

'Decayed' vs 'Developed' Work Behaviour

Wali Zahid

A decade ago, I attended a course in Canada. An evening, a guest lecturer spoke to us on the characteristics of decayed nation's vs those of developed nations. I do not recall her name or what she covered. I just remembered one thing from her talk: decayed nations live in the past and developed nations live in the future. Or may be in different words. Suddenly I recalled why we still talk about 'Fall of Dhaka' and 'Why Pakistan came into being' while the developed world talked about year 2050!

I remember asking the speaker if she considered the same measures apply to individuals. She said yes. Which meant to me: Although I come from a decayed nation called Pakistan, but if I choose I can become a 'developed' individual by adopting the behaviors of the developed nations. Wow!

This talk became a turning point for me. Since then wherever I traveled, I kept on looking at decayed vs developed behaviors. No wonder, I turned to teaching, training and coaching. That too coaching the business leaders!

The list below is a compilation of my years of journeys/ readings/ observations/ interviews since 1997. Hope you can find some value in this. And if you pick only one behavior, chances are this can be your turning point!

At the moment, these are only words. I intend to expand this list into meaningful sentences, so a layperson doesn't have to go through the labor of management lingo! Until this happens, happy reading!

Personal Orientation

Ineffective / 'Decayed' Behaviour	Effective / 'Developed' Behaviour
Live in past	Talk about future
Consider it 'event'	See a 'process'/ pattern
Build (grandeur)	Maintain
Attempt perfectionism	Know it's an imperfect world and know where to stop!
Good enough	Good is the enemy of great
Look at constraints	See possibilities/opportunities
Win-lose	Win-win
Inward looking	Externally-focused
Impossible	Possible
Can't do	Can do!
Self-centered	Self and other centered/ empathetic
Last-minute	Prepared / plan ahead
Quitter	Never never quit
Strong individuality	Group-orientation
Competitive	Collaborative

Personal Values

Ineffective / 'Decayed' Behaviour	Effective / 'Developed' Behaviour
Values are situational	Principle-centered / integrity
Arrogance / elitism	Humility / modesty
Operate from scarcity	Operate from abundance
Accumulate wealth	Share wealth / generous

Communication

Ineffective / 'Decayed' Behaviour	Effective / 'Developed' Behaviour
One-way, top-down communication	Multi-way communication
I language	We language
Excluding	Inclusive
Difference unwelcome	Challenge is ok!
Secretive	Open
Bargain is unpleasant	Love to bargain
Formal	Informal
Non-participative	Concerned/ participate
Status-, class-conscious	Down to earth

Leadership style

Ineffective / 'Decayed' Behaviour	Effective / 'Developed' Behaviour
Use power	Use influence
Use push	Use pull
Manage	Lead
I am the leader	The leadership is shared
No trust in others	Trust
Blame others when things go wrong	Look in the mirror
Credit is mine	Credit is theirs
Expect not much from team members	Expect great outcomes
Creates in-group / out-group	Fair to all
Micromanage	Empower
Divide and rule	We all are one!

Problem-solving/ Decision-making

Ineffective / 'Decayed' Behaviour	Effective / 'Developed' Behaviour
One right answer	Many right answers
Ideas com from SMT	Ideas from frontline/shop floor
My decision	Team's decision
Mistakes not allowed	You have a right to be wrong!
Ambiguity unacceptable	Tolerance for ambiguity
Procrastinator	Decisive
Risk averse	Risk taker
Data driven	Intuitive

Orientation towards change

Ineffective / 'Decayed' Behaviour	Effective / 'Developed' Behaviour
Conformity	Diversity
Resist change	Use 'creative destruction'
Rule-bound	Rules can be broken

Customers and suppliers

Ineffective / 'Decayed' Behaviour	Effective / 'Developed' Behaviour
Customers are nuisance	Customer obsession
Suppliers are 'dependent'/ at the receiving end	Suppliers are loved/ considered partner
Over commit	Under-promise, over-deliver