

MOTIVATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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In life, it doesn't matter where you're coming from. All that matters is where you're going. You cannot change the past but you can change the future by changing your actions today. And one of the most important things you think about with regard to the future is the person you want to be, a week, a month, a year and five years from now.

Where are you going and how are you going to get there? Aside from what you want to accomplish, what kind of a person do you want to become as the result of all your work and effort?

Men and women who achieve great things in life are invariably those who give a lot of thought to their own evolution and growth. They become exceptional people by design, not by accident. They are like master craftsmen, continually shaping and polishing their characters and personalities so that they evolve and grow into someone important and worthwhile. And so should you.

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Be Outstanding

The highest goal you can have for yourself is to become a leader, to become an outstanding man or woman who is looked up to, admired and respected by the people around you. In this segment on motivational leadership, I'm going to share some ideas with you that will help you in your evolution towards personal leadership.

Motivational leadership is the ability to uplift and inspire others to perform at their best. Personal leadership on the other hand, is the ability to motivate yourself to do the things, and be the kind of person, that make you into a motivational leader. Both are necessary for maximum performance. They are flip sides of the same coin.

These are practical, proven ideas based on many years of research and experience and any one of them may contain the key that turns on the engine of your own potential.

It's been said that, "Leadership is not what you do, but who you are." This; however, is only partially true. Leadership is very much who you are, but it cannot be divorced from what you do. Who you are represents the inner person and what you do represents the outer person. Each is dependent on the other for maximum effectiveness.

Be a Role Model

The starting point of personal leadership, motivational leadership, is to begin seeing yourself as a role model, seeing yourself as an example to others. See yourself as a person who sets the standards that others follow. A key characteristic of leaders is that they set high standards of accountability for themselves and for their behaviors. They assume that others are watching them and then setting their own standards by what they do. They, in fact, lead by example, just exactly as though someone were

following them around, secretly taking notes and photographs of their daily actions for others to see and act on.

Motivational leadership is based on the law of indirect effort. According to this law, most things in human life are achieved more easily by indirect means rather than by direct means. You more easily become a leader to others by demonstrating that you have the qualities of leadership, than you do by ordering others to follow your directions.

Instead of trying to get people to emulate you, you instead concentrate on living a life that is so admirable that others want to be like you without your saying a word. In business, for example, there are several kinds of power. Two of these are ascribed power and position power. Position power is the power that comes with a job title or a position in any organization. If you become a manager in a company, you automatically have certain powers and privileges that go along with your rank. You can order people about, and make certain decisions. You can be a leader whether anyone likes you or not.

Ascribed power is the power you attract to yourself by the kind of person you are. In every organization, there are people who are inordinately influential and looked up to by others, even though their positions may not be high up on the organizational chart. These are the men and women who are genuine leaders because of the quality of the people they have become, because of their characters and their personalities.

Servant Leadership

Perhaps the most powerful of motivational leaders is the person who practices what's called, "servant leadership." Confucius said, "He who would be master must be servant of all." The person who sees

himself or herself as a servant, and who does everything possible to help others to perform at their best is practicing the highest form of “servant leadership.”

We have been led to believe, over the years, that leaders are those who stride boldly, exude power and confidence, give orders and make decisions for others to carry out. However, that’s old school. The leader of today is the one who asks questions, listens carefully, plans diligently and then builds consensus among all those necessary for achieving the goals. A leader does not try to do it by himself or herself. A leader is a person who gets things done by helping others to help themselves.

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This brings us to some of the qualities of motivational leaders. These are qualities that you already have to a certain degree and which you can develop in such a way that you stand out from the people around you in a very short period of time.

5 Qualities of Leadership

There have been more than 3300 studies done on leadership. After reading and reviewing many of these studies, I’ve come to the conclusion that there are basically five qualities that are essential to your becoming a motivational leader.

1 ■ The first is the quality of vision. This is the one single quality that, more than anything, separates leaders from followers. Leaders have vision. Followers do not. Leaders have the ability to stand back and see the big picture. Followers are caught up in day-to-day activities. Leaders have developed the ability to fix their eyes on the horizon and see greater possibilities. Followers are those whose eyes are fixed on the ground in front of them and who are so busy that they seldom look at themselves and their activities in a larger context.

George Bernard Shaw summarized this quality of leaders; in the words of one of his characters, “Most men look at what is, and ask ‘Why’. I instead look at what could be, and ask, ‘Why not?’”

Start With Yourself

The best way for you to motivate others is to be motivated yourself. The fastest way to get others excited about a project is to get excited yourself. The way to get others committed to achieving a goal or a result is to be totally committed yourself. The way to build loyalty to your organization, and to other people, is to be an example of loyalty in everything you say and do. These are all applications of the law of indirect effort. They tie very neatly into the quality of vision.

Motivational leadership means getting people excited about the accomplishment of a big goal.

Traditional leaders just organize the resources and the activities of various workers. Motivational leaders, on the other hand, affect people’s emotions by painting a big, exciting picture of the future.

The motivational leader transforms people by tapping into their hopes, dreams and ideals. He or she gets them to buy in to the possibility of creating something wonderful as a result of their efforts.

One aspect of good leadership is the ability to choose an area of excellence. Just as a good general chooses the terrain on which to do battle, an excellent leader chooses the area in which he and others

are going to do an outstanding job. The commitment to excellence is one of the most powerful of all motivators in the human psyche. All leaders who change people and organizations are enthusiastic about achieving excellence in a particular area.

The most motivational vision you can have for yourself and others is to “be the best!” Many people don’t yet realize that excellent performance in serving other people is an absolute basic essential for survival in the economy of the future. Many individuals and companies are still getting by adhering to the idea that as long as they are no worse than anyone else, they can remain in business. This is just plain silly! It is prehistoric thinking. We are now in the age of excellence. Customers assume that they will get excellent quality, and if they don’t, they’ll go to your competition so fast people’s heads will spin.

As a leader, your job is to be excellent at what you do, to be the best in your chosen field of endeavor. Your job is to have a vision of high standards in serving other people. You not only exemplify excellence in your own behavior, but you translate it to others so that they too become committed to this vision as well.

This is the key to servant leadership. It is the commitment to doing excellent work of the highest quality in the service of other people, both inside the organization and outside. Leadership today requires an equal focus on the people who must do the job on the one hand and the people who are expected to benefit from the job, on the other.

2 Quality number two, perhaps the most respected single quality of leadership is that of integrity. Integrity is a complete, unflinching honesty with regard to everything that you say and do. Integrity is a quality that underlies all the other qualities. Your measure of integrity is determined by how honest you are in the critical areas of your life.

Integrity means this: when someone asks you at the end of the day, “Did you do your very best?” you can look them in the eye and say, “Yes!” Integrity means that, when someone asks you if you could have done it better, you can honestly say, “No, I did everything I possibly could.”

As a leader, integrity means that you admit your shortcomings. It means that you work to develop your strengths and compensate for your weaknesses. Integrity means that you tell the truth, and that you live the truth in everything that you do and in all your relationships. Integrity means that you deal straight forwardly with people and situations, and that you don’t compromise what you believe to be true.

3 ■ If the first two qualities of motivational leadership are vision and integrity, the third quality is the one that backs them both up. It is the quality of courage. It is the chief distinguishing characteristic of the true leader. It is almost always visible in the leader’s words and actions. It is absolutely indispensable to success, happiness and the ability to motivate other people to be the best they can be.

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In a way, it’s easy to develop a big vision for yourself and for the person that you want to be. It is easy to commit yourself to living with complete integrity. But it requires incredible courage to follow through on your vision and on your commitments. You see, as soon as you set a high goal or standard for yourself, you’ll run into all kinds of difficulties and setbacks. You’ll be surrounded by temptations to compromise your values and your vision. You will feel an almost irresistible urge to “get along by going along.”

Your desire to earn the respect and cooperation of others can easily lead to the abandonment of your

principles, and here's where courage comes in.

Courage combined with integrity, is the foundation of character. The first form of courage is your ability to stick to your principles, to stand for what you believe in and to refuse to budge unless you feel exactly right about the alternative. Courage is also the ability to step out with faith, to launch out into the unknown and then to face the inevitable doubt and uncertainty that accompanies every new venture.

Step Out of Your Comfort Zone

Most people are seduced by the lure of the comfort zone. Like going out of a warm house on a cold, windy morning, the average person, when he feels the storm swirling outside, his comfort zone rushes back inside where it's nice and warm. But not the true leader. The true leader has the courage to step away from the familiar and comfortable and to face the unknown with no guarantees of success. It is this ability to, "Boldly go where no man has gone before," that distinguishes you as a leader from the average person. This is the example that you must set for yourself if you are to rise above the average. It is this example that inspires, and motivates other people to rise above their previous levels of accomplishment, as well.

Alexander the Great, the King of Macedonia was one of the most superb leaders of all time. He became king at the age of 19 when his father, Phillip II, was assassinated. In the next 11 years he conquered much of the known world, leading his armies against numerically superior forces.

Yet, when he was at the height of his power, the master of the known world, the greatest ruler in history to that date, he would still draw his sword at the beginning of a battle and lead his men forward into the conflict. He insisted on leading by example. Alexander felt that he could not ask his men to

risk their lives unless he was willing to demonstrate by his actions that he had complete confidence in the outcome. The sight of Alexander charging forward so excited and motivated his soldiers that no force on earth could stand before them.

4 ■ The fourth quality of motivational leadership is realism. Realism is a form of intellectual honesty where you insist upon seeing the world as it really is, not as you wish it were. This objectivity, this refusal to engage in self-delusion, is a mark of the true leader.

Those who exhibit the quality of realism do not trust to luck, hope for miracles, pray for exceptions to basic business principles, expect rewards without working or hope that problems will go away by themselves. These are all examples of self-delusion, of living in a fantasy land.

The motivational leader insists on seeing things exactly as they are and encourages others to look at life the same way. As a motivational leader, you get the facts, whatever they are. You deal with people honestly and tell them exactly what you perceive to be the truth. This doesn't mean that you'll always be right, but you will always be expressing the truth the best way you know how.

5 ■ The fifth quality of motivational leadership is responsibility. This is perhaps the hardest of all to develop. The acceptance of responsibility means that, as Harry Truman said, "The buck stops here."

The game of life is very competitive. Sometimes, great success and great failure are separated by a very small distance. In watching the play-offs in basketball, baseball and football, we see that the winner can be decided by a single point and that single point can rest on a single action, or inaction, on the part of a single team member at a critical part of the game.

Take Ownership of Your Actions

Life is very much like sports, as well. Very small things that you do, or don't do, can either give you the edge that leads to victory or take the edge away from you at the critical moment. This principle is especially true with regard to accepting responsibility for yourself and for everything that happens to you.

The opposite of accepting responsibility is making excuses, blaming others and becoming upset, angry and resentful toward people for what they've done to you.

Any one of these behaviors can trip you up and be enough to cost you the game.

- If you run into an obstacle or setback and you make excuses rather than accepting responsibility, it's a five yard penalty. It can cost you a first down. It can cost you a touchdown. It can make the difference between success and failure.
- When you face a problem or setback, and you both make excuses and blame someone else, you get a 10 yard penalty. In a tightly contested game, where the teams are just about even, a 10 yard penalty can cost you the game.
- If, instead of accepting responsibility when things go wrong, you make excuses, blame someone else and simultaneously become angry and resentful and blow up, you get a 15 yard penalty. This may cost you the championship and your career as well if it continues.

Excellence

Personal leadership and motivational leadership are very much the same. To lead others, you must first lead yourself. To be an example or a role model for others, you must first become an excellent person yourself.

Vision

You motivate yourself with a big vision, and as you move progressively toward its realization, you motivate and enthuse others to work with you to fulfill that vision.

Integrity

You practice absolute honesty and integrity with everyone in everything you do. You are the kind of the person others admire and respect and want to be like. You set a standard that others aspire to. You live in truth with yourself and others so that they feel confident giving you their support and their commitment.

Courage

You demonstrate courage in everything you do by facing doubts and uncertainties and moving forward regardless. You put up a good front even when you feel anxious about the outcome. You don't burden others with your fears and misgivings. You keep them to yourself. You constantly push yourself out of your comfort zone and in the direction of your goals, and no matter how bleak it might appear, you keep on keeping on with a smile.

Realism

You practice intense realism. You refuse to engage in mental games or self-delusion. You encourage others to be realistic and objective about their situations as well. You encourage them to realize and appreciate that there's a price to pay for everything they want. They have weaknesses that they'll have to overcome and they have standards that they'll have to meet if they want to survive and thrive in a competitive market.

Responsibility

You accept complete responsibility for results. You refuse to make excuses, or blame others or hold grudges against people who you feel may have done you wrong. You say, "If it's to be, it's up to me."

You repeat over and over the words, "I am responsible," "I am responsible," "I am responsible."

Finally, you take action. You know that all mental preparation and character building is merely a prelude to action. It's not what you say, but what you do, that counts. As the commercial for Nike shoes says, "Just Do It!"

The mark of true leaders is that they lead the action. They are willing to go first. They set the example and act as the role model. They do what they expect others to do.

Motivate Yourself

You become a motivational leader by motivating yourself. And you motivate yourself by striving toward excellence, by committing yourself to becoming everything that you are capable of becoming. You motivate yourself by throwing your whole heart into doing your job in an excellent fashion.

You motivate others by continually looking for ways to help them to improve their lives and achieve their goals. You become a motivational leader by becoming the kind of person that others want to get behind and support in every way. Your main job is to take complete control of your own personal evolution and become a leader in every area of your life. You could ask for nothing more, and you should settle for nothing less.