

DK LEADERSHIP

DRIVING SUCCESS *Through Emotional Intelligence*

Toxic Positivity / Unintentional Gaslighting

By Dr. Karyn Gordon

WHAT

- “Toxic Positivity” is a concept that keeping ONLY positive is the right way to live (**Source: Psychology Today**)
- Only focusing on positive things in your life and rejecting / ignoring any negative experiences
- Ex. When someone has a miscarriage saying “Well you can try again”
- Ex. When someone loses a job they loved saying “It’s a blessing in disguise”
- **Some experts challenge this term since it should be called “Toxic Happiness”**
 - Happiness - is an emotion (temporary)
 - Positivity - is a mindset & a skill (discipline)

WHY THIS MATTERS

- When we reject / ignore “unpleasant feelings” – we make them bigger – it’s like we are telling ourselves that those feelings don’t matter
- When we ignore our unpleasant emotions -they *may* manifest themselves in different ways:
 - Strange Dreams
 - Bitterness, Depression, Addictions
 - Relationship Conflict

THE SOLUTIONS

Tip #1: Know The Difference Between “Toxic Positivity” & “Healthy Positivity”

Toxic Positivity

- Means ignoring unpleasant emotions
- Anyone can do at any time
- Thinks “Fake it till you make it attitude” & aims for good vibes all the time

Healthy Positivity

- Is a mindset to accept ALL emotions (anxious, stressed) & learn from to help you move forward
- Is a mindset that often doesn’t come easily & requires work to develop it
- Doesn’t change the world around you – it changes how you see it

Tip #2: Know Examples of Toxic Positivity & Supportive Comments

Toxic Positivity

- *You’ll get over it*
- *It’s a blessing in disguise.*
- *Just try again to get pregnant.*

Supportive Comments

- *This must be really difficult. Thank you for sharing.*
- *How can I support you?*
- *I can only imagine how you feel.*

Tip #3: Think BOTH (Validate Emotions AND Be Willing To Talk Solutions)

- Only AFTER people have vented, their emotions have been heard, validated and you have provided **Supportive Comments** – then you can ask if they would like to problem-solve (let them decide – they may or may not be ready)
- Ex. Would you like to brainstorm how to problem-solve this?
- Ex. I have some thoughts – would you like me to share my perspective