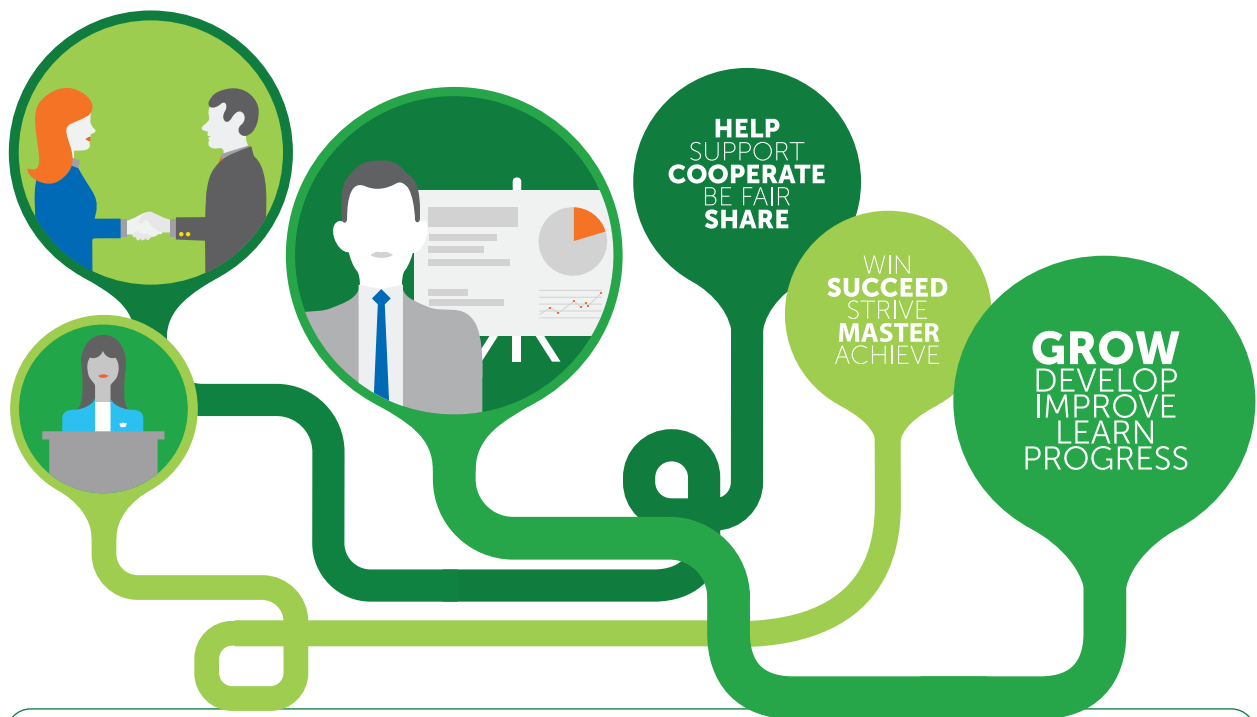


Inspire Others

Research Summary

Role modeling is one of the most powerful ways to influence the behavior of those around you. Human beings naturally look to one another—and particularly to their leaders—to understand how they should think, feel, and act in response to the obstacles they encounter. More often than not, you do this completely unconsciously, never realizing the extent to which you are influenced by the behavior of those around you.



In fact, even being exposed to certain words or images can influence you in unexpected ways. In one study, psychologists at New York University found that reading the words: **Help, support, cooperate, be fair, share** prior to participating in a game made people more cooperative and less competitive with the other players. Remarkably, simply reading these words seemed to unconsciously trigger the goal to cooperate. In another study, people solving puzzles put in significantly more effort after being exposed to the words: **Win, succeed, strive, master, achieve**. In this way, using words like: **Grow, develop, improve, learn, progress** in your everyday interactions with your team and colleagues can help trigger their growth mindset thinking.

Inspire Others

Research Summary continued

Role model

These aforementioned effects are, of course, even stronger when we witness someone else actually engaging in cooperative, persistent, or growth-minded behavior. **Psychologists refer to this as goal contagion**—because at an unconscious level, goals and the mindsets you pursue them with appear to spread from person-to-person (provided you see the behavior in a positive light).



For instance, in one study, a group of Dutch men and women read a short story about a college student named Johan. In one version, Johan was going to work for a month to raise money before taking a trip. In the other version, Johan was going to spend the month volunteering at a community center.

After reading one of the two Johan stories, everyone had the opportunity to earn money by completing a computer task as quickly as possible—the faster their performance, the more money they could earn. Those who had read about the Johan who wanted to earn money were **10% faster** than those who read about Johan the volunteer, suggesting that they had “caught” his goal of wanting to earn money. And naturally, the faster participants were completely unaware that anything about Johan had influenced their own behavior.

This and other studies of **goal contagion** suggest that just seeing you experiment, value progress, and learn from others can make others more likely to start engaging in these behaviors themselves. **By being seen to embrace a growth mindset, you can help it spread throughout your team and your entire organization.**

Aarts, H., Gollwitzer, P. M., & Hassin, R. R. (2004). Goal contagion: Perceiving is for pursuing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(1), 23-37.

Bargh, J. A., Gollwitzer, P. M., Lee-Chai, A., Barndollar, K., & Trötschel, R. (2001). The automated will: Nonconscious activation and pursuit of behavioral goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(6), 1014-1027.



NeuroLeadership
INSTITUTE

neuroleadership.com

© 2015-2018 NeuroLeadership Institute. Not to be shared or copied without permission



avanade Together we are always learning.