



USING INITIATIVE

Employers say they want staff who have a positive attitude and can take initiative, but how do you build your confidence to try new things and how do you learn to remain positive? This Challenge will help.

1 Why are some people good at taking initiative?

In pairs try to answer these questions:

Who do you know who is good at starting something new?

What it is about them that helps them be a starter?

How do you think they got good at doing this?



2 Show me an example of initiative

Two young people start a work experience placement. No one speaks to them.

One says,

"I'll go back tomorrow and if no one speaks to me, I won't go back."

The other says:

"I'll go back tomorrow and if no one speaks to me, I'll start a conversation with someone."

What would you do?



3 Do you have initiative?

The good news is that initiative has very little to do with skills or education. It's more about having a positive spirit, a good attitude and an awareness about what is possible!

Someone with initiative:

- Sees opportunity where others see barriers.
- Taps inner creativity to tackle problems without giving up.
- Goes the extra mile.
- Doesn't blame someone else but is motivated to improve things.
- Gets things done on their own, often before others do.

Someone without initiative:

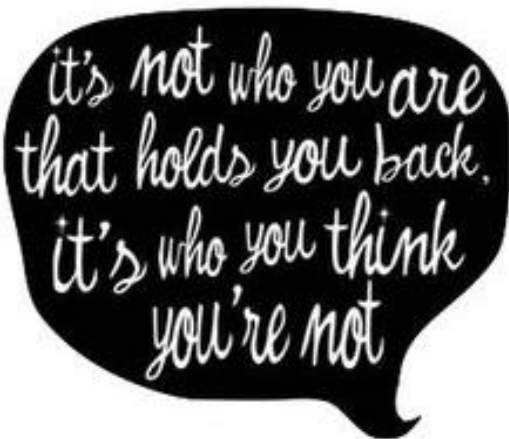
- Leaves unfinished projects.
- Assumes someone else will do it.
- Waits for a perfect time, which never comes.



Will someone give you a job if you aren't bothered?

We may not wear a badge like this but often our body language shouts this message!

4 What holds us back from being able to take initiative?



- Lack of confidence?
- Fear that we will fail?
- Lack of experience?
- Don't think anyone will follow?
- Someone's always done things for me

Why do you think people lack confidence to take more initiative?

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5 Taking initiative - how do we get better?

1) Learn to make decisions



When we don't know what to do, we sometimes hesitate in making a decision in case we make a wrong choice.

But doing nothing is a decision and when you drift you often end up following someone else and not controlling what you do.

When you make decisions you start taking responsibility and learn through *mistakes but also own your triumphs*. Learn to trust your instincts and be bold, what's the worst that could happen?

2) Fake it till you make it!

Watch this short film in which a young woman who has been in work for a few years talks about being positive and sometimes even act until your confidence grows. Sometimes you have to *"fake it before you make it."*

Notice that once you take the initiative you can gain confidence which makes it easier to be bold next time.



3) Watch and learn from others

Next time you see someone doing something which needs to be done before they were asked, ask them about their action:

- What inspires them?
- Why do they take initiative?
- Do they ever get things wrong?

As you watch others and observe behavior you learn and grow as an individual.

Who do you know who you could ask?

5 USING YOUR INITIATIVE CHALLENGE

WHAT'S YOUR
CHALLENGE



Find 2 other students in the class and get into a small group of 3.

In your group you will have to compete a task against the other groups to:

Walk around the school and identify 2 things about the building which could be improved.

Discuss in a small group how you would go about improving them - on your own initiative.

Where would you start?

How would you persuade the school to let you try to make the improvements?

How would you get others to follow your example and work with you?

What have you learnt from this Challenge?

Why not try to do a similar exercise in your own home.

Do you think you could now teach others about initiative?