

Carl Potter's Safety Opine #4 - May 5, 2020

Being Gracious in Safety

Today and the next few months will require leaders, employees, and safety professionals to practice some gracious safety.

Yesterday as I made a trip to Sam's Wholesale Club for some coffee and other substances to sustain my family and me, I noticed that over half of the people did not have on masks, even though there were signs at the entrance recommending them. I did have my mask on and practiced social distancing the best I could. It is obvious that many people think they are exempt from taking recommended precautions and I get that. In all my work of identifying safety culture trends and suggested improvements this behavior does not surprise me in the least. In this time of uncertainty and seemingly daily changes in suggested routines, it's difficult to feel confident.



As we attempt to go back into the world in public places, busy businesses, and crowded colosseums we will be asked to be gracious in safety. By gracious, I mean being kind, courteous, and aware of others. When people are expected to follow new and changing rules, it will be easy for tempers to flare and people to put up personal emotional barriers. Hands will be wide-spread and thrown-up to make oneself look bigger. People's faces will turn red and teeth will grind, and a low growl may

even be heard. Primal self-protection and herds of people will develop to protect those who are not as aggressive. If we expect this to occur, we can watch out for it in ourselves and manage to stay calm and gracious.

Prepare to be gracious and replace negative emotions, particularly fear. Fear is an emotion that evokes a lot of different behaviors in different people at different times. Fear-based emotions can range from anxiety to anger, hopelessness to arrogance, panic to fatigue and can suck the life out of a person. Consider how graciousness – kindness, courtesy, and concern for others – can help replace fear.

Are you Fearful of the Future?

Fear is a normal human trait that can be good for staying alert. When your heart begins to beat fast and your brain prepares a message to send for a turbo-boost of adrenaline you may become reactive... Stay calm! Chances are that whatever is happening to you is also happening to others around you. Admit when fear is rising and analyze the situation to make your best move. Sometimes just taking a breath and holding it for a second before letting it out is enough to clear the brain. If an action you are thinking of makes the situation worse, stop. Rethink your options, and then take an action that can leave you and those around you in a better emotional or physical state.

Being gracious to others is a leadership characteristic that can lead you to further success. “Thank you for speaking-up” and a smile to the person that asks you if you would mind putting on your mask is better than a hasty retort like a bear standing up with paws spread, teeth bared, and a growl that says, “Get back!”

Being gracious in safety will move the world forward much smoother and faster than fearful reactions. We all want to be safe at work, in public places, and at home. Following procedures and wearing personal protective equipment is a responsibility we all must take serious so that we can create environments where it is difficult to get hurt.

As always, if I can be of service in advising you in mitigation strategies and tactics for creating a workplace where it is difficult to get hurt, please email me at: carl@safetyinstitute.com

Be Safe!

Carl Potter, CSP

CarlPotter.com