

Laugh Your Way to Positive Relationships

By Bonnie Budzowski
President, inCredible Messages, LP

We all remember days when our good mood was snuffed out by an angry boss, co-worker, or family member. It is no surprise, then, that the book, *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence*, tells us that moods are contagious. We know bad moods are contagious. We have been victim to them. We are, perhaps, less aware that smiles and laughter are contagious too. We might be unaware altogether that we have the power to spread a good mood and build relationships in the process.

Primal Leadership is co-authored by Daniel Goleman, (well-respected expert on Emotional Intelligence), Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee. The authors describe research studies showing that smiles are contagious. Smiles are like magnets that draw others to smile in response. A smile, however, can be faked.

Laughter is too complex for faking, and, at a deep, non-verbal level, people know this. Accordingly, we trust people who laugh with us. In a neurological sense, laughing with someone is the quickest way to connect.

You don't have to be a jokester to build positive relationships. Lighthearted humor is a good contagion around the office. The authors of *Primal Leadership* report one study in which leaders were interviewed about high and low points in their careers. Successful leaders used three times more humorous comments than leaders who were judged to be average. The successful leaders interjected approximately one humorous comment per four minutes of interview time.

Go ahead. Laugh a little. Enjoy your route to positive relationships.

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