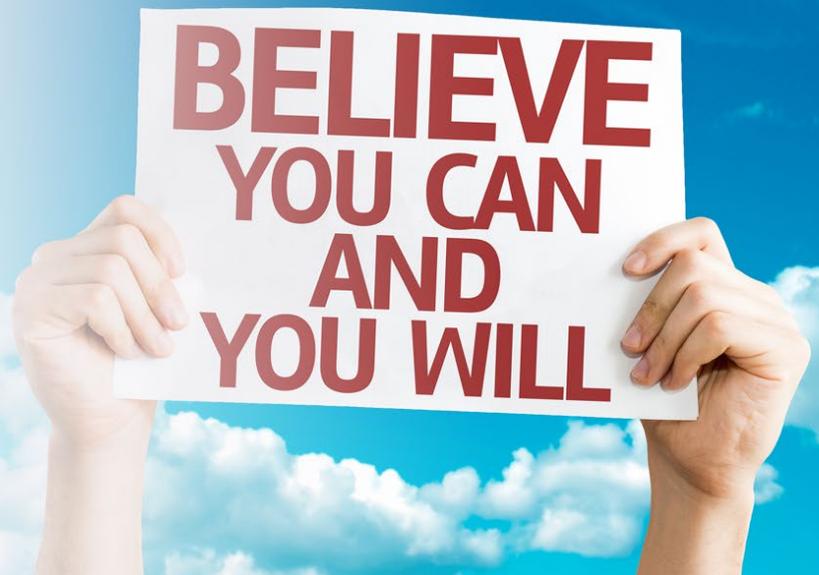


THE CAN-DO, BOUNCES BACK ORGANIZATION

- ▲ Efficacy, the first step to a high functioning culture
- ▲ Optimism, Growth and Accountable Behaviors help create Efficacy



A year out of college, one of my housemates showed me an article in Esquire about how one could live in France for \$1,000 for a year! Full of optimism and naïve exuberance, he and I promptly hitchhiked from Baltimore to Montreal, where we hopped a cheap flight to Paris.

We omitted one small detail: to live at this ridiculously low rate, we had to register in the French University system and take advantage of all the student discounts.

In spite of getting translations of our diplomas duly stamped at the French Embassy in Washington, we managed to leave them out

of our backpacks! Anyone who has ever visited Paris knows that one month on \$1,000 would be tough there. So, we headed south to the Alps and hired out under the table for a series of “ski-bum” type jobs at a ski resort named Les Deux Alpes.

That worked for a while, but the European Union was just becoming a thing then, and work permits for non-Schengen zone citizens were scarce to non-existent. We got fired from our room and board jobs, because the proprietors were fearful of the fines from the authorities and ski resorts were way too visible.

My buddy gave up and returned to the States, but I was having too much fun exploring. Undeterred, I hitchhiked all over the region looking for work so that I could remain there. **And that is when I met Gaston Perrot, a great leader and friend.**

Gaston was changing careers. He had been the highly successful head coach of the French Women's Ski Team and was just beginning his career as a small hotelier. He had bought an old, run-down building in a small town near where he was born. The village was a spa for folks looking to lose weight. They would come in the summer and drink the spring waters and go to a dieting boot camp.

The building was so old, it had a stone foundation. There wasn't a right angle in the joint. He had done most of the demo, and I was his right-hand man for the project. We transformed that three-story rooming house, that had one bathroom at the end of the hall on each floor, into twenty one hotel rooms with a full bath in each.

We ran into all sorts of unexpected challenges. Gaston had two phrases that carried us through it all. **The first one was, "You have to believe," when the task looked just short of impossible. The second, after we were confronted with a setback was, "Nothing resists us!"**

And nothing did. We opened that summer, a quaint little hotel in a town that ultimately became the Olympic Village during the Winter Olympics in Albertville, France.



The term efficacy has often been used in conjunction with health care and pharmaceutical treatments. **Dr. Al Bandura of Stanford University coined the term Self-Efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to bring about or cause things to occur or happen.** In an organization, this concept is one of collective efficacy. Leaders in adaptive, constructive cultures make a point of building personal and collective efficacy in the mindset of their team members. They help cultivate a can-do attitude, encouraging and empowering their people to take initiative, confident in the belief that when they work hard, they can expect to get the desired results, just like Gaston did. Optimism as a mindset is important.

Effective cultures also need to be growth oriented. Members of an organization must come to view their work as meaningful and feel that they are expected to take on challenging tasks as an opportunity to learn and grow. I not only learned about construction techniques, doing it in a foreign language posed fascinating challenges.

It is especially important that members view mistakes not as an occasion of shame, but as an opportunity to learn how to perform better the next time. They need to feel free enough to take the risk so that they can learn and grow. Otherwise, there will be little innovation or proactivity.

When leaders create this type of environment, the members are willing to step up to difficult challenges and take personal responsibility for their performance. When faced with setbacks, they say to themselves, "Nothing resists us," and they bounce back, tackling tasks with that same high belief in their ability to make things happen.

An organization's efficacy, then, is the first step to creating an adaptive, constructive, high functioning culture.

Next up: Goals.