

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRAINER<sup>9</sup>

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It is common experience that trainers, when they get together, often wonder what are the characteristics of a trainer. This is often a poser by those who aspire to be a trainer. Often, persons having the necessary attributes are not sure about the qualities that make a good trainer.

It is in this context that it is necessary to identify some of the significant qualities that go to enhance the performance of a trainer. Some of these qualities are: -

**Empathy:** This is the ability to put oneself in the shoes of another. It is the faculty for recognising the fears and uncertainties in the minds of trainees when learning additional techniques or skills. Empathy enables a trainer to point out personal difficulties encountered by him in similar learning situations, so as to put the learners at ease.

**Honesty:** This is the courage to recognise personal strengths and weaknesses and to be frank about these aspects to the personnel being trained, for their own benefit.

**Patience:** This is shown in the willingness to compliment slow progress and refrain from the anger when mistakes are made. It includes the techniques of repeating instructions, breaking down a task into small units and allowing time for learners to try out.

**Pace:** This is closely integrated with empathy and patience. This is an external speed governor, which acts more to slow down than to speed up. It is far better to move slowly and attain complete mastery, than to push for rapid and sloppy completion.

**Democracy:** This refers to the kind of atmosphere created when learning takes place. The trainer should be supportive and non-threatening in presentation. The tone of voice and facial expression should lead the learners to feel comfortable in raising questions, offering suggestions, reinterpreting instructions and generally to feel relaxed while they learn.

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<sup>9</sup> Kozoll, Charles F. Training & Development Journal, July, 1975, Vol.29 No.7

**Purpose:** This emphasises the element of tenacity in achieving the training goals. A good trainer conscientiously moves a group of learners along to a pre-set destination. There may be stops and shifts, but the eye is always fixed on certain performance standards and levels.

**An ability to listen:** The trainer must hear questions raised by trainees and understand if the questions reflect other problem, which are not being mentioned. He should have the posture of a listener through training towards the speaker and maintaining eye contact.

**Respect for experience:** Adults will learn more effectively if respect is given to the experience and qualifications they can bring to a situation. This will encourage greater participation and activity by trainees.

**Prestige:** A trainer should command the respect of his colleagues in the organisation. The training programme will then be strengthened by its acceptance among older and experienced employees.