING: WATCH

"The Way We Think About Work Is Broken" (08:02)
Talk by Barry Schwartz
TED Conference, March 2014
myumi.ch/JmzA1

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

Apart from a paycheck, there are intangible values that, Barry Schwartz suggests, our current way of thinking about work simply ignores.

SHARE & REFLECT

- What are the key takeaways of this video for our work as managers and leaders?
- What makes work satisfying for you? For others in your organization?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- What are common workplace practices that make employees feel like cogs in a wheel?
- What can you experiment with this next week to make your work more satisfying for yourself and/or people you work with?

CLOSE

- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Why We Work
By Barry Schwartz
Simon & Schuster/ TED Books, 2015
myumi.ch/Jmz4z

The Fundamental State of Leadership

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership"
By Robert Quinn
Harvard Business Review, July/August 2005
myumi.ch/Jl0g7

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In the pre-reading Robert Quinn says, "When leaders do their best work, they don't copy anyone. Instead, they draw on their own fundamental values and capabilities— operating in a frame of mind that is true to them yet, paradoxically, not their normal state of being. I call it the *fundamental state of leadership*. It's the way we lead when we encounter a crisis and finally choose to move forward."

REFLECT & SHARE:

- Recall a demanding experience from your past career that truly pushed you to your edge and challenged your sense of intention, integrity, trust, and adaptability.
- What was the context?
- What was the dilemma for you or what was at stake?
- What action did you choose?
- How did the situation conclude or get resolved?
- What leadership lesson did you take away?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- Is there a leadership challenge you're struggling with right now?
- What can you apply from the article to that situation?

CLOSE

- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Lift: The Fundamental State of Leadership
By Ryan W. Quinn and Robert Quinn
Berrett-Koehler, 2015
myumi.ch/6pzAE

What's Your Purpose?

RELEVANT LEARNING: WATCH

"U-M Students Bring Disney Songs to Life for Kids in the Hospital" (02:27)
Michigan Medicine, January 19, 2016
myumi.ch/6O2ow

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

Show the Michigan Medicine video at the start of the group's meeting and then share a personal reflection about how this video affected you.

REFLECT & SHARE

Studies have shown that an important element of resilience is doing something that is meaningful not just for yourself but for others.

- Share a story of a time you did something meaningful for someone else.
- How did this act impact your sense of purpose in life?
- How might this kind of purposeful giving be activated in the workplace?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- What is something meaningful you can do to support someone at your workplace within the next month?

CLOSE

- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Additional resources available from the Center for Positive Organizations at:
myumi.ch/aGMGP

Positive Ethics and Virtues

You don't have to look far to find examples of morals gone awry in the business world. Business school textbooks are filled with them and they become cautionary tales for emerging leaders.

Ethical and virtuous organizational leaders have a positive impact on their organizations. Studies show that employees who consider their leaders to be ethical are more satisfied with their jobs and perform better. Employees are very sensitive to what is fair, just, and right, and ethical leadership enhances the sense that one's work is meaningful and "good." Employees with ethical leaders are also far less likely to engage in unethical behavior like discrimination, which further adds to a positive work environment.

These leaders are role models whose behavior employees respect and want to emulate. And when employees are treated well by their leaders, they pay it forward by treating others well, too.

Ethical and virtuous leaders ask themselves the following questions:

How do we cultivate attributes such as generosity, forgiveness, and compassion in our organization?

What is the relationship between these attributes and organizational performance?

How do we inspire people toward doing "more good," not simply "less bad?"

Leading by Example

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Why Leading By Example Isn't Always Enough"
By David Mayer
Fast Company, January 20, 2016
myumi.ch/aZAkq

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In his *Fast Company* article, David Mayer writes, "While responding to the idea of ethical leadership is pretty easy, doing so in practice is another story altogether. Many leaders assume that as long as they're a good person, their employees will follow suit. It's true that being a moral person is critical to good leadership, but it's also important to be a moral *manager*. Leading by example, and example alone, is almost never enough."

REFLECT & SHARE

- What traits do ethical leaders share?
- How do you observe these traits in action?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- How do your hiring practices consider ethical behavior?
- How are ethics embedded into other organization policies or practices? How effective are the policies and practices? What would make them more effective?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

The Bare Truth of Leadership

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ
"Leadership—Warts and All"
By Barbara Kellerman
Harvard Business Review, January 2004
myumi.ch/aXA3R

PRACTICE CHECK-IN
- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT
"The words 'leader' and 'leadership' in everyday language have acquired an inherently positive bias," writes Barbara Kellerman in her *Harvard Business Review* article. But she goes on to say that "the reality is, of course, that flawed leaders are everywhere. In corporations, overweening
personal ambition and greed have driven many a CEO to run afoul of the law. In the last couple of years alone, scores of powerful and successful executives have been indicted for financial wrongdoing of various kinds."

REFLECT & SHARE
- Why do leaders behave badly?
- Why do followers follow bad leaders?
- What is the consequence of bad leadership behavior?
- How can bad leadership be slowed or even stopped?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE
- What are some examples of bad leadership in your organization?
- What can you do to stop bad leadership from taking root in your organization?

CLOSE
- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

The Virtuous Organization

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Organizations and the Virtuous Circle"
By José Luis Guillén
IESE Business School, University of Navarra, March 27, 2014
myumi.ch/JDMkG

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In this IESE article, Jose Luis Guillén writes, "By fostering gratitude, kindness, compassion, care, and forgiveness we can dramatically impact individual and organizational performance. Implementing these and other virtuous practices is positively related to individual and organizational performance. Relevant impact has been found—across many different industries and companies—on variables such as profitability, productivity, quality, innovation, customer satisfaction, and employee retention, among others."

REFLECT & SHARE

- How do you display virtuousness at work across its different dimensions?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- How do you face mistakes or difficult situations at work? Do you forgive and take advantage of mistakes as a way of learning or create a culture of fear?
- How is gratitude fostered in your team / organization?
- How can you demonstrate and encourage the public expression of compassion?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL ASSESSMENT

VIA Character Strengths Assessment
VIA has created a tool to measure your character strengths, which are organized around the virtues of wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. The Assessment can be accessed and taken for free at myumi.ch/a8pk9.

- The Assessment could be used as an additional pre-work assignment and then woven into your group's reflection and discussion.

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

"Organizational Virtuousness and Performance"
Chapter by Kim Cameron, in *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline*, pp 48-65, Berrett-Koehler, 2003
myumi.ch/L127d

Principles and Practices of a Virtuous Organization

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ
"Earlham College Principles and Practices"
myumi.ch/6nzQw

PRACTICE CHECK-IN
- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT
Earlham College is a Quaker institution in Indiana. Earlham's principles reflect the values held dearly by the college and practiced by the college community. Earlham's student guide says that these practices are "principled not because they conform to abstract rules, but because they are done thoughtfully and conscientiously." Earlham's approach to leading its community is unique and powerful.

REFLECT & SHARE
- What aspects of Earlham College's Principles and Practices stood out to you?
- What impact did the example of Earlham College's Principles and Practices have on you and your aspirations for your workplace?
- What is a core value of your business? What are the organizational practices that support that value? What are the questions or queries that support employees in being reflective in their practice of this value?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE
- How might aspects of Earlham College's Principles and Practices approach be applied to the workplace?

CLOSE
- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Additional resources available from the Center for Positive Organizations at: myumi.ch/6eePn.

Positive Relationships

In her 2016 Harvard Business Review article, Christine Porath cites research she's done during the past 20 years on acts of incivility in the workplace. From data culled from thousands of employees, Porath found that 98 percent had experienced uncivil behavior and 99 percent had witnessed it. Rude or uncivil behavior ranged from outright nastiness and intentional undermining to ignoring people's opinions to checking email during meetings. Left unchecked, this negative behavior has significant impact on employee wellbeing and workplace relationships.

On the other hand, positive relationships in the workplace are characterized by high quality connection, compassion, respect, and care. Relationships such as this reflect and amplify the best in colleagues and help create the conditions for flourishing.

As a leader, a key question to ask is:

How do we create energizing, generative relationships in our workplace?

High-Quality Connections

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Fostering High-Quality Connections: How to Deal with Corrosive Relationships at Work"
By Jane Dutton
Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2003
myumi.ch/6kzBd

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In her SSIR article, Jane Dutton describes the costs of incivility at work and how attention to connection and attention to respectful engagement builds mutual positive regard, trust, and active engagement.

Today we are going to practice the art of building high-quality connections.

REFLECT & SHARE

High-Quality Connection Exercise

- Pair up, and in five minutes create a high-quality connection with your partner.

- **Debrief in pairs**

  - What did your partner say or do to make you feel at ease and comfortable?

  - Describe how you felt (emotionally and physically) at that moment?

- **Debrief in the large group**

  - What specifically did you do to connect with your partner? What did you say? What did you do with your body language? Your emotions?

  - Based on your experience, how would you define/describe the practice of creating a high-quality connection?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- How do high-quality connections happen in your workplace?

- What can you do to encourage more high-quality connections in your workplace?

- What's one thing you can do tomorrow or next week to cultivate a high-quality connection with someone at work?

CLOSE

- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?

- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Energize Your Workplace: How to Create and Sustain High-Quality Connections at Work
By Jane Dutton
Jossey-Bass, 2003
myumi.ch/JYgXM

Emotional Intelligence

RELEVANT LEARNING: WATCH

"Social Intelligence and Leadership" (10:15)
An interview with Daniel Goleman
Harvard Business Review, August 11, 2008
myumi.ch/Lozrm

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In the interview with Daniel Goleman, he quotes data indicating there is a direct correlation between the emotional intelligence of leadership and how organizations perform. He goes on to say that beyond emotional intelligence, which is essential for individual development and self-mastery, social intelligence involves the ability to influence others—being able to tune into other people, to read them, to know how they are thinking about things, what they are feeling right now, etc., and using that knowledge to learn how to communicate more effectively.

REFLECT & SHARE

- Think of a recent interaction at work where you felt understood by a colleague.
- What was it about this interaction that created these feelings? What did the other person say or do?
- What was the impact of that interaction on you? What was the impact on your relationship with that colleague?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- How might being emotionally and socially intelligent enhance your team or organization's effectiveness?
- As you consider your own leadership growth, what is one thing you can do to increase your emotional and social intelligence as a leader? What steps can you take in the next month to grow in that area?

CLOSE

- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Bringing Your Emotions to Work

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Make Your Emotions Work for You in Negotiations"
By Shirli Kopelman
Harvard Business Review, May 16, 2014
myumi.ch/LzRpG

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In her 2014 *Harvard Business Review* article, Shirli Kopelman argues, "Too often, people refuse to acknowledge their full range of feelings because they're afraid of losing the ability to think rationally and act strategically." Get emotional at work and the typical reaction is to clamp it down. But Kopelman advises that positive and negative emotions are valuable resources you can use to your advantage.

REFLECT & SHARE

- Recall a time recently that you felt a strong emotion at work.
  - Was that emotion positive or negative?
  - What triggered it?
  - What was your immediate reaction to the emotion?
  - Did you choose to express the emotion? Why or why not?
- Share and discuss your responses with a partner.

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- In her article, Kopelman describes five ways to use your emotions as resources.
  - Which of her five strategies have you used and what was the impact on you and others?
  - Which of the strategies is most challenging to do at work? Why?
  - Which of the strategies would you like to try? Why?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Negotiating Genuinely: Being Yourself in Business
By Shirli Kopelman
Stanford University Press, 2014
myumi.ch/LERDp

The Value of Reciprocity at Work

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"5 Ways to Get Better at Asking for Help"
By Wayne Baker
Harvard Business Review, December 18, 2014
myumi.ch/6vRPP

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

There are many reasons why employees shy away from help-seeking at work. Why? Wayne Baker explains, "Asking for help is often perceived as a sign of weakness or ignorance, implying that someone can't get their work done on their own. A second common barrier is nervousness about incurring social debts or obligations—'What do I owe this person now?' Third, and for American workers in particular, personal values can get in the way. Self-reliance is one of the 10 core values that I recently documented in four national surveys, and while it's an admirable trait, it's also self-limiting. In today's organizations, you can't be successful if you don't ask for what you need."

REFLECT & SHARE

- What prevents you from asking for help at work?
- What might be other reasons employees don't ask for help from each other?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- Is there something you need help with at work? Try asking for it tomorrow or next week!
- What can you do to help build a culture where asking for help is the norm?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK: FURTHER READING

Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success
By Adam Grant
Penguin Books, 2014
myumi.ch/abRD2

OPTIONAL GROUP ACTIVITY: RECIPROCITY RING

Participants wanting to explore Wayne Baker's **Reciprocity Ring** exercise can find information at: myumi.ch/LR7OQ. Information on Baker's new **Give & Get App** can be found at: myumi.ch/JNrO3.

Dealing with Toxic Behavior at Work

RELEVANT LEARNING: WATCH
"How to Deal With Jerks at Work" (01:58)
Talk by Gretchen Spreitzer
Michigan Ross, April 27, 2015
myumi.ch/JdOyK

PRACTICE CHECK-IN
- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT
New research from Gretchen Spreitzer shows that toxic co-workers aren't just annoying—they can also affect your work quality. In the video shared before our meeting, Spreitzer offered some tips for dealing with difficult or annoying colleagues in the office.

REFLECT & SHARE
- Bring to mind a situation at work where a colleague was behaving badly.
- How did this person's peers react to the behavior?
- How did this person's manager react to the behavior?
- Was this person's behavior handled well or poorly? Why?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE
- Give an example of when you have seen toxic behavior effectively handled in the workplace.
- What is the impact on an organization's culture when toxic behavior is not dealt with or handled well?

CLOSE
- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Additional resources available from the Center for Positive Organizations at: myumi.ch/6wRpQ.

Positive Culture

Peter Drucker is fabled for having said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." The intent of this statement is clear: Not paying adequate attention to organizational culture can be the downfall of a business.

Organizational culture is now at the forefront of businesses today and the word "culture" is becoming commonplace in the workplace. Organizations of all kinds are now keen to understand what their culture is and how to optimize it, hoping that an engaged and productive culture will boost business performance. But a positive organizational culture produces so much more than productivity. A positive culture humanizes the workplace and creates the conditions for employees to flourish.

A positive culture is influenced by a number of beliefs and practices and informed by answering the following questions:

How do we build high-performing cultures of thriving (high degrees of learning and vitality)?

How do we build high-performing cultures of flourishing (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment)?

How to Build Your Culture

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ
"Five Elements of Building an Organizational Culture"
By Ari Weinzweig
ZingTrain
myumi.ch/Jl0q7

PRACTICE CHECK-IN
- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT
Zingerman's is renowned for its business practices and its training outfit, ZingTrain, has become a significant part of business operations. Regarding culture, Zingerman's co-founder, Ari Weinzweig, says, "At Zingerman's, the culture is the everyday reality of organizational life. The culture is not the mission statement, the vision, your bank balance or the staff handbook, though all those contribute to creating it. The culture is what we do and say, the way we behave, the way we treat each other, our products, our customers, our community, and ourselves. In essence, it's the 'personality of the company.' While speeches, grand plans, fancy training manuals, etc., have some influence on the culture, they are just as likely to have a negative as a positive influence. Ultimately, it's what leaders do much more than what we say that makes the culture what it is."

REFLECT & SHARE
- What are the key elements of your organization's culture?
- How do you live, measure, and reward behaviors related to your culture?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE
- How well are you living your organizational culture currently?
- What is one action you can take to be in greater alignment with your culture?

CLOSE
- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Flourishing at Work

RELEVANT LEARNING: WATCH

"Flourishing" (23:00)
By Jane Dutton
Positive Business Conference, Michigan Ross, May 12, 2016
myumi.ch/6O2Ow

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In her talk, Jane Dutton says that people "deserve to flourish at work." She adds, "There are three conditions that we can bet on that foster flourishing at work—positive meaning, positive emotions, and positive connections."

REFLECT & SHARE

- Describe a time at work when you felt most alive?
- What are some words to describe how that felt?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- Where does your organization struggle in supporting employees to have an experience of positive meaning, emotions, or connections at work?
- What's one experiment you can try next month to help others feel more alive at work?

CLOSE

- What is your one key takeaway from this meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

Diversity and Inclusion Begin with Belonging

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Diversity Efforts Fall Short Unless Employees Feel That They Belong"
By Pat Wadors
Harvard Business Review, August 10, 2016
myumi.ch/aGMoP

"What Signals is Your Office Sending about Who Belongs?"
By Aleah Warren
Medium, September 22, 2016
myumi.ch/aZAnq

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

Diversity and inclusion are growing challenges in many organizations, particularly in the tech industry. But as these terms become more commonplace, their meanings and the programs that seek to achieve them are being questioned. Do traditional diversity and inclusion programs work?

REFLECT & SHARE

(individually, then share in pairs or triads)

We have all had the experience of being new to a group or organization.
- What did people say or do that made you feel welcomed?
- What in your onboarding experience made you feel that you belonged?

Bring to mind a situation where you did not feel welcome or that you belonged.
- What specifically happened that created this experience?
- How did you feel? What did you do?
- What actions did you take following that situation? Why?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- Why does a lack of diversity in corporate America persist?

- What are the consequences of not supporting inclusion at work?

- What other things besides belonging might be foundational to supporting an experience of inclusion at work?

- What things could you do as a leader to increase the general sense of belonging in your workplace?

- What could your office do now to create greater ambient belonging?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?

- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

"Millennials Have a Different Definition of Diversity and Inclusion"
By Lidia Dishman
Fast Company, May 18, 2015
myumi.ch/aAMnW

Beginnings at Work

RELEVANT LEARNING: WATCH
"HopeLab Culture: Beginnings" (07:23)
By Chris Murchison
HopeLab, April 6, 2016
myumi.ch/aXAER

PRACTICE CHECK-IN
- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT
In the video shared before today's meeting, the former CEO of HopeLab says, "Beginnings are quite interesting because as humans we give very disproportionate weight to what happens to us initially in relationship and in engagement. So if you pay a lot of attention to the early days of an engagement you get an enormous leverage, an enormous amount of mileage, in terms of the way people end up feeling about themselves and about the environment they are working in."

REFLECT & SHARE
- What was the onboarding experience like for you in your current job? What was similar or different from what you saw in the HopeLab video?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE
- What is one way your organization can improve the onboarding process, based on what you saw in the HopeLab experience?

CLOSE
- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING
"A Step-By-Step Guide to Onboarding New Employees"
By Jacob Shriar
Officevibe, May 11, 2016
myumi.ch/L47Mx

Endings at Work

RELEVANT LEARNING: READ

"Hello, Goodbye: Endings as Positive Opportunities"
By Chris Murchison
Huffington Post, August, 2015
myumi.ch/JDMeG

PRACTICE CHECK-IN

- What did you experiment with since our last meeting?
- What did you notice?
- What did you learn?

SET-UP/CONTEXT

In the pre-meeting reading, Murchison writes, "While most organizations invest time and resources in beginnings, not all companies make a similar investment in the human side of endings—and the results of that are easy to see. The traditional layoff process is largely a legal and transactional affair, full of practices that are well intentioned but often leave employees feeling startled, hurt, and betrayed."

Layoffs, however, are sometimes necessary business actions. Murchison believes "they are a critical inflection point for everyone involved, a moment that's remembered for a lifetime. Transitions out of an organization are an amazing opportunity to reinforce your values and culture, to support connection and humanness, and to foster a healthy sense of control in the face of adversity. A thoughtful and respectful ending can be a profound experience with lasting positive impact."

REFLECT & SHARE

- What was your key takeaway from the article?
- What surprised you?
- What challenged you?

DISCUSS/PRACTICE

- What's one practice that you can advocate for in your organization to create more positive endings for employees?

CLOSE

- What is one key takeaway or practice you will try before the next meeting?
- What was your experience of the meeting today? What did you most enjoy? What would improve our time together?

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

"Congratulations! You've Been Fired"
By Dan Lyons
New York Times, April 9, 2016
myumi.ch/J9OWe

Additional resources available from the Center for Positive Organizations at: myumi.ch/6xRQG.

Resources

POS Community of Practice Coaches

For advice regarding your Community of Practice, please reach out to our coaches. Send an email to cpo-copcoaches@umich.edu, and a coach will follow-up with you.

PAUL JONES
pfjones@umich.edu
in LinkedIn profile

DIANE JONES
diane@cjonesgroup.com
in LinkedIn profile

REBECCA BEAGAN
rcbeagan@umich.edu
in LinkedIn profile

CHRIS MURCHISON
chris.murchison@gmail.com
in LinkedIn profile

BELINDA LIU
belinda@hivequest.co
in LinkedIn profile

POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONS CONSORTIUM

The Positive Organizations Consortium is the preeminent peer-to-peer learning and networking cooperative designed to enhance the business effectiveness and sustainability of positive organizational change. The Consortium unites researchers and organizational change leaders in the quest to build a better working world where employees are healthier, more engaged, and more loyal, and companies are more financially successful.

positiveorgs.bus.umich.edu/consortium

POSITIVE BUSINESS CONFERENCE

POS RESEARCH CONFERENCE
Illuminating Research for a Positive Future

Hosted annually by the Michigan Ross, the **Positive Business Conference** gives you the opportunity to engage with thought leaders and the latest research on positive business approaches that yield extraordinary results. Network with like-minded individuals from diverse industries and participate in practical hands-on workshops.

Michigan Ross is the leading center of global excellence in positive business. Ross faculty pioneered positive organizational scholarship and continue to lead research that applies positive business practices across all functions, from accounting to marketing to supply chain management and more. We created the Positive Business Conference to share this knowledge and foster a community of leaders to make the world of work a better place.

positivebusinessconference.com

The Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) Research Conference is a biennial gathering of top scholars, featuring development and research sessions geared towards visioning the next generation of the POS movement. Since the inaugural conference in 2001, the Center for Positive Organizations has convened each event with the hope of sharing and advancing qualitative and quantitative research in the field.

posresearchconference.com

Tools sponsored by the Center for Positive Organizations

Below is information for tools mentioned in this Guide. All of the Center's tools can be accessed at: myumi.ch/6v2RV.

The Reflected Best Self Exercise

The Reflected Best Self Exercise (RBSE) enables people to identify their unique strengths and talents, making it an excellent tool for personal development. Each participant requests positive feedback from significant people in his/her life and then synthesizes it into a cumulative portrait of his/her "best self" that can be used to amplify skill strengths in life and work.

For an additional fee, the Center for Positive Organizations can manage the data collection process for more than 10 participants.

The Reciprocity Ring™

The Reciprocity Ring™ is a high energy, group-level activity that enables participants to give and get help, strengthen group cohesion, and generate positive emotions. Participants engage in acts of paying it forward while expanding their networks and gaining concrete benefits such as solving a problem, gathering critical information for a task, or receiving a referral to someone who can help with a project.

myumi.ch/LR7OQ

The Give & Get App

Give & Get™ is a mobile application designed to dramatically improve employee engagement and drive better work results. Built with a proven methodology for enabling people to create and extend relationships with their co-workers, Give & Get enables distributed teams to be more productive.

myumi.ch/JNrO3

Center for Positive Organizations

Chris White, Managing Director
chriswhi@umich.edu

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
CASE EXAMPLES

Grand Rapids POS Community of Practice

The first POS Community of Practice, piloted in Grand Rapids, provides some best practices on group structure, materials, and more. This group was started in 2013 with Paul and Diane Jones, who are POS devotees and sponsors of the Center for Positive Organization's Positive Links Speaker Series.

With support from the Center, Paul and Diane initiated a discussion group that met one evening per month in Grand Rapids with the intention to reflect, discuss, and encourage action around positive organizational practices. Paul and Diane started the group with a three-month trial period after which participants could opt out if they chose. Their group blew through the three-month milestone and met for a full year. Participants helped lead discussions, hosted meetings in their offices, and co-created a very lively, informative, and engaged experience. Given

this success, Paul and Diane launched the first official POS Community of Practice in 2014, and their group continues today.

Paul and Diane's most crucial takeaway was that the Community of Practice will evolve and adapt to best suit the needs and interests of the group. In that spirit, their recommendations can be used as starting points from which to co-create personalized communities.
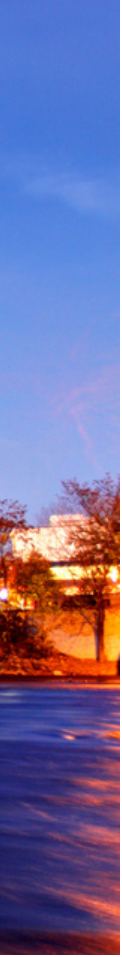
Advice for meeting structure and commitment

- Focus on building a diverse group representing different companies. Hand select your initial group of 10 or more positive people you know but who do not know each other.

- Make personal calls to invite members and follow up with an email (see attached sample).

- Once you get going, build the group by encouraging current members to invite other positive people to join.

- Meet for at least 90 minutes once each month. Start with a three-month commitment. Offer an extension at the end of the three months if the group would like to continue to meet.

- Plan an agenda to help keep the meetings to 90 minutes.

- Meet at a group member's office on a rotating basis to keep the environment engaging and provide an opportunity to build relationships by seeing where participants work.

- Use a variety of materials and methods for learning, including TED Talks, magazine articles, a guest speaker, a volunteer from the group, a game, or available POS products to provide interesting ways to engage the group.

- The Reflected Best Self Exercise tool from CPO is a powerful way to start a group and learn more about each participant from the start. The tool comes with a teaching guide to help structure a group conversation about the results. If you choose to use the RBSE, note that it takes at least two to four weeks advance prep.

- To dive deeply into a topic, more than one session may be required. Be okay with moving slowly. Three months could be spent on one topic for a greater level of depth in one domain of research!

- At each meeting, discuss as a group what direction and what topic is desired for the next meeting.

- Gather feedback at the end of each meeting to enrich the group's experience.

- Include food! The Grand Rapids group either brings food in or goes out for dinner after the meeting to further develop positive relationships with one another.

> For more information, please contact Diane Jones at diane@cjonesgroup.com.

San Francisco Bay Area Culture Builder Dinners

In 2014, Simon D'Arcy (Next Level Culture) and Chris Murchison (HopeLab) had the idea to harness energy in the San Francisco Bay Area and cultivate a network of consultants and organization leaders and practitioners interested in building thriving workplaces. Inspired by the format of a salon, Simon and Chris decided to host a series of dinner conversations designed to provide these culture builders with the space and like-minded compatriots to inspire and support each other.

Our time together was structured to hack the usual professional gathering and create an experience where participants could meet and deeply engage each other. Culture Builder Dinners seated guests at tables of six to eight people to allow for intimate conversation.

At each dinner, we set the context for the evening with the following invitations:

- To commit to having one conversation at the table.
- To give space for people to be heard without interruption.
- To be present, listen deeply to each other, and be curious.
- To pay attention to and support the experience of the whole group.

Dinner conversation kicked off with short introductions. In a go-around fashion, participants were invited to answer the introduction question one person at a time, and the group was asked to give that person uninterrupted space and their undivided attention.

Introductions were two to three minutes in length.

An example of an introduction question follows:

- Share a personal story that illustrates your passion for building positive workplace culture.

Conversation was then turned to one provocative question that, again, participants responded to one at a time. Each person was given approximately two to three minutes to respond.

An example follows:

- What are you learning in your work that might be applied to the creation, sustaining and/or scaling of organizational culture more broadly?

Following this round, conversation was opened up for discussion of a question of interest to the group. This could be done in open discussion format or in a go-around fashion.

Over the course of two years we hosted eight dinners, varying in size from eight to 25 and keeping to the same conversation format. At larger dinners, guests were divided into smaller dinner tables of six to eight participants, with a facilitator assigned to each table. A diverse guest list was curated for each dinner, which included a mix of past attendees and new guests, and intentionally balancing consultants and internal practitioners, men and women, for-profit and non-profit, and small and large organizations.

The dinners were overwhelmingly successful and consistently created meaningful and connected conversation between relative strangers in a short amount of time. Many guests commented that the dinner experience was delightfully unusual, refreshing, and inspiring. They felt as if they were among friends and appreciated the light structure to conversation, which allowed everyone to participate fully.

While not a true Community of Practice, the Culture Builder Dinners built a vast network of positive leaders in the Bay Area that could easily become the seeds for a longer-term group. The dinners helped to test interest and identify people that might become likely invitees to a Community of Practice group.

For more information, please contact Chris Murchison at chris.murchison@gmail.com.

Sample Invitation to join a Positive Organizations Community of Practice

Dear _____,

Have you ever wondered how to energize your workforce, truly empower them, or help them develop and perform to their full potential? If so, then we invite you to join a select and diverse group of local business people, as we explore ways companies can thrive by helping their employees develop and utilize their strengths and passions.

What is the basis for our enthusiasm? More than 10 years ago, a new movement in organizational studies was launched, Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS). Scholars from around the world have joined in the pursuit of unlocking human potential, revealing possibilities, and facilitating a more positive course of human and organizational welfare. Today, the Center for Positive Organizations (www.positiveorgs.bus.umich.edu), at the University of Michigan's Stephen M. Ross School of Business, carries this charge.

Please consider joining our Community of Practice as we learn about these concepts and discuss how to practice them in our organizations. As a result, you can expect to be inspired, broaden your leadership wisdom, and reinvigorate and refine your practice.

We will meet monthly for the next year, exploring how to enact positive leadership, positive meaning and purpose, positive ethics and virtues, positive relationships, and positive culture in the workplace. We hope you can join us!

If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please let me know. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

[Community of Practice Leader]
[Contact information]

CENTER FOR
POSITIVE
ORGANIZATIONS

"The CPO team appreciates all the time and talent that went into this guide from our extended community. In particular, we want to thank Paul and Diane Jones for pioneering this way of bringing people together around our content; Rebecca Beagan for helping to turn the idea into a living document; Monica Worline and Belinda Liu for their willing and wise input; and to Chris Murchison for the many hours of work he put into enhancing and stewarding the Guide to the finish line."

Chris White, CPO managing director

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May 2, 2017