Dealing with cynical people…

It’s easy to get caught up in negativity. The only one that suffers is you. Have you ever met an “overly cynical person?”

Here is a great article to think about and catch yourself before you fall into this trap or perhaps catch someone you see falling.

Please share with others!

Chief Sam

VFA/GCC LEADERSHIP TRAINING

A cynic burns his bridges before he gets to them!

Negative people affect our morale no matter how much we try to ignore them.

Webster's dictionary defines cynic as "a fault-finding critic who is distrustful of human nature and motives." That sounds like a good definition to me.

But what stands out to me about cynics is that they want to bring other people down. Cynics are only happy when everyone else is unhappy. You have seen those employees that want every other co-worker to be as unhappy as they are. The positive, upbeat employee threatens the cynics insecurities.

Hence, cynics prefer that others join in their misery. Why suffer alone when you can take good people along for the ride and lure them into your depressive view of the world? Why indeed? No one, it seems, wants to be miserable alone.

In an office or fire station situation, cynicism can spread like a virus. One cynic starts getting negative about another company, management, peers etc. and starts affecting everyone's morale. That cynicism can be so contagious that it destroys the
spirit of the station or office. It reduces productivity and increases turnover. If not addressed or stopped, cynicism can have very damaging effects.

How can you tell if you're dealing with a cynic? They tend to make telltale statements, really half-truths, such as "management or another person always lies," "the organization doesn't care about you," and/or "the Captain/Chief only cares about him/herself." My advice to employees: When you hear these phrases, run for cover and start a conversation with someone else. The other suggested tip is: Simply say to the person, “why don’t you go to the person you are gossiping about, as they are the only one that can do something about it!”

Cynics often have a greater impact on others than themselves. Reveling in being negative, unhappy and pessimistic, cynics derive real pleasure from making others unhappy. They're like bloodsuckers that feed off other people.

If you want to be unhappy, go right ahead, but please leave everyone else out of your bleakness.

Maya Angelou once wrote, "There is nothing so pitiful as a young cynic because he has gone from knowing nothing to believing nothing.” As Angelou suggests, cynics are quick to attack, denigrate and critique but never offer solutions. They only see the worst in any situation and never suggest any glimmer of hope of turning things around. In my mind, cynicism is one step removed from hopelessness.

I've always considered myself someone who doesn't follow the crowd. When I'm confronted by negative, cynical people, I take a step back and will not take what they say seriously. Then I'll ask some pointed questions: "What exactly do you believe in? What do you feel passionate about? How would you improve the situation?" Usually they are dumbfounded and can't respond.

Becoming friendly with cynics in the office can be damaging to your business health. If you become part of the cynical crowd, you'll be branded as a loser by association, even if you're not cynical yourself. Managers will keep their distance, and fast trackers will also stay an arm's length away.

Here are some specific tips to handle the cynics in your company and your life:

Be positive with them. Show them the alternative. Talk about what the department/company/CEO/your boss has done, such as offering perks, good
wages, benefits, healthcare etc., and seeing things from the employer's viewpoint. Cynics hate positive talk, which drives them crazy.

Point out reality to a cynic. Most cynics exaggerate reality because they only stress the negative. Providing the full picture to a cynic creates an antidote to their one-note hopelessness.

If all else fails, avoid them. If the cynics are only going to demoralize you and make your life miserable, stay away. You have little to gain from spending time with them and have your peace of mind to lose.

Chief Sam