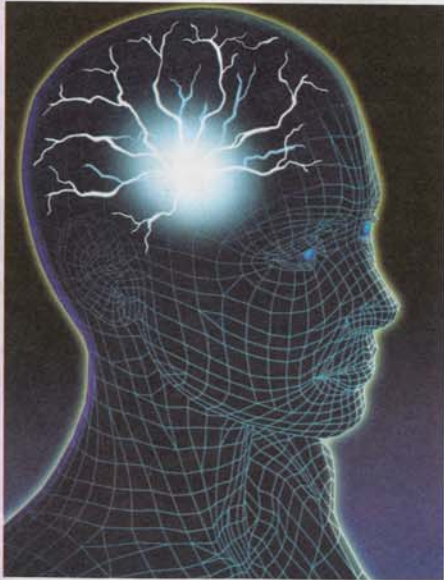


Motivation: It's An Inside Job



By LETA BEAM

WE often hear about leaders who are masterful at “motivating” their staffs to greater levels of achievement or speakers whose messages “motivate” their audiences to change. Maybe you’ve even been encouraged to be a better “motivator” for those who report to you. How can you motivate someone else? You don’t – because you can’t.

Motivation is intrinsic. It’s a willingness to take action based on beliefs that the actions are meaningful and will be satisfying, thus doing something will result in getting what we want. Leaders, speakers and even super heroes may inspire us but they can’t motivate us. Only you can motivate you. Stop yearning for an external “fix” of motivation and understand that it’s an inside job for all of us. You need to realize and appreciate how powerful we are in creating our next reality.

Since it’s an inside job you can’t motivate someone else. You can, however, establish an environment and a culture that is conducive to others’ motivation as well as your own.

Robert Allen (One Minute Millionaire) and many other business writers have offered us a simple but effective success equation. BE – DO – HAVE. Decide who you want to “be” every day; take action and you can have whatever you want. It works. Motivation stems from who you choose to be and it stimulates and guides the things which you choose to do. There are two powerful coaching questions that are begging to be answered:

- How do we motivate ourselves?
- How can we contribute to the creation of a quality of work life that allows others to motivate themselves?

Consider adopting this perspective offered by Dee Hock, “Here is the heart and soul of leadership – invest 50 percent of your time and attention leading yourself – your own purpose, ethics, principles, motivation and conduct. Invest 20 percent leading those with authority over you and 15 percent leading

your peers. Use the remainder to induce those who work for you to understand and practice this theory. Lead yourself, lead your boss, lead your peers and free your people to do the same. All else is trivial.”

Focus, first and foremost, on getting yourself on a roll and staying there. It’s impossible to re-engineer your culture from any other place. Here are eight provocative thoughts to enhance your own motivation level.

Provocative Thoughts on “The Inside Job”

Know Exactly What You Want – You may be saying, “Well, duh,” but most of us haven’t identified our burning “why.” Our white-hot burning desire. Motivation is when a need or desire causes you to act. What do you really, really want? It’s not enough to jot down your goals or point to the annual operating plan for your company. Identify specifically and exhaustively, in Technicolor, what you want, without censorship. The more you are connected with your desires, the easier it is to maintain peak levels of motivation and the faster it is to achieve these desires.

Create A Daily Practice – Read your “burning why” each day and spend about five minutes (no more) with it, standing in the feeling place as though you already had what you want. This simple action helps you to stay grounded as you move throughout your day, acting as a rudder.

Practice Intentional Thinking – You are, at all times, in charge of your thoughts, feelings, beliefs and actions. No exceptions. It’s too easy to feel entitled to or a victim of roles based on externals – people, situations or circumstances. Intentional thinking channels your energy toward what you want. Unintentional thought patterns are the stealth saboteurs of motivation. Choose your thoughts carefully because they become your next reality. Thoughts become things.

Clearly Identify Obstacles – What are the limiting thoughts, feelings or beliefs that are causing the roadblocks? What can you do in order to create more willingness to act (motivation)?

Collect Evidence – The better it gets, the better it gets. Begin to intentionally notice everything which signals increased momentum. At the end of each day, journal everything that gets you closer to what you want. There is nothing that fuels motivation more than noticing positive change around you.

Remain In The Company Of Extraordinary People – Whether through informal “processes” or formal masterminding groups, be intentional about spending time with other highly motivated people. Find out what works for others and adapt it to your style.

Think Like A Woman – Women are well positioned to tap into and integrate the three primary intelligences – intuitive intelligence, logic or basic intelligence and emotional intelligence. Capitalize on that. Connect your head, heart and gut. This fuels an unlimited supply of motivating energy and, when combined with the others, delivers huge results.

Foster An Unquenchable Thirst For Learning – Fresh ideas easily create sparks of possibility and enhance self-esteem. Motivation and self-esteem are intertwined. Intentionally make room on your calendar for learning moments. There are a

million opportunities and one of them will work for you. It will help you to keep the momentum.

How, then, do we contribute to the creation of an environment that encourages motivation? I believe in “everyday leadership.” That means that you are capable of contributing regardless of your position in the organization. Remember, the heart and soul of leadership is to spend 20 percent of your time coaching those above you and 15 percent of your time coaching your peers to get on a roll and stay there. Here are eight bonus thoughts to stimulate your own creativity:

Be The Change You Want To Create – Remember, you cannot motivate someone else. Model extraordinary behavior. It’s more powerful than any book, presentation or feedback. Share your story with others.

Promote A Coaching Culture – A coaching skill set offers a common language and a unique way of interacting that allows the sparks of possibility to adhere. It is one of the best conductors for cross-pollination within companies and for sharing and promoting the secrets of sustaining high motivation levels. This means that truth telling, powerful questioning, tuning in and many more skills are routinely deployed.

Focus On What’s Right – Remember, the better it gets, the better it gets. In groups, teams, with your staff or board, focus more on what’s right and how it got that way. It creates energy more conducive to high levels of motivation.

Create Pockets Of Learning – Whether it’s a journal club or the decision to become a *learning organization*, nothing helps others to clarify what they want, identify imaginative solutions, or energize more than learning.

Avoid Isolation – Research, visit, or talk to other organizations. Investigate their best practices on creating the type of work life that fosters high levels of motivation. No matter how extraordinary your organization is today, you don’t want to get stale. Find out who has a better mousetrap.

Ask – Have an inquiring mind. Ask people what would help them to gain momentum and stay there.

Share Generously – Tell others how you motivate yourself.

Express Belief In Others – Remind others that motivation is an inside job. If someone attempts, even subtly, to put the motivation monkey on your back and to make you responsible, don’t accept the monkey. Give it back. See everyone as completely capable of developing a new thought pattern about this.

Motivation isn’t a one-day or one week process. It’s a way of life. Once you establish the courage to begin, the pieces will fall into place. Since you can’t motivate someone else, do the best to share your insights so others can learn from you to motivate themselves. Of all of the thoughts to offer to stimulate creativity, I think surrounding yourself with extraordinary people who can give you positive feedback can dispel all negativity that you may encounter. You are in charge of your own destiny – only you can make the change to be at your very best. **W**

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