

The ABC's of Encouragement

By Jay D. Rohman

In a world filled with gloom and doom, there is a great need for an atmosphere of encouragement. Sometimes an encouraging word or a pat on the back is all that is needed. There occurs a ripple effect that when we reach out and touch someone, we never know how that will impact whoever comes into contact with that individual. We need to understand that it is the responsibility of each one of us to be an Ambassador of Encouragement.

Where is it needed more than in the public service sector. Individuals sacrifice everyday to step up and serve the American public on a daily basis. Some may risk their lives while others may only answer questions, but both have one thing in common. They are servants. They also have the opportunity to be encouragers not only to the people that they serve, but also to the people that they work with.

Let's look at the A, B, & C, of encouragement.

A is for Attitude. We all have a choice when we wake up in the morning. Are we going to have a good day, a bad day, or we'll see how it goes day? Sure, there may be outside circumstances that we feel affect our attitude, but the ultimate responsibility for deciding how we are going to feel is up to us. When we deal with a difficult individual who rubs us the wrong way and makes us feel angry, we naturally want to react in a like manner. When that person is gone, our anger can continue and spill over into our next interaction with another person. The question we need to ask ourselves is 'why?'. They aren't there holding a gun to our head and saying 'you need to feel this way'. So why is it that we continue to feel that way? The reason is because we choose to continue to feel angry, or sad, or happy, whatever the emotion might be. Instead of giving someone power over your attitude, you need to reclaim that power and choose how you will feel and what your attitude will be.

B is for Behavior. This goes hand in hand with attitude. We will act in a way that is congruent with the way that we think or feel. If we are angry we will act angry. If we are sad, we will act sad, and so on. But there is another side to the coin as well. We can also affect the way that we feel by our behavior. For example, the next time you become angry, upset, or impatient with someone...smile. I mean genuinely smile. You can't stay mad when you smile. It's just not possible, unless of course you're smiling in a sadistic sort of way. But if you sincerely smile, it is very hard to be angry, sad or depressed. Think about the last time you were depressed. What was your body language like? Were you walking around in a moping state with your head down and your back and shoulders hunched over? If so, that's probably why you are always feeling depressed. The next time you have that feeling of depression, stand up straight, put that chest out and you

shoulders back. Pretty soon you'll feel like anew person. Take control of your behavior!

C is for Communication. Now communication has two aspects. It is the way we talk to each other and it is the way that we talk to ourselves. Even though these have two different audiences, they are generally interlinked with each other. We can't communicate with respect to others if we don't communicate with respect to ourselves. We have to learn to control our '*mind chatter*' if we ever want to learn to communicate with others on a genuine basis. One way to do this is through self affirmations. Self affirmations are where we say specific things to ourselves in a positive and present tense. We say good things to and about ourselves to build our self esteem and self worth. Once we believe in our value and worth, it's amazing how we see the value and worth of other people. When we master our *mind –chatter* we become better communicators and master that aspect of our behavior as well. We then need to learn to communicate with individuals in truth and kindness. Say what you mean and mean what you say. But keep in mind that if you can't say anything good, it's probably best not to say anything at all. Learn to communicate encouraging words to yourself and others.

Follow the A, B, & C of encouragement and you'll be well on your way to being an 'Ambassador of Encouragement'. To receive the full listing of the A Thru Z's of Encouragement, just send an e-mail requesting them at encouraging101@hotmail.com.

Jay Rohman, the 'Ambassador of Encouragement, is a professional speaker, trainer, and freelance writer. For further in formation, go to his website at www.encouraging101.org.