

Encourage to inspire

The motivation to change has to come from within us. People can, of course, encourage us in a number of ways, but ultimately motivation isn't an external energy.



If we accept that we can't control what's outside of us, then it stands to reason that we can't make someone else do anything.

THE POWER OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Where does motivation come from – externally or internally? I believe that motivation comes from within and that therefore we can only motivate ourselves. However, I've always found that if we have certain things in place and we behave in a way that's encouraging, supportive and appreciative, then it's possible to create circumstances in which people are far more likely to feel motivated to act in particular ways.

Think about how we behave with very young children. Imagine you're in a room with some friends and there's a toddler there who takes her first steps whilst everybody's watching. What do you think would happen? No doubt everyone will be clapping, cheering and cuddling the toddler. It stands to reason that the child

Here's an
idea for
you...

Think about the systems of recognition you have in place at home or at work. Take an aspect of your children's behaviour that you want to encourage, and make a conscious effort to notice and praise that behaviour. Don't do this simply by buying tangible presents, but take the time to really show them how you feel. This also applies at work – don't leave it to formal systems to recognise achievements, make sure that you take the time to thank people for their efforts and to appreciate their commitment.

will then want to do more of this. Moreover, when she does she'll get the same reaction, and so on. It's only when children get a little older, possibly around school age, that our focus tends to shift to highlighting behaviour that we don't want to see, instead of recognising, appreciating and supporting the behaviours we do want to see. For example, we expect children to behave well and so we hardly notice when they do, but boy do we notice when they behave in a disruptive manner. Often children find that they get far more attention for less acceptable behaviour so, guess what, they do more of it!

TELL THEM IN THE WORKPLACE AS WELL

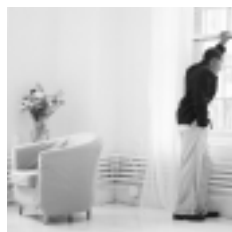
We all like a sense of achievement. I don't know anyone who doesn't like to say, 'Yes, I did that', whether in respect of a piece of embroidery, getting a hole in one or an achievement at work. How long does it take word to get round at work that someone's made a mistake? Probably not long at all. Members of a team that's not working well together will publicise errors as they seek to disassociate themselves from them. Fixing the problem also involves the rapid transmission of opinions and suggestions. Compare this with how long it takes people to receive recognition for their successes.

There's often no system in place to make sure that people's achievements are publicised. Yet one of the greatest motivators for people is simple recognition that what they're doing is valuable to the organisation and that they as individuals really count. An individual's achievements can be recognised with a simple thank you; repeating that expression of gratitude in front of colleagues is highly motivating and has the following secondary benefit.

Generally, people welcome responsibility. They prefer to achieve objectives rather than simply carry out tasks. They want to develop and take on even greater responsibilities, and are far more likely to want this if they feel that their achievements will be recognised and valued.

IDEA 12, *What made you do that?*, looks at another aspect of motivation at work.

Try another idea...



'No person can be a great leader unless he takes genuine joy in the successes of those under him.'

REVD. W. A. NANCE

Defining idea...

How did
it go?

Q I feel ashamed that I've focused so much on the negative aspects of my children's behaviour. But how can I change my approach and still avoid the bad behaviour?

A If we're not getting enough attention for the things we do well, then we'll start to do more of the things that we do get attention for, even if they're 'naughty' and result in a scolding, which is better than nothing. So, if you greatly increase the appreciation levels for behaviour you want to encourage, and decrease the amount you pick up on the things you don't want, you'll begin to see a shift. It takes time, but stick with it and you may be pleasantly surprised.

Q The members of my team work remotely so I'm not in constant touch with them and can't see how they're working day to day. I only really see the final results of their work and these are either right or wrong. I obviously have to point out when their reports are incorrect and this can cause some real upsets. But how can I keep them motivated by giving them praise without being insincere when I don't know what they are doing?

A If they rarely hear from you, aside from when you're pointing out where they've gone wrong, then it's not surprising that they can get upset, as they've probably worked really hard to get the report done. You can show them that you value them by picking up the phone and speaking with them regularly, asking how things are going, asking them how you can help and thanking them for their constant dedication even though they're remote. If you do this they may begin to share any confusion or concerns they have at an earlier stage, leading to an increase in correct reporting.