

USCG Auxiliary Diversity Moment

May 2023

Respect Is Its Own Reward

Shipmates, please take a few minutes to discuss this information with your members at your next meeting.

“You either believe that people respond to authority, or that they respond to kindness and inclusion. I’m obviously in the latter camp. I think that people respond better to reward than punishment.”

–Brian Eno

It is said that in the Auxiliary we are all recruiters. However, we are also all leaders.

We are all leaders, whether or not we want to admit it. Simply being a member of something bigger than yourself puts us in that position. Remember when you first started, you saw all the shipmates who previously joined your unit as those who probably knew way more than you did, and you looked to them for guidance and assistance. You may have thought that you might not be accepted by your peers. Almost by default, the new member sees all of us as leaders, not just elected or appointed ones.

What do we do with that responsibility? First, to our shipmates, we need to quickly assess their background, interests, and abilities. That’s where we can shine--by demonstrating our commitment to the Coast Guard Motto: *Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty*. In *Devotion to Duty*, we show that we value our newest member’s untapped diversity by making that assessment, appointing a mentor, and get them involved right away. *Respect* is the basis of showing regard and consideration for others and their rights and ideas. Respecting others encompasses diversity. It really covers everything. Everyone is obviously unique and brings their own skills and abilities to the Auxiliary. It is our job as leaders to support that diversity and by doing so, maximize what is set forth in the mission-set of the Coast Guard and Auxiliary. By doing all this and aligning ourselves with that mission-set, we exemplify our dedication to high standards of behavior, and therefore edify *Honor*.

Shipmates, all these things help in rewarding our people. Rewards motivate people to work towards desired outcomes, whereas punishments can cause people to drop out or act out of fear rather than out of a desire to achieve a goal. Rewards, big or small, foster a positive atmosphere overall in any unit. Rewards provide people with recognition and appreciation for their work and can bring on increased productivity and satisfaction—leading to accomplishments. Our discussion here was more focused on intangible rewards, but the tangible—public praise, an informal letter or certificate of appreciation, formal recognitions, and medals are necessary as well. Use them all to continue to make all of us successful.