

Creating Pathways of Success -

Have you ever hopped into your car and started heading down the road only find yourself on the oh-so-familiar path to work ...on your day off? Work is not where you were intending on going and yet your brain has gone immediately to that pathway or that set of neurons that, due to repetition and familiarity, are programmed to fire in a certain way because of the familiarity of the situation. It might be the routine as you leave your home, it might be the time of day or just that you're distracted and don't really give your brain a clear message for the neurons to fire on. In the book, "Why Do They Act That Way," by David Walsh, Ph.D., he states, "Neurons that fire together wire together," and every single person has millions of pathways throughout their brain caused by the constant firing and wiring of neurons through repetition and



experience. As adults we have the advantage of repetition. Years of experience give us an understanding of what to do next or whether there will be consequences to our actions. Young people need the same kind of advantage. Repetition, multiple experiences and opportunities create healthy pathways in their brain for positive decision making and skill building.

We're at the beginning of the summer season, and young people are seeking out or returning to those summer jobs that provide so many wonderful experiences for them. Those experiences can also create a solid and reliable future employee so we must remember what our role is in the entire process. Based on research, adolescent brain development lasts until approximately 24 years of age and, during those different stages of development important pathways are being created. Those pathways rely on positive support and multiple experiences. More than likely, members of your summertime and/or part-time staff fit into a younger age group, and there are going to be those days that you ask yourself, "Why do they act that way?" Therefore, if you have the pleasure of working with young people, and in particular, young people up to the age of 24, take note that you can help create those positive pathways for success on the job by providing repeated opportunities for them to learn.

Here's another way to think about it. When you learn a foreign language, how many different ways do you practice learning that language? You write it, speak it, read it and you hear it. Each of those experiences engages the brain's neurons to "fire" and then "wire" together

through various styles of repetition. If we want young people to understand a particular task on the job like the way orders are to be taken or the way they should engage with customers, the opportunity to practice must come in many different forms, many different times and, ideally, from as many different individuals that are willing to remain calm and patient as this pathway is being created for that employee.

It's up to every manager and/or supervisor to provide that learning opportunity or the opportunity for those neurons to "fire and wire together." I'm always surprised that some employers feel that just by putting on the uniform, a young person should understand the expectations of the job. If our goal is to develop a successful work staff and, ultimately, a successful work environment, we must recognize our role as leaders to supervise in such a way that provides a clear understanding of those expectations. You might look at the process and think about the amount of time it takes; rather that it is time well spent when you look at the final outcome and time you're saving in the long run. Be willing to engage in a mentoring or shadowing process that allows your younger staff the opportunity to learn, to create those pathways of success for the job, for their future and for yours.

I hope you enjoy my eZine – feel free to share this article via social media or forward to someone it may interest, and keep Lori's contact info intact. Remember to "like" Supporting CommUnity on Facebook for a chance to win **Why Do They Act That Way?** by David Walsh, Ph.D.

Lori A. Hoffner, Professional Speaker ~ Trainer ~ Consultant, draws on years of experience of leadership in both the for-profit and non-profit business world. She can offer staff-development programs helps promotes a cohesive internal team and positive culture of support within your organization that helps benefit your bottom line.

To learn more about creating a positive culture in your workplace, and learn more about the staff training's that Lori can offer, visit <http://www.supportingcommunity.com/> or contact Communications Coordinator, Betsy W. Ryan – Betsy@SupportingCommUnity.com 508-785-5644

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