

TERRY WILLIAMS



# GETTING BETTER BUY-IN

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HOW TO MOVE YOUR PEOPLE TO MOVE WITH YOU

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**Getting Better Buy-In:**  
How to move your people  
to move with you

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A Leader's Motivation Handbook

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**Terry Williams**

A Leader's Motivation Handbook

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# Introduction

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In the workshops I lead, and with the people I've had reporting to me who also had people reporting to them, one of the most common questions I hear is, "How do I motivate someone"? This book is the right book for them, even if that isn't the right question to ask.

I've been a trainer and facilitator for over twenty five years. In the middle of that, I was also a senior manager in a complex and changing organisation for a dozen years. Both roles involved helping people move towards behaviour change. The thing about behavior change is that you can't do it for them, nor can you always be around when the going gets tough. For those people doing the actual moving towards behavior change, they need to:

- *want* to do it,
- think they *need* to do it,
- think they *can* do it, and
- think they should do it *now*.

The combination of all those conditions is what we label 'motivated'. They need to be *self-motivated*. Armies might have generals, stage plays might have directors, and sports teams might have coaches screaming on the sidelines but the soldiers, athletes and actors doing the doing are the ones who need to be motivated. The generals, directors and coaches just need to make sure they recruit well, train for technical skills and create a culture and environment where people's natural motivations can come through. It's easy to say in a single sentence but it's not easy to do, especially when most leaders don't even realise that's what they're supposed to be doing. There's way too much of that image of the sports coach screaming from the sidelines as the poster child for motivation. There are definitely times and places for that approach but it's far less necessary than many think.

It might sound controversial for someone authoring a book on how to motivate people but I don't think any one person can motivate any other one person meaningfully *in the long run*. What they certainly can do is

create an environment and provide some tools where individuals and teams have:

- clarity on what they're trying to achieve,
- clarity on what action steps are required, and
- surety that the effort required is worth it, even if the results are not guaranteed.

That would apply in war, sports and drama, as well as any workplace you'd care to name.

One of my favourite leadership quotes is, "The true test of your leadership is what happens when you're not around". In writing this book, I tried to find out who originated it to give them credit. Even with Google, I could not find it. Maybe it was me? It sounds like something I would say.

Think about the implications of that quote.

I've worked for people in the past who were charismatic, passionate and energetic – the sorts of people many would believe to be what motivators look and sound like. Just being around them, you couldn't help but be turned on to the work by their infectious enthusiasm. However, it quickly became evident that it was all quite fleeting and superficial. Fireworks are exciting but you wouldn't want to work for them.

I've read widely the works of motivational authors and attended the presentations of many motivational speakers. It might be argued that perhaps they should call themselves speakers and the audiences can decide whether or not they're motivational? Maybe they're entertaining, and maybe they've got great content, but does that move anyone in the audience to lasting and meaningful behavior change? The truly great ones who genuinely motivate don't just speak or write, they provide structures, systems, tools and the design for environments that will allow and enable us to motivate ourselves. Because, ultimately, we're on our own for the most part once we close that book or walk out of that auditorium.

What I've tried to do with this book, and its associated presentations and workshops, is to give you structures, systems, tools and the design for environments that will allow and enable you to motivate yourselves when I'm not around. And, more importantly, for you to do the same with your people. At the end of each chapter is a planning page with the headings 'stop', 'start', and 'continue'. (The logic behind these is explained more



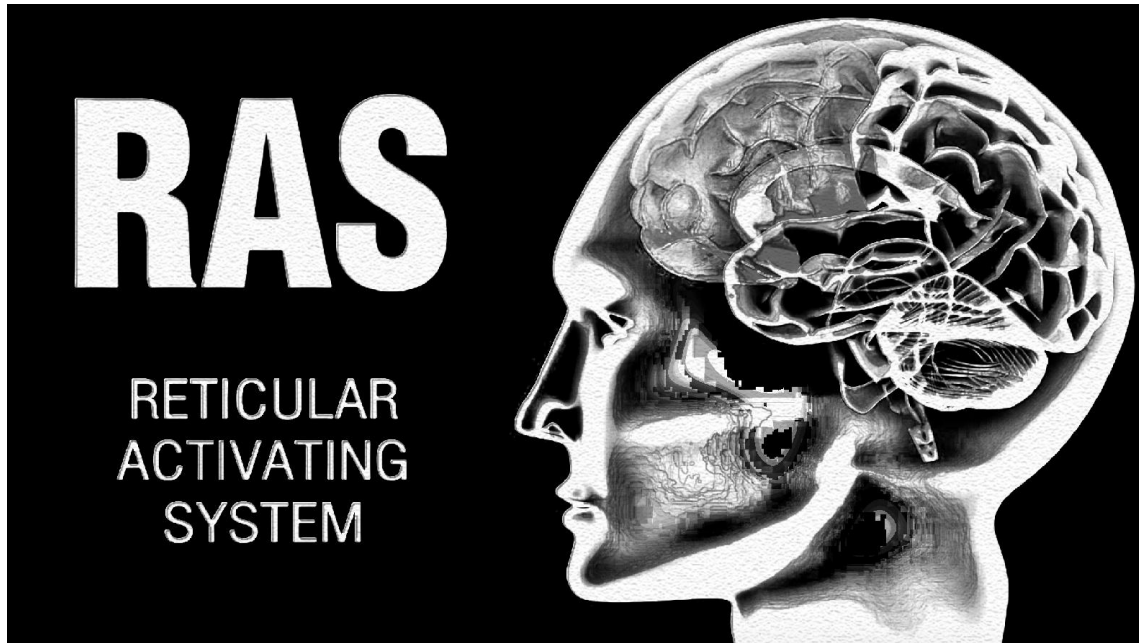
fully in chapter 5). Rather than you racing to get through the book, I find in reading, thinking and in conversation, it often pays to pause and reflect. More specifically, it pays to reflect on how this information might be relevant to you and or your people and, more importantly, what are you going to do? The knowing-doing gap is a well-documented barrier to change and development. Even a micro-pause whilst reading and then the physical act of writing out your thoughts can increase the likelihood of you applying the knowledge. It's even better if you then share that commitment publically.

I mainly work with leaders or potential leaders in the workplace or those that support them. That said, I see the principles in this book applied successfully outside work. You might be a sports coach or captain. You might be in the arts or sciences. You might be a sales person, business owner or project manager. You might be a mum or dad. Chances are you have more than one of these life leadership roles where you need to move people towards behavior change. Whether it's to practice the clarinet late into the night before the state championships or whether it's to get a marginal customer service rep to answer more calls, you'd like some tools to motivate people that don't rely on you doing all the heavy lifting.

The ideas and tools in this book are backed by research and forged in real life experience. They work. But we need to get away from this notion of motivation being you saying something to someone enthusiastically like a cheerleader or forcefully like a Marines Drill Sergeant, or an impassioned plea to go out and win one for the Gipper. They are easy images to conjure up but they're not how lasting motivation is managed in the real world. They're movie set-pieces and you're not Al Pacino.

## Chapter 1: Influence Focus And Attention Via The Reticular Activating System (RAS)

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Have you ever encountered a situation where someone asks you a question like, “Hey Terry, have you noticed the new Toyota Prius? It’s that fluorescent lime-green colour?”. And you hadn’t noticed it but, the moment it’s drawn to your attention, for the next two weeks you see nothing but lime-green cars everywhere you go. Have you ever had an experience like that?

When I ask that question in my workshops, even though I ask it as a rhetorical question and am in no way asking for, nor expecting, an overt response, virtually everyone present starts nodding. This experience is everywhere, frequent and universally relatable. In those workshops, before I ask the lime-green car question and describe the situation, I first ask if anyone knows what the Reticular Activating System (RAS) is. Only a tiny fraction of people ever say they know and only a small proportion of those do know the correct answer. Yet, most everyone does know what it is. They just don’t know what it’s called or why it exists.

You and I don't need to get into the minutiae of psychology and physiology as to where in the brain it is. I'll just address how it comes to exist, what flicks its switch and how you as a leader or influencer might be able to leverage it to get your people to buy into your project, mission, etc. It's important and powerful. There's a reason it's chapter one of this book.

The RAS comes to exist as our brain's internal defence mechanism to protect ourselves from going crazy trying to receive, interpret and react to a constant bombardment of external sensory stimuli. We are all being inundated with sights, sounds, tastes, tactile sensations and smells all the time with many competing for attention at once. Picture the RAS as you'd picture a bouncer in a nightclub. The nightclub in this metaphor is your conscious mind and it has a limited capacity. The clubbers in the queue are the sensations from our five senses. Ideally, the bouncer would only let in VIPs and exclude the riff-raff. "You're in. You're in. You, not with those shoes".

But, as we've already demonstrated, riff-raff does get in, such as lime-green cars. And it gets in using the same technique that clubbers have used on nightclub bouncers for years – bribes. For a brain, that's dopamine, a neurotransmitter linked to reward and pleasure.

Whilst our subconscious mind does sterling work on many thousands of bits of information, even while we sleep, our conscious mind is limited. It can only handle single digits. The key words here are focus and attention. You can reasonably assume the RAS developed to help us in our caveman times. (I would say 'caveperson' but they were, well, caveman times). And what cavepeople really needed to focus on was noticing things to eat, procreate with and things that might eat us. Patterns in the clouds may well be lovely but they do not tick any of those boxes. Rustling leaves could herald the arrival of a sabre toothed tiger or the presence of a boar for dinner.

One of the primary things that can switch on our RAS bouncer is novelty. Changes in patterns, routines and environments can be threats. And that is as true of modern people as it was of our cave-dwelling ancestors.

The one exception is the sense of smell which bypasses the RAS and goes directly to the memory centre. Chances are, some of your first memories and most powerfully emotional memories are smells. There's probably some evolutionary survival reason for that but, by and largely,

leaders in the workplace don't need to concern themselves too much with smell. That said, it does happen and you should handle it sensitively.

OK, so that's the potted history and purpose of the RAS. It is the keyholder to our focus and attention. The problem for many of us is that random stuff gets in there like lime-green cars, the ranting de jour on our Twitter feed and shiny things. What we'd like in there are high-value thoughts that can help us and move us forward. How can we switch our own RAS onto deliberate and positive foci and how can we do that for the people from whom we're trying to get buy-in?

To stretch our bouncer analogy a tad further, you'd like to think bouncers receive some training on what to look for in a VIP and what to look for in potential trouble makers. We can also train our RAS and provide ongoing support, for ourselves and others. Most of the subsequent chapters in this book work because they switch on the RAS.

Before we get to those chapters with their specific techniques, let's look at how you might generally take advantage of your RAS and, more importantly, clear out the trash that's currently getting in there. At a basic level, the RAS is about the WHAT, not the HOW. We increase our odds of getting what we want if we focus on it. We'll then start noticing things around us that otherwise we may not have because we've activated our RAS purposefully and deliberately, rather than letting it have its own merry and random way. I used to work in the gaming industry and there were some interesting conversations around how many big winners got their ceilings cleaned. Sure, they planned to quit the day job, pay off the house and take the world trip but a disproportionate number got their ceilings cleaned. Why? Because when you're a winner and you're happy, where are you looking? Up. Where do sad people look? Down. This works in reverse. Rather than letting your results drive where you focus. Take deliberate, conscious and proactive control and make your focus drive your results.

What do you want – very, very specifically, what do you want? A lot of people might say, “wealth,” “health”, or “happiness”. They're too broad. This question, seemingly easy at first, is actually more challenging than you think if you haven't already been giving it some thought. We'll cover good old fashioned goals in more detail in chapter 10 and tried and true models like SMART goals. For now, let's focus on how you need to

represent your goal tangibly in the physical world so it can serve to activate your RAS.

This physical form needs to have three characteristics. The reason the lime-green car activates your RAS and sticks in your mind for ages afterwards is that it's:

- novel,
- distinctive, and
- physically exists in multiple locations.

To leverage this mind-system to your own ends of self or team development and reaching whatever goals you have, you need a novel, distinctive and physical reminder in multiple prime eyelines. For your team, where are these eyelines? What are people looking at all day and as they arrive and leave? Is it their computer screen, clock on the wall, the fridge door in the kitchenette, the entry door to the office?

Mass-produced motivational posters of geese flying in formation or rowers at dawn are all well and good but do they really motivate at all, or are they just good for covering the smudge marks on the wall? If you'd spent the twenty dollars you spent on that poster on a pizza, would that have been more motivational? The trouble with posters and pizzas is that they're both short-term motivators, if they're motivators at all. What would be more specifically motivational for your people on an ongoing basis?

Whatever personalized and customized focus visuals you create with their images and messages will wear off too so they need to be regularly updated. Short, burst campaigns are more effective than dusty old posters, even if they're in a nice chrome and glass frame. Those things just become part of the wallpaper and certainly quickly fail the novelty and distinctiveness tests.

These RAS activators don't just have to be graphs, pictures or posters. They can be gestures. Let me give you an example. I MC'd an Olympic gold medallist speaking at a conference who told their story of winning that medal. More powerful though was their story of not winning a medal at the previous Olympics at which they'd been expected to. In coming fourth, the speaker demonstrated the distance between them and a medal by holding their hands in front of them about a foot apart. Their left hand

was a medal and their right hand was no medal. It was simple, iconic and, for an athlete, a very physical representation of how close they'd come. The expression "coming up short" had never been better expressed. In their speech, they spoke of being disappointed and how they used that to motivate themselves for the next four years. I don't think they realised it but as they spoke of that disappointment, they constantly repeated that gesture. It had become a short and simple trigger to connect back to that RAS-activating experience. Four years later, when they won their gold medal, they didn't win by a mere foot. They won by, what was at the time, a world record margin.

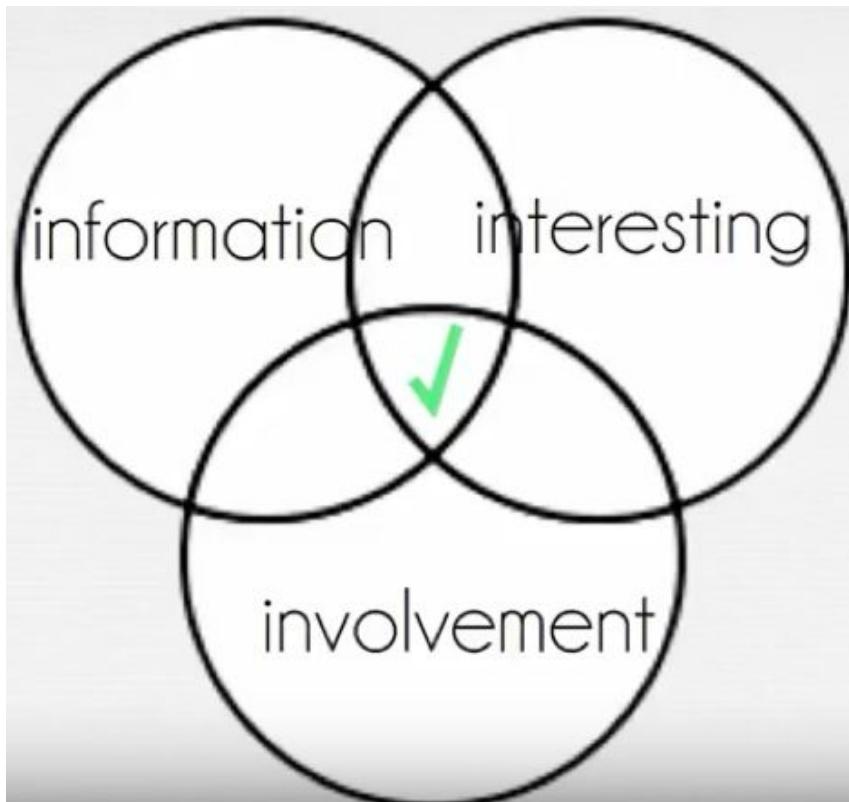
Stop

Start

Continue

## Chapter 2: Create Opportunities For Involvement (The 'Triple I' Model)

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I've been a trainer and facilitator for over twenty five years and, in that time, my observation, experience and research tells me there are three critical components for the optimum learning environment. I try to make sure they are present wherever I'm hoping to get some learning to take place – in a classroom, online or one-on-one. I need to make sure my learners publically declare they're on board with these things before we even start doing any learning.

Whether or not the learners are themselves paying for the learning, there is a cost to them being there. There are no magical pixies doing their work for them while they're learning so that work will be waiting for them upon their return. The cost to them is time and time is money. Apart from the cliché, I genuinely look at time these days as a currency and measure



many of my decisions with a time metric, as do many others. I need to ensure my learners believe they are getting something of value in return for their time currency. So, I make available before the learning some evidence of that. For example, testimonials from previous learners addressing the value they got from the information they learned.

You might be thinking at this point, what has this got to do with you? You're probably not a trainer. You're a leader, project manager or some other form of change agent trying to get better buy-in and move your people to move with you. Bear with me please. You'll soon see as I go through the 'Triple-I' model that there is a very strong overlap between me as a trainer trying to create an optimum learning environment and you trying to nudge people towards change. My people and your people both need the same things and certainly that first thing is something of value in exchange for the time and effort. For me that is information and I'd be surprised if that wasn't the same for you too. People do not like operating in an information vacuum. Uncertainty and ambiguity are the enemy. Even if you don't yet have all the facts yourself, anything you can do to lessen uncertainty and ambiguity can only help your buy-in efforts. In an information vacuum, people tend to default in their thinking to worry and worst case scenarios. That does not help make them participative or productive.

Whether it be a little motivational speech you choose to give to your team, some data you pin to a noticeboard, or an emailed story or article you circulate, it would pay you to provide initial and ongoing evidence to your team of information relating to, and the value of, the changes you propose. Somewhere, some other team or teams similar to you have done something like this before. Make a connection. Get in touch. Who do you know that knows them? Buy someone a coffee, smoothie or sparkling water and extract some info. If you agree time is a currency, you'll be even more pleased at the value of real-life connections and information from people ahead of you on the change curve.

You might think that your change is new and different and innovative. What you're proposing to do has never been done before. You're inventing the next iPhone. Fine, maybe the specific goal of your change is new but the nature of the change process and its effects on people, are not. That is a well-trodden path and why reinvent the wheel? It's a bit like seeking advice as a potential new parent from people who already have kids. I'm

sure your kids are going to be amazing and your friends' advice won't apply wholesale to everything you need to know about kids, but you're obviously going to be having those conversations. Take everything you hear with a grain of salt and look for patterns rather than taking any one piece of information at face value as a literal and universal truth.

The first 'I' is information and your people need it. If they don't get it from you, where are they going to get it. How can you verify that competing information's accuracy? Get ahead of the game and provide what info you can as soon as you can and as often as is practical.

The second 'I' is interesting. What do most people find most interesting? Themselves. In chapter 8, we talk about stimulating internal motivation with the WIIFM Grid. WIIFM stands for 'What's In It For Me'? It's not as selfish or Machiavellian as it sounds, it's more about point of view. The information that you provide needs, for the most part, to be from *their* perspective. Leaders and project managers are all too guilty of providing information from their own, or the company's, perspective. If you're a team leader of midnight shelvers at a supermarket and you're trying to lead them to self-identify ways of improving their processes, they're less likely to be motivated by the possible impact on the millionaire owner's gross profit than they are by the impact on them and their friends with whom they work. How can you honestly link increasing the store's gross profit to something of benefit to the team? That might be something like job security or team stability which is more likely if the store makes money. Hopefully.

The odds are very high that any people you're leading, and from whom you're trying to get buy-in, have had leaders like you try it with them before. On average, it's likely that those previous efforts and results have not been great. There's even a slang term for it on factory floors where various change projects have come and gone as the flavor of the month management consultants have influenced management: BOHICA! This stands for 'Bend Over Here It Comes Again'. The underlying cynical philosophy of that is if you keep your head down and remain unnoticed, you might survive until the next round of suggested changes. This mindset is the opposite of what you need to get buy-in.

A simple, obvious, yet underutilized technique to try in these BOHICA-response situations is to ask questions. Be it at a toolbox meeting at the back of truck before the shift starts or in a conference room

with a whiteboard and flipcharts, you lead a series of questions with people who have been there before. Depending on how you handle them early on in your change efforts, these people can be one of three things as you attempt to move forward with your changes:

- an obstacle,
- an ally with influence beyond your own, or
- a passive non-participant demotivating others around them. ('Last Of TheBOHICAns').

It doesn't have to be a big, obvious meeting. It could be a subtle series of questions over time. You could conduct it with the entire group, in smaller sub-groups or with key individuals, perhaps popular or persuasive opinion leaders within the group. Or a combination.

You can use your own words but the simple questions are questions such as:

- why didn't the last change work?
- if you were running the last change, what would you have done differently?
- What are some problems with the way things are now?

The first 'I' is information – something of value in exchange for their time and effort. The second 'I' is interesting – having the change framed from their point of view. The third 'I' is involvement.

Often, one of the reasons people resist change, avoid change, or don't participate in change is a sense of powerless or loss of control. To the extent that you're able to give them some control, or at least influence, or at the very least a sense of influence, can break down that resistance to a degree. Sometimes it's quite a challenge for you to find the opportunity for that. Things need to be accomplished and there's a budget and a schedule. But to the extent that you can, you should, as it will bring people along for the ride. If you can't give them control over what they need to do, can you give them some choices? Choices and options are great for lessening that sense of a loss of influence over their own environment and outcomes.

For example, when I was running a project to shift a contact centre and build some new accommodation, I had a lot of constraints but, if I looked hard enough, there were plenty of small opportunities to create options for the people who would be most affected by the shift – the actual CSRs working the phones sitting in the new space. The centre needed new carpet tiles and they had to be within a price range and had to be a certain durable type to handle the 24/7/365 rolling of office chair wheels across them. Based on experts' advice, I narrowed down a range of carpet tiles options and gave it to the CSRs to decide. It wasn't just the carpet tiles they had to decide but also the means by which they would fairly and wisely make their selection. It's amazing how people step up to the plate if given some room, clear direction and the opportunity.

They formed a team to look at the options, get samples, trial them in the space so everyone could see them in the light and next to the furnishings etc. It included the various shifts over the 24 hours so

everyone's point of view was included. Importantly, they decided in advance the means by which they'd make their decisions, and a process for dealing with disagreements. To make a demonstrative act of trust, I also publically declared at that preliminary stage that I would abide by whatever decision they made. Little acts of trust-building have a greater effect down the line when you need them to trust you. Think of it as an emotional bank account. You make many small deposits so when you need to make a large withdrawal later, the balance is there and in the black. Always remember, the emotional bank account does not allow overdrafts.

With the 'Triple I' model, just like in the image at the start of this chapter, we're looking for that sweet spot of intersection in the middle. The people from whom you're trying to get buy-in feel they're informed and getting value for their time and effort. They feel their point of view is being taken into account. There are concrete activities in which they, or their representatives, are involved.

As a last act in covering this topic in my workshops, I always seek a public declaration from my learners that they agree they will be involved. Everyone is different and extroverts will clearly be more overtly involved than introverts but involvement doesn't have to be loud or obvious. It can be subtle. It can be as subtle as asking rhetorical questions. That's another low-effort, low-risk way of activating people's RAS.

With small changes, you might be able to think of opportunities for involvement and keep track of them in your head. For any changes of meaningful significance, this approach will fall over very quickly, doing more harm than good. If you have a project plan or similar forms of documentation, add a page headed 'Opportunities For Involvement'. Have the names of the participants, stakeholders etc down the first column. The top row can be the timeline. Use this planning document to make sure those that need the most involvement get what they need. It might be one large thing or many smaller but regular ones. Having a written plan makes it far more likely it becomes reality. How do you know what opportunities for involvement they'd like or you would find useful? Well, for that, there's a little technique we're about to cover in detail in chapter 3 called 'asking'.

Stop

Start

Continue

## Chapter 3: Stop Telling People (The Power Of Self-Identifying)

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As a trainer, leader, or change agent, it's tempting to *tell* people things. It's time efficient. It's possible that you know something and they don't, so why wouldn't you tell them? It turns out that the research shows that, if your objective is to influence people to choose to change their own behavior in your absence, telling is much less effective than using questions to guide people to self-identify their own conclusions.

There go another couple of the themes of this book in a nutshell:

- self-identification, and
- the true test of your leadership or influence is what happens when you're not around.

This predisposition to telling people leads to what I call 'tick-box' communication. Someone delivers an instruction in person, by phone or email and, in their mind, they tick a figurative box labelled 'communication done'. Reality has a way of tripping up such tick-box communicators when their instructions gets ignored, misinterpreted or forgotten. Just because you say something doesn't mean they hear it. A simple factor such as a nosy workplace or poor phone reception could lose part or all of a message. And, "I never got that email" has become the, "My dog ate my homework" of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Even if they hear it, it doesn't mean they understood it, whether it was technical complexity, unfamiliar jargon or the issues for those with English as a second language. There are plenty of possible gaps in the communication chain from misunderstanding. Coupled with that are issues around people not asking or revealing that they didn't understand for ego or face-saving reasons. I will sometimes deliberately and repeatedly drop a piece of completely fictional jargon or an acronym into conversation with groups. At a suitable gap in proceedings, I will take on the character of the TV detective 'Colombo'. As we are about to take a break, I'll turn back and ask, "Oh by the way, what does [insert fictional jargon] mean"? Clearly, no one can answer the question because the jargon was made up. Their assigned questions for conversation in the break, upon which they'll be reporting back are:

1. what might be some reasons very few people ever say they don't know what I'm saying and ask for clarification, and
2. what impact might this have on communication and subsequent productivity in the workplace?



Even if they genuinely understood your instruction, they might unilaterally choose not to implement all or part of it, due to their own agenda, biases or fears. Back in chapter 2, we covered the BOHICA effect where people can simply passively withdraw effort without overtly opposing change. The communication chain is another place the BOHICA effect can come into play and threaten your change efforts if you are not vigilant.

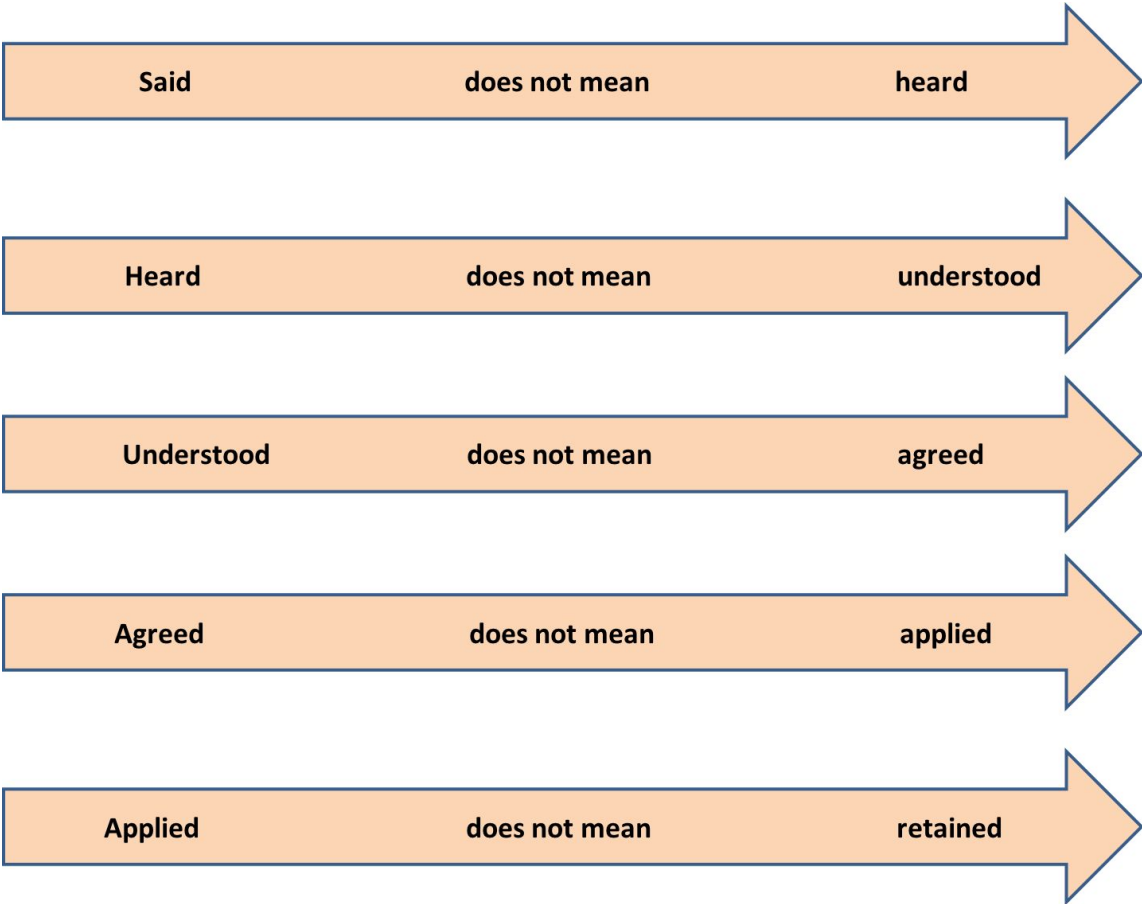
Even if they did hear, understand and agree, they might be constrained from acting upon your instruction for other reasons, such as a lack of resources, poor cooperation from others or conflicting advice from someone else.

Ultimately, they may have followed your instruction and carried out the action you intended as you intended it but then you discover they fail to repeat the desired behavior. They might not display the initiative to do so without further instruction from you or they might revert to old ways of doing it.

Communication cannot be a linear, one-way broadcast with a tick-box mindset if it is to be demonstrably effective. And, that is what telling people is - a linear, one-way broadcast with a tick-box mindset. There is no one 'magic bullet' solution to this. It's lots of little things.

One of my favourite techniques is what the military call 'The Back Brief'. An instruction is delivered by an officer to an individual or team and it is then delivered back to the officer to ensure that it has been heard and understood as well as indications of how it will be carried out and questions. A simple task assigned to a single person will result in a quick and short verbal reply as a back brief. A more complex task might result in a short group presentation back to the officer after a specified time in which they've had time to reflect and respond meaningfully and collectively. I mentioned the back brief in passing to a law firm recently and they now use the practice.

Be wary of asking someone, "Do you understand," as they'll likely nod or say yes regardless. Get them to show they know, even if it's just repeating back in their own words. This is more likely with less experienced team members.



The military do have an advantage in that there is far less likelihood of the BOHICA effect, due to the inherent hierarchy and command-and-control authority. Us civilians need to leverage persuasion and influence strategies. I'll now outline my 'ask don't tell' strategy which has a far different meaning from the one made familiar by the U.S. military.

# Influence Continuum

**Force threaten tell ask suggest imply hope**



The ‘Influence Continuum’ graphically represents a spectrum of options by which we attempt to move others towards change. At one extreme, we have force. There are few situations in which that is appropriate but if someone refuses to leave a burning building and you drag them out, I guess that’s OK. In less dramatic situations, the downside of force and threats is that it might achieve what you want in the immediate term but it damages the relationship moving forward and you have to be there. To put a figurative gun to someone’s head, you need a gun, be thought to be willing to use it and be physically present. In the introduction to this book, one of our stated aims was to lessen your burden and get others to do the heavy lifting. Force and threats are not long-term fixes and are very much in the heavy lifting category.

The other end of the continuum with the vagueness and inaction of implying and hoping are for avoiders. With that come regrets and poor results. Avoidance is only a short-term fix and it doesn’t fix anything.

The good old middle is the happy hunting ground for change agents on the Influence Continuum. Which of *tell*, *ask* or *suggest* you choose to use depends on at least three things:

- the individual with whom you’re dealing,

- the objective of your interaction, and
- the situation in which you find yourselves.

For example, you may lean more towards telling when the individual is new, inexperienced or lacks knowledge on a particular topic. With a proven, reliable and experienced veteran, you'd likely lean more towards suggestion, specifying the result you're after, offering some options as to how it might be gone about but leaving it up to their discretion. A situation with significant health and safety, legal or cost implications might be more directive than discretionary so you'd apply the 'tell' mode.

This chapter is about the relative power of asking versus telling, so let me give you some research that backs that up. This relates to when you want to influence others to choose to change their own behaviour in your absence. You don't have to be there (with or without a gun). You don't have to do the heavy lifting and it sets up behavior change on an ongoing basis.

A study was done with smokers. Smokers were invited to a seminar. There were many smokers and many seminars. Each smoker attended one seminar. Half the seminars had an expert at the front of the room, looking and sounding like an authoritative expert. Maybe they wore a lab coat. Maybe they used PowerPoint graphs. They said something like, "Hello. I'm one of the world's leading experts on smoking cessation and I'm here today to TELL you why YOU should give up smoking". They then proceeded to do just that – telling them why they should change. All very logical and credible but not very interactive, with no opportunities for involvement which, as we know from chapter 2, is very important. So, that was seminar type one – an expert tells you.

The second type of seminar was different. Similar types of people entered a similar room but, this time, there was no lab coat and no PowerPoint graphs. A casually attired person stood at the front of the room holding a flipchart marker and welcoming attendees. They asked one participant something like, "Hi Kate. Kate, if you had a friend that wanted to give up smoking, what might be some of their reasons? Help her out everybody". Audience contributions were written up on the flipchart and, soon enough, they'd drafted a list which was usually not a lot different from the list that the expert could have told them. It was quicker when the expert told them, I'll grant you that.

Twenty minutes into every seminar, secretly out the back, an assistant pulled the fire alarm. Everyone had to leave the building for an unspecified amount of time. Of course, they were all smokers, so the researchers videoed everyone and timed how long it took on average for seminar groups to light up. Which type of group do you think took longer to light up?

It wasn't even close. The groups who had been asked to self-identify reasons why someone (not 'them', but 'someone') might (not 'should' but 'might') want to give up smoking took three times as long to light up. Smoking is a behaviour borne of chemical addiction so that result is amazing. Similar studies have been done looking at other behaviours which are discretionary choices and the time disparities have been even greater. Let's take that 300% as a conservative baseline.

If people come up with ideas themselves, facilitated by leaders or change agents or themselves, they are three times more likely to listen further, three times more likely to believe and trust the information, three times more likely to be willing to try it, (here's the really important stat) three times more likely to keep going when it gets tough, and three times more likely to advocate the idea to others once they've normalized it themselves.

Just to reiterate, I'm not saying you should never tell people things. There are clearly situations and types of information where telling is both effective and efficient. But, when the objective is to nudge people into choosing to change their own behaviour in the long run in your absence, then guided self-identification is the smart way to go.

By itself though, just them listening, believing and trying isn't enough to sustain the motivation to change. Some support is required and, again, that heavy lifting shouldn't fall solely on your shoulders. The next chapter looks at how you might set up sideways collaboration opportunities.

Stop

Start

Continue

## Chapter 4: Utilise The Influence Of Social Leverage & Collaboration (The Learning Staircase)

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If you're trying to motivate a group of people, here's a catch-phrase for this chapter – one size does not fit all. People are different in many ways but there's one very specific way, they are different *from you*. Whatever you consider to be a motivator may not motivate significant numbers of other people. In fact, that personal motivator of yours might be someone else's demotivator.

In one of my previous roles, our department was well-known in the organization for our team celebrations. One person, new to the organisation but who had been there long enough to have witnessed several of these, congratulated us on them but did draw our attention to the fact that every single one of our celebrations revolved around food. Why?

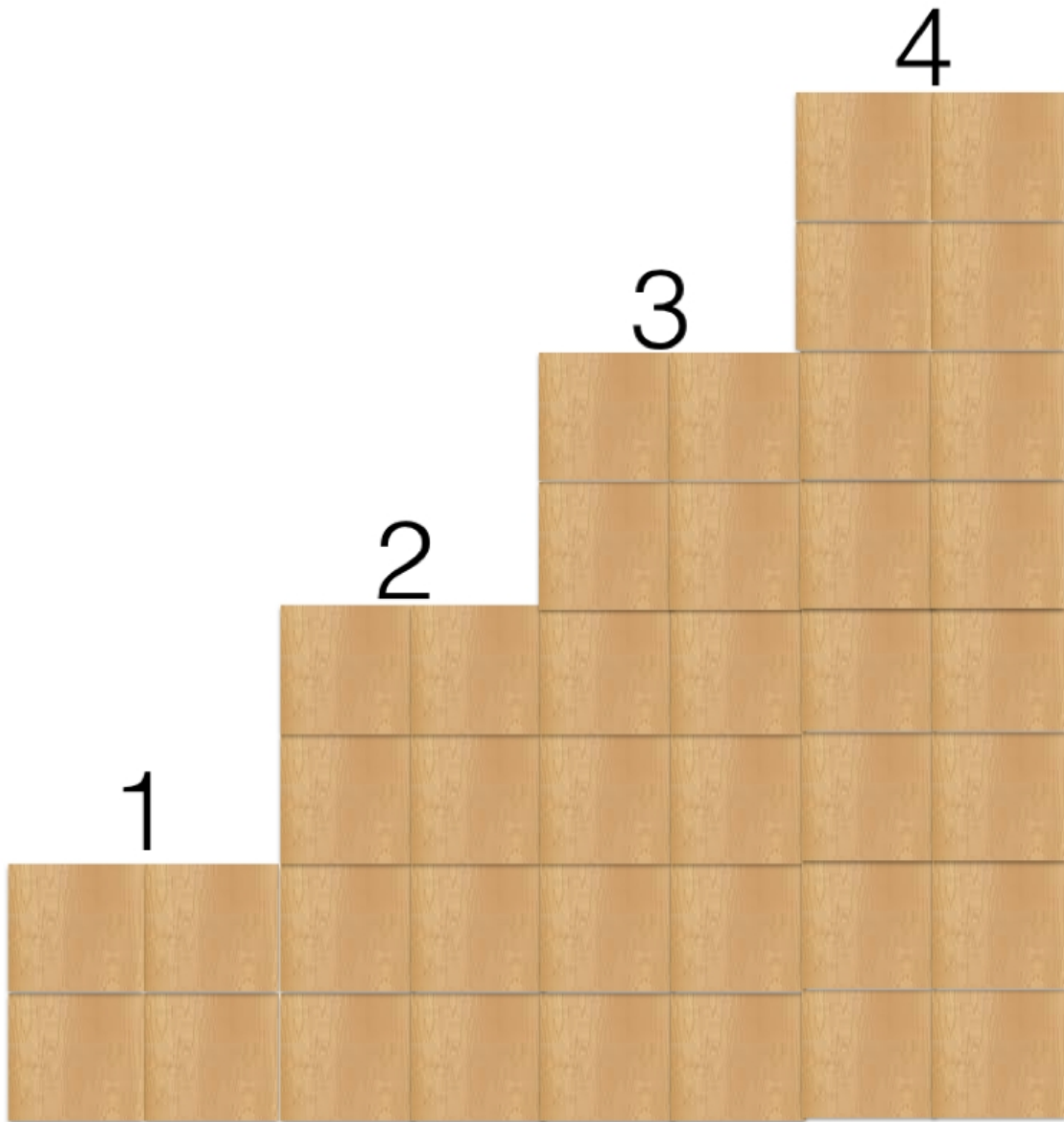
Because I liked food. In fairness, most people do. But the types of food that feature in celebrations are rarely healthy and we had a significant proportion of our team who were trying to watch what they ate. We weren't helping. So, we mixed it up a bit with varying styles, locations and scales of celebrations. We'd thought we were getting good reactions to our food-based celebrations, and we were, but once we had the comparison of trying different things, responses were even more positive.

This chapter will give you a couple of tools. The purpose of these is to weave into your motivation strategies other people's points of view. You might genuinely be open-minded and you might genuinely be trying to take into account the perspectives of others but there really is no substitute for actual others providing their own perspectives and representing many additional others.

The people in the group you're trying to motivate will all be starting from different points in their age, gender, experience, education, life stage and so forth. How can those ahead in one area help those who are not and how can those who are new help challenge those who are part of the furniture? There's a model I use when I'm training trainers and it's one of the bedrock ideas driving adult learning. It's got many names and lots of cultures have come up with their own versions. In this book, I'll call it 'The Learning Staircase.

It's a basic model of prerequisites for learning. You can't run until you can walk. You can't walk until you can crawl.





This model is skill specific. Let's take driving as an example. Right now, it's front of mind for me. My children, now adults, have recently succeeded in getting through the full drivers licence process. I have succeeded in getting through my 'white knuckled parent in the passenger seat process'. It makes me nostalgic for when I got my own drivers licence back in the early Duran Duran era.

I'm going to continue to call the various levels of The Learning Staircase one, two, three and four. It's obvious and intuitive what I mean. I will spend a bit of time now though going a bit deeper into what it takes and means to be at each level and to move forwards and backwards. There

are a few polysyllabic terms coming up. Fret not, we'll be back to one, two, three, four before you know it. As I said, I use this model in training trainers about some principles of adult learning. It's also a great framework for thinking about motivating people, your people, at the different levels in different ways. It's also the way you see how you can plan collaborations and use people's natural socialization to spark more motivation. Or, at least, prevent some demotivation.

Step one is also known as (polysyllabic warning) Unconscious Incompetence. It's a terrible term. I prefer to say that if you're a one at a particular skill, then you don't yet know what you don't know. The symptoms of being a one are typically high levels of motivation and low-to-zero levels of actual skill. Taking my own driving experience as an example, before I got behind the wheel of a car, I was going to be the next world racing driving champion, I was going to get that elbow sunburned by hanging it out the car window and I'd be cruising my hometown's main streets on a Saturday night. Good times... in my head. Step one (Unconscious Incompetence), I didn't yet know what I didn't know.

Then I got behind the wheel of a car. Suddenly I'm starting in third gear and bunny-hopping into the middle of the intersection and stalling the car, cars are coming and I'm freaking out. Or, I'm attempting a hill-start in neutral and I'm coasting backwards and the truck behind blares its horn and I'm freaking out. This is step two or Conscious Incompetence. Suddenly, it hits me how little I know and how much more there is to it. The symptoms of being a two are plummeting morale and slightly more than zero skills.

Common to steps one and two is the fundamental need for supervision. By definition, if you cannot do a skill competently without direct supervision then you are a one or a two at that skill.

It might be that you only spend thirty second at stage two before ploughing onwards. Some people, for some skills, never get beyond step two. Perhaps you know them? Perhaps you are one?

The odds of a two becoming a three are very much dependent on the qualities of the driving instructor / teacher / coach / leader doing the supervision. Basically, there are three alternatives. Firstly, people at step two can give up. For some people, for some skills, that might be the best option. Secondly, people at step two can spin their wheels. They neither give up nor progress. They become a burden and produce low quality high-

cost work. The third alternative is the best. They get effective feedback, can see the benefits are worth the effort and discomfort. They try and learn and try and learn, until one day they cross the magical ‘line of supervision’ and can complete the skill competently by themselves. This is when they hit step three Conscious Competence. The symptoms are medium and improving levels of skill, and variable motivation depending on their supervisor experience during step two.

At step three, they can do it but it’s effortful. It’s often clunky. Our brains don’t like effort. On average, your brain is the size of your fist and that is roughly four percent of your body mass. Despite being only four percent of our body mass, our brain consumes twenty four percent of our energy. Consequently, our brains are constantly on the lookout for what psychologists call ‘heuristics’, or what I would call ‘shortcuts’.

Have you ever had a day when you’ve gotten in the car in the morning to drive to work? You’ve turned on the ignition, searched for the traffic report on the radio, done half a yawn and then, as you open your eyes, you’re at work with little if any clear recall of that drive to work. Have you ever had an experience like that? You have. You’ve had many of them. In fact, you’ve had many more of them than you can remember.

Step four is Unconscious Competence. We can do it competently without actively thinking about it. This is the effortless that our brain likes. The symptoms of step four are high motivation and high competence. We cannot rest on our laurels at step four. The Learning Staircase is something we can move forwards and backwards or get stuck on, spinning our wheels. The two variables affecting our movement are:

1. am I not only skilled enough for the level I’m at but am I developing, and
2. is my work connecting with my internal motivation and not conflicting with my beliefs and values?

Step four is certainly desirable but it is no Nirvana. There are some potential downsides to being a four – the curse of genius. One such downside is complacency. The diligence we showed getting to that level is no longer essential. We imagine we can multi-task. You might be juggling activities but your brain cannot multi-task. The best it can do is rapid task-switching. You might be able to keep some plates spinning but there will

always be degradation of quality. Whilst driving, we imagine we can text, put on makeup, install a Bluetooth speaker, clear a windscreen, or, as I saw a truckdriver doing on a motorway recently, eat a bowl of oatmeal out of his lap. (Full credit for nutritional choices, less so for road safety).

I got stuck at Wellington airport in 2016 on a day when there was both an earthquake and a flood. I'm not complaining. I had a minimal delay, others had serious problems. I did get to stare at TV during the daytime which I do not normally do. There was a TV chat show and it featured a chef as a guest. The chef made a meatloaf and the host came across to conduct an interview at the kitchen. The host asked why the chef had cut an end off the meatloaf and put it to one side of the remaining meatloaf in the tray. The chef flushed with embarrassment and stammered out something like, "I learned to make meatloaf as a young girl at my mother's knee. She used to do it and I've just kept on doing it. I'm a professional chef and now you've asked me the question, I cannot think of a single technical cooking justification for doing this".

The host said something like, "That's OK. Let's ring your mum"!

The mum declared, "Gosh, I was watching live on TV and I don't know why. My mum used to do it and I've carried it on".

They went back four generations and spoke with the great great grandmother, "I made meatloaf during the great depression. We had a very large family, were very poor and could only afford to buy a small tray. So, to make the meatloaf fit, we had to cut off the end"...

Isn't that so very *human*? There was, at one point, a perfectly valid reason but, over time, people simply repeated it without thought as to whether it was still valid. In workplaces, you'll often hear the phrase, *the way things are done around here is the way things are done around here*. Between social leverage and behavioural inertia, we are very inclined to keep doing things until some compelling or external reason crops up not to. We all need a TV chat show host coming up to us and asking *why*. We don't have a TV chat show host on retainer but we do have ones and fours. Clearly, there's an obvious value in having skilled fours developing ones but the traffic isn't one-way. The value the ones bring to the equation is the *why*. Lots of whys. Some days perhaps painfully so.

The downside of being a four, along with complacency might be over-confidence or arrogance, or an inability to deal with non-fours (customers,

stakeholders, other departments, etc). When we're very busy, we may not take personal timeouts and look at what we're doing and ask:

1. is this still the best way of doing this, or
2. is this even necessary to do at all?

You can't just hope fours and ones work together naturally. You can't just release them into the wild and hope for the best. How can you systematically plan and manage as skills change who of your people are ones and fours and how they interact in a planned way? Here's a tool for that called 'The Skills Matrix'.

Below is an example of what a very basic DIY skills matrix might look like. Ideally it wouldn't be subjective as to what it takes to be a four or a one but, even if it is just initially your opinion, it's a useful starting point as a planning tool. You can't start buddying up your fours to help develop your ones or use your ones to challenge your fours until you know who is which.

	Skill 1	Skill 2	Skill 3	Skill 4	Skill 5	Skill 6	Skill 7	Skill 8	Skill 9	Skill 10
Name A	4	1	3	1	4	4	4	1	3	1
Name B	2	2	2	2	4	3	2	2	2	2
Name C	1	1	3	2	4	2	1	1	3	2
Name D	2	2	2	1	4	1	2	2	2	1
Name E	1	2	3	2	4	2	1	2	3	2
Name F	2	2	3	2	4	3	2	2	3	2
Name G	1	1	2	1	4	4	1	1	2	1
Name H	2	1	2	1	4	2	2	1	2	1
Name I	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
Name J	2	2	3	2	4	3	2	2	3	4

In the above example skills matrix, let's look at the column headed 'Skill 1'. Employee A is a four. No one else is above a two. Have a think about the implications of that and what actions you might need to take. For a start, what if employee A left or got sick. You've got a key-person critical risk there that needs to be managed. Quite apart from developing and motivating the twos, you need to create cover, continuity and even a succession plan. Pick your best two and get them buddied up with a goal and a timeframe to get that two up to a four. Then do it again.

Employee I is no higher than a two in any skill. That's not necessarily a problem. They may be new. They'd benefit from being buddied up with a

variety of fours. This lightens the load on a top performer like employee A and allows employee I to be exposed to a variety of perspectives.

Such matrices are living documents. Some workplaces find it appropriate and useful in a positive way to post it as an A3 on a wall so it's visible to all. The thinking there is that people strive to better themselves. I think this is generally true but I'd still advise caution in posting such information publically. It very much depends on an open and trusting workplace culture.

It's great you're using a planned approach to manage the interactions of people at different levels within your team with a purpose to drive motivation in both the teacher and learner. However, even the best laid plans still have to contend with people who aren't you influencing your team, sometimes without it being obvious they're doing it, or even realizing themselves that they are doing it. This is hard to plan for directly but keep an eye out for it. It's called *Social Leverage*.

Social leverage is fairly evident all around us. If we haven't had a direct and personal experience of a topic, our opinions can take the shape of those others around us who are like us. Sometimes this social leverage is accidental, sometimes deliberate. For example, the signs in hotels designed to encourage towel re-use. It certainly reduces costs for the hotel in reducing what they pay for laundry services. It might be framed more altruistically than that around benefits to the environment. Both are equally true. What drives the towel reuse behaviour of room occupants though is what previous room occupants have done and those little signs these days often feature a statistic – something like, “75% of previous occupants of this room have reused their towels”. That information does indeed drive up towel re-usage.

However, the notion of social leverage can also have negative or unforeseen consequences. A national park intern in the U.S. took up a role at a park that was experiencing a disappointing problem with littering. She had studied this notion of social leverage so she thought she'd use it to drive tidiness behaviour improvements. She convinced park management to give her enough time and resources to construct a large cage just inside the entrance to the park. After surveying and measuring trash collections from the park for three months, she filled the cage with the amount of trash that represented how much trash was dumped in the park every day and posted a large sign to that effect. It was a lot of trash and its

distinctive mass struck visitors as they arrived. She then continued the survey and measurement of trash dumping for the next three months to see what influence the cage and sign had on visitor behaviour.

Staggeringly, disappointingly and perhaps surprisingly, trash dumping doubled. What? How? Why?

This is the dark side of social leverage  
– *everyone else is doing it...*

In your thinking around developing and adjusting your own motivation strategies with your people and projects, you need to be on the alert for examples of desired behaviour to reinforce and publicise. At the same time, you need to be on the alert for examples of off-target behaviour – to extinguish any rewards and reinforcement people are getting for that behaviour and making sure it doesn't virally spread. This would include those BOHICAns. Non-participation can spread if you allow it to take hold, even tolerate it. As a leader and change agent, everything you do has a consequence, even if that something you do is nothing.

Stop

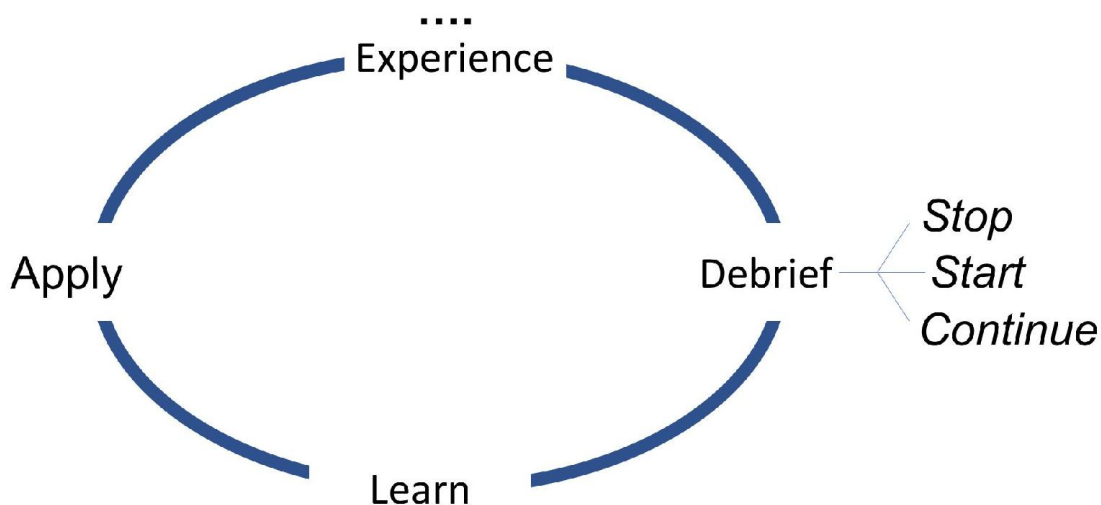
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Continue



## Chapter 5: Learn From Mistakes & Successes (The Experiential Learning Cycle + Debriefing)

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The Experiential Learning Cycle sounds like a mouthful but it's simple really. It's the way we learn naturally. I use a lot of different techniques as a trainer with my learners but if I had to choose just one – my desert island training technique – I would choose experiential learning.

The overwhelming majority of people I met can walk. They've never been to walking university. They never did walking 101 at nightschool. Yet, somehow, without being formally trained at the skill of walking, most everyone manages to become competent at it. We were once a pre-toddler. We had parents or caregivers, perhaps older siblings. We could see them modelling the act of walking and we could see the benefits of being able to walk. That ever-elusive cookie jar would be within our reach if only we could walk. We had a go, we fell down, we had a cry, got a pat on the head and some words of encouragement. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. A cycle of learning, encouragement, practice, feedback. A combination of logical learning with purpose and emotional responses. Eventually, we got those cookies.

If you look at the diagram at the start of this chapter, we start with the experience. It could be the tentative first steps of a toddler or a sales call

by one of your sales team. That sales call succeeds or it doesn't. There is a point of reflection which I call the 'Debrief'. Based on that we extract some learning and apply it which leads us to a new, hopefully improved, experience. And so it goes on.

I've taken another popular model and fused it into the standard experiential learning cycle to create a hybrid. At the debrief point, rather than rely on people generally being able to reflect on their experience in an unstructured and undisciplined way, I've added three simple questions. I'll outline these in a moment.

I work in a lot of different organisations. Often, someone senior will take me on a tour of the workplace. They'll proudly show me the new computer system, the digger, the warehouse. I'll meet the team. The boss will say how proud they are and how, "Around here Terry, we learn from our mistakes". At that point, I'll ask them, "Wow, that's really interesting. I'm writing a book on that. Tell me, how, how do you learn from your mistakes"? The conversation takes a bit of a dive at that point. They don't really know how they learn from their mistakes, or even if they do learn from their mistakes. It's just something they say. It's something a lot of people say.

What my hybrid model gives people is a simple, low-effort discipline that enables individuals, teams and organisations to genuinely learn, not only from their mistakes, but also from their successes. So often, one person will be thriving but not everyone gets the benefit of learning from the positive experiences of others.

And it all happens at that 'debrief' point of the experiential learning cycle.

Let's stick with the unsuccessful sales call as a simple example with which to work. The debrief for a small experience is itself a small debrief. You drive to your next sales call and in the car, you and the voices in your head have a three-question conversation. If it's a big deal, then the debrief becomes larger and more formal – multiple people in a room with laptops and whiteboards – but still the three questions remain the same.

The first question is 'stop' – what's one thing, the main thing, that next time I will stop doing? Not thirty-seven things but one thing, the main thing.

The second question is 'start' – what's one thing that next time I might try? Notice the language. The words 'might' and 'try' imply an

openness to possibility and innovation. But you don't know what you don't know so you might need to phone a friend or do some research. You might not be able to answer it on the spot but, once again, it activates your RAS and you're more likely to notice that one new thing you might try as you go.

The third question is 'continue' – always finish on a relative high, a personal pat on the back – what's one thing you will continue to do?

If you can normalize and habituate this discipline then you will structurally build into your life, and that of your team, a continuous improvement loop. It creates lots of little learnings and brain rewards which bolster feelings of motivation. If you keep at it, it becomes part of your team culture – *the way things are done around here*.

Stop

Start

Continue

## Chapter 6: Self-Identify Models Of Best-Practice & Target Behaviours (The Mandela List)

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Worrying as it might seem, I had a room full of learners recently who did not know who Nelson Mandela was. I called a time-out and we had a mini history lesson. I know he was man of the century but it was last century and that was 17 years ago, so maybe it's not surprising that he might not be top of mind for a chunk of the population. But he should be. And, for more than the obvious and usual reasons. Give me a few moments of exposition and you'll soon see why a less well-known aspect of his life can be useful for us in our own change efforts.

As a teenager myself, I first became aware of the existence of Nelson Mandela via the 1984 hit song by Special AKA called 'Free Nelson Mandela'. It was a big hit. Thanks to it, Mandela's imprisonment got into a lot more young ears, hearts and minds that it otherwise would have, including mine. Once it was drawn to my attention, I started noticing more and more about it. (Remember the RAS? Songs can be quite effective in hooking into that).

What I was even less aware of was what happened prior to 1984. In the mid-90s, I read Mandela's autobiography, 'Long Walk To Freedom'. Around 2000, I saw an interview. Both really helped to fill in a lot of the gaps for me prior to Mandela's imprisonment. The African National Congress was not originally a political party, nor even an activist movement, it was a workers' rights organisation. Mandela was not a rah-rah frontman. He was a workers' rights lawyer, quite happy shuffling paperwork in the background. There were others to go rah-rah and get people hyped into action.

Soon enough, the movement had become so popular and effective that the authoritarian government felt the threat they posed and started arresting and frightening followers. One night there was no one to get out on stage and go rah-rah. Mandela was the next cab off the rank, so to speak. In the interview, he described how he thought of a couple of people that he knew whom he considered to be highly effective and confident speakers. Then he wrote down on a blank piece of paper a list of behaviours that he thought those people did that made them so effective and confident. Then he took that piece of paper on stage with him and he did those things. It went well. The next time, he did it again and so on. We all know how, eventually, it turned out and the influence he had.

Flash forward 40-ish years. It's the year 2000. He's just been named Time Magazine's 'Man Of The Century' and is addressing the United Nations General Assembly. A man who decades ago was reticent to step out on stage in front of a crowd is now leaving the biggest public speaking gig on the planet to a standing ovation. It is then that he is interviewed and it was this interview that I mentioned earlier. In it, he speaks of the list. What I call 'The Mandela List'. (Mandela himself would probably just call it a list).

He said something like, "Look, I no longer literally carry this list around with me onto the stage". As he said this, he held out his hands to indicate a pretend list in his hand, then moved his hand with that pretend list to his heart and continued, "But, I still carry it around with me".

Since I saw that I've used the concept of a 'Mandela List' in my training, writing and coaching. I've used it in my sessions and often at the end when we go around and people say what tool they've found the most useful and intend to implement straight away, this is one of the most mentioned.

The technique is simple:

1. On a blank page, write down the names of two people you know who are highly effective at whatever it is you're trying to do.
2. Write down ten specific, observable, repeatable behaviours that they do that you believe makes them so effective.

A two-step process seems easy and simple but it's deceptive. For a start, let's look at the two people you choose. In workplace-based training, I deliberately do not limit their range of choices to workplace people. They can choose from family, teachers, sports coaches, community leaders, etc. The only constraint is that must be real and known to them. They can't choose someone famous for being cool as a leader like a Richard Branson – unless they know him. They can't choose a famous sports person – unless they know them. They can't just think of a generic composite of what someone who is effective might be like. They have to be real and observable. The point of this is to link to activating your RAS and for that you have to be able to see the object of your attention.

Chances are you won't be able to remember every aspect of their effective behaviours when you're put on the spot. In workshops, I get people to share their answers and ideas and collectively we build up onto a whiteboard a long list which becomes our model of best practice against which everyone can compare themselves. (More about this in chapter 7 next, where we create a sense of discomfort to drive ourselves forward based on gaps between where we are now and a model of best practice).

I ask for ten behaviours in their Mandela List, not because there's anything magical about ten. With experience, for most people, this is on the upper end what they can come up with from memory. By setting a specific target, it drives more people to move beyond merely three or four. It's often a driver of creativity to set tangible targets. Another micro-motivator.

I'm quite pedantic as they report back their answers and for their own good. I asked for specific behaviours – observable and repeatable. If they come back with “good attitude,” “confident,” or “friendly”. I get them to

be more specific and describe *behaviours*! What do they do and say and how do they do and say it? What do they *not* do or say?

The exercise is a short one in a classroom but it links back to the real world and it starts a habit of people seeking out high performers to observe and model them. Not in a vague way by hopeful osmosis but in a structured and planned way with lists and goals. It's a small world, maybe you've been the target of one of my Mandela List writers?

As its most basic, the Mandela List gets people self-identifying models of best practice and target behaviours. Back in chapter 3, we looked at that smoking study and how much more effective self-identifying was in getting people to choose to change their own behavior in your absence. The Mandela List combines activating the RAS and the strength of self-identifying. This becomes a foundation for several other methods to come in this book. By itself, the list is just a list. Other things are required to get people wanting to change. They need to:

- see that these behaviors are possible because at least two people they know are doing them,
- see that these behaviours are observable and repeatable; they're not just inherent to the personality of some people,
- the two people are reaping rewards and benefits as a result of the behaviours, and
- the effort to learn each behaviour on the list, one at a time, is do-able and worth it.

The additional spark to the flame of change is discomfort between how they see themselves now and how they could be, illustrated by the list. What's missing as of now and what's needed to fan that flame is something against which to compare the list. And that something is how they rate themselves against that best practice identified in The Mandela List.



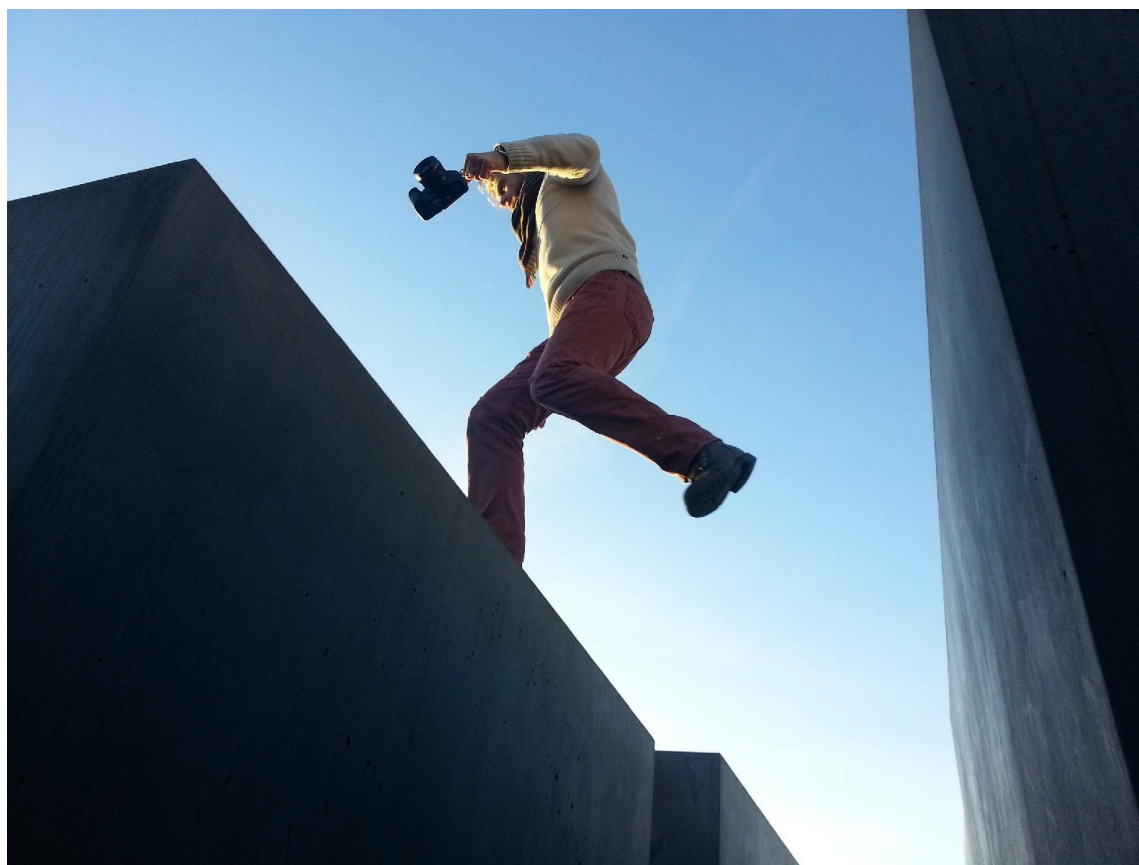
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## Chapter 7: Create Dissonance With Gap Analysis (The Distance Between ‘As-Is’ vs ‘Wannabe’)

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Dissonance is a sense of discomfort or mental conflict in someone holding two conflicting views or between two compelling but mutually exclusive positions. People tend to avoid dissonance or freeze in the face of it. You can also use it to drive motivation. By combining several of the techniques we've already covered, such as RAS and self-identification, we can create in ourselves, or in others, a purposeful sense of dissonance. This is one fuel of motivation.

The first point we need people to self-identify is the status quo, or as I sometimes call it the 'as-is'. You can simply ask people this face to face, perhaps giving them time in advance to think about it. You can ask for an individual's perspective or for a group's.

The second point we need people to self-identify is a future desired state, usually within a defined timeframe. I call this the ‘wannabe’. My default timeframe is three months. That’s not too far in the future but it’s enough time to get something of substance achieved.

Even without any more direction than that, people will describe the ‘as-is’ and they’ll describe the ‘wannabe’. The difference between the two creates the dissonance.

I use a number of techniques in workshops to enhance this effect further. I have a set of 100+ laminated photos. They’re varied and colourful. There are people, vistas, quotes, sheep, wine. It’s just a set of varied and colourful images, laid out flat on a table with lots of room around the table for people to move. Then I ask participants to wander over to the table and for each person to select two photos. One represents how they see themselves today – the ‘as-is’. If we’re talking about presentation skills, it’s how they see themselves today as a public speaker. Their second photo of choice represents how they see themselves as a public speaker in three months – the ‘wannabe’.

Once people have their two photos, they move away from the table. Once everyone has their photos, I get them to pair up, allowing them to choose their partners thus giving them some control in a situation which some might be nervous about. Often nerves are caused by a sense of lost control or powerlessness, so anything I can do to mitigate that, even symbolically, is often disproportionately effective.

In pairs, they then tell their partners what photos they chose and why. So, in a small, low-risk, semi-public way they reveal the gap between where they are and where they believe they can and should be. This public revelation is a dissonance magnifier. Depending on the size of the group and the personalities of the people, I sometimes get people to again share those photos with the whole group.

Taking self-identification, RAS and then the Mandela List along with ‘as-is vs wannabe’ is a powerful combo. You can probably imagine what conversations follow once you’ve got people wanting to move away from their current state towards the benefits of an improved future state. Feelings are all well and good, and indeed are the real driver of motivation whatever the facts say. What areas do they need to focus on and what do they need to do to get moving along this path between their two points?

Once they've identified a model of best practice using the Mandela List and given their brain an itch with 'as-is vs wannabe', the tool to start the thought process about focus areas is a self-ranked list using a 5-point scale.

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
eg communication skills			✓		

From their Mandela List, they choose their own top seven behaviours and then 'grade' themselves on each. This will identify the areas they need to focus and work on. For them to tap into why they should keep doing that work after the initial enthusiasm wears off, we'll need to proceed to chapter 8 to clarify and reinforce what's in it for them.

Stop

Start

Continue

## Chapter 8: Stimulate Existing Internal Motivations (The WIIFM Grid)

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	What you stand to gain if you do	What you stand to lose if you don't
Professionally		
Personally		

If we look at basic animal behavioural psychology (and we're all animals), fundamentally we're supposed to be motivated by moving towards pleasure and away from pain. We're a bit more sophisticated than animals but, dress it up as we might like to, there's still a lot of truth to that. I'll call them 'push' and 'pull' factors'. Apparently if you had to choose one of them, then push factors are slightly more influential over us but we don't have to choose one. It's most effective if we use both at the same time. Or, to be even more practical, it's most effective if we can facilitate other people to use both themselves.

Again, we could *tell* people what is in it for them and why they *should* be motivated about what we're proposing. But, we know from previous chapters that self-identification is the way to go. The WIIFM grid is a simple little planning tool you can use in its physical paper form to stimulate that self-identification, or it can be the basis for a conversation or conversations and the people never need to see an actual grid at all.

WIIFM stands for *What's In It For Me?* From the point of view (POV) of the people you're trying to motivate, what are the potential personal and

professional benefits of moving with you and what are the potential costs if they do not? I use both a personal and professional perspective because many people are way more interested in their non-work life than their work-life and if you can involve them in thinking about both, it's a more powerful lever.

Because of the FM part of WIIFM, I always see the term like a radio station call sign. WII-FM. It reminds me to broadcast my message of a frequency that *they* can receive. I've done this as a trainer and as a leader and it's a helpful focusing technique.

It's also often productive to get people talking about and completing their WIIFMs in pairs or small groups. Some people might struggle to think about the benefits of something they've never done before. The group dynamic does spike up the outputs of brainstorming. There are also some people who are hard to reach. Some have personal agendas contrary to yours and some have genuine issues. You may never convince these people but it's important to get them to at least participate. For one, as devil's advocates they might identify some pitfalls that an overly optimistic you did not. And non-participants, even if they're not overtly negative or saboteurs, can suck the life out of a team. I've found that even initially unwilling people will at least make some overt effort for their peers. If they're in a pair, and their colleague is depending on them to help develop a WIIFM, most will. And, in doing so, their RAS gets activated as those benefits and risks get drawn to their attention, like so many lime-green cars. It's almost a subtle variation on DeBono's six thinking hats as anyone developing a WIIFM has to temporarily suspend their negativity and deliberately look for those benefits.

The diagram at the start of this chapter is just to give you a feel for the format. I generally use a single A4 pre-printed template for an individual or an A0 flipchart sheet for a group. As you move forward with your changes and hit some walls where motivation might be tested, a constant visual reminder of the WIIFM – the why – can sometimes be a difference maker. Like my example of that Olympic athlete with their two-handed physical gesture of the distance between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, it's a trigger to motivation via the RAS when the going gets tough. It's not just for your team, you're going to hit some walls too and you'll need your difference maker.

Stop

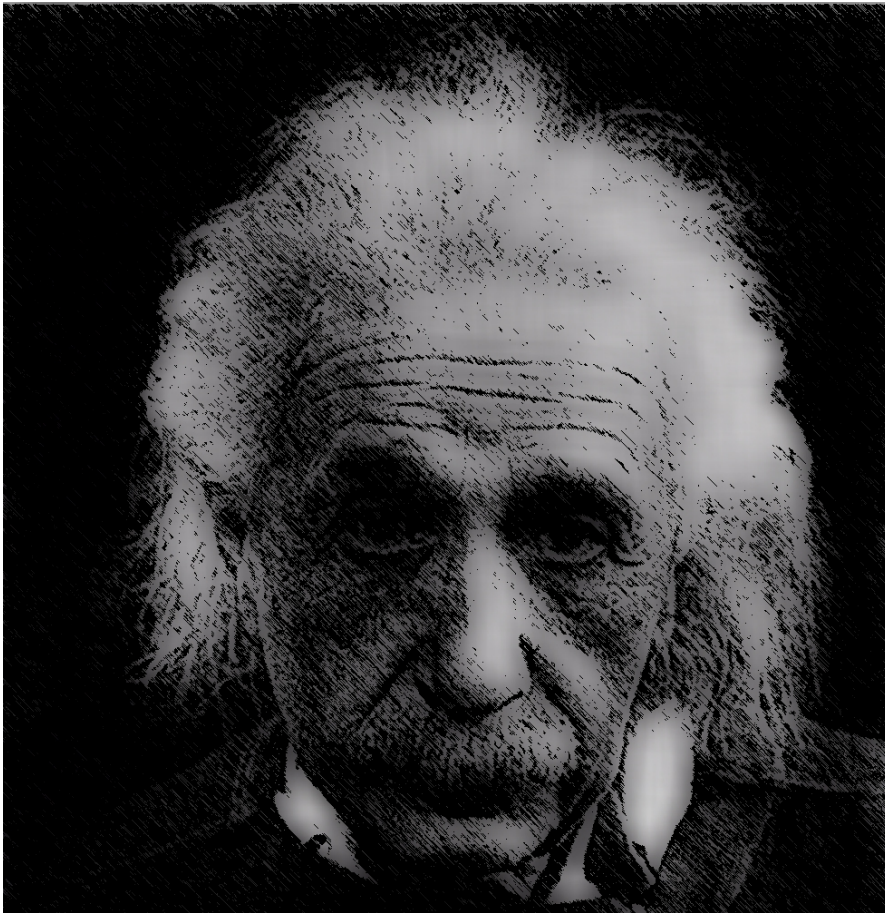
Start

Continue



## Chapter 9: Create A Perception Of Momentum (Endowed Progress & Behavioural Physics)

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Misattributing quotes is not a new thing but the internet has certainly enabled it to go into mass production. One of my favourite satirical memes on this is, “Don’t believe everything you read on the internet,” which is then attributed to Abraham Lincoln...

Albert Einstein is supposed to have said many wise things and I’m sure he did. It turns out he didn’t say the quote I’m about to give you but it sounds like the sort of thing he might have said and, once you hear it, I think you’ll agree it’s indisputably wise. So, please be advised someone’s definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over again and expecting a different result.

When running workshops around the topics of change or personal development, I'll often start with a slide with this sketched headshot of Einstein and that quote in text beneath, while I verbally admit I do not know who actually originated the saying.

At this point in the workshops, we discuss why people find it so hard to change, even when logically we can see the merits of doing so. Practice doesn't make perfect, practice makes patterns. Repetition (doing things over and over again) reinforces those patterns making them stronger and less effortful. The term 'rut' is a useful one here. When we are in a literal rut – a deep trench in the ground – we can only go forwards or backwards and to climb out of the rut, whilst possible, is quite an effort, possibly an insurmountable one and it's uncertain as to whether it's worth the effort. It's the same with a figurative rut. We tend to keep going forwards, following the path of least resistance. Perhaps we might go backwards, retracing our steps, but nothing new lies there. To scramble out of the behavioural rut is time-consuming, dirty and maybe even dangerous and any possible benefits above ground are not guaranteed.

So, most people keep plodding ahead doing what they know, stuck in the constrained safety of their comfort zone, even though that comfort zone might be a hole in the ground never likely to take them anywhere new, exciting or better.

Another reason I used an image of Einstein to open this chapter is that he was a physicist. I vaguely recall Newton's laws of motion. (Hopefully, I'm not misattributing them). The first law is that an object, stationary or moving, will continue on that path and at that speed, unless affected by an outside force. I'm certain those aren't the exact words but you get my drift. (Except, of course, there won't be any drift without the influence of an outside force).

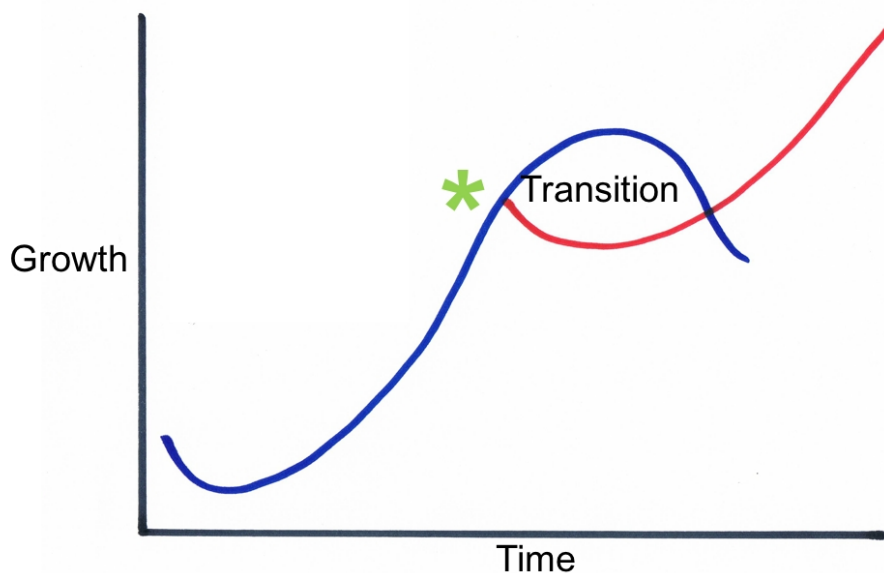
I've taken to adapting that law of physics to people's behavior – a convenient hybrid I call 'behavioural physics'. Most people, stationary or moving, will continue on that path and at that speed, unless affected by an outside force. And don't we just? We stay in a town, or a job or a relationship until something from outside slaps us on the face, either figuratively or literally in the case of a relationship, and then we're forced to change or at least rethink our situation. Maybe that external event is a heart attack or a job loss or a relationship breakup or an earthquake. But,

whatever it is, it's external and it contributes to a feeling of powerlessness, helplessness and / or being out of control. It's demotivating.

Some people however, and I like to call these people 'successful', *choose* to change on their terms. They consciously, deliberately and proactively choose to change their path before being forced to do so by any external event. And in that act of choice they have more options and aren't pressured into taking regrettable options, or only having one or no options. Finding a job is much harder when you don't have a job. Selling a house after a breakup is not a great place for leveraging negotiations with time and money pressures you wouldn't be facing otherwise.

So, for the purposes of this book, as a leader or project manager etc, you are an agent of change. A critical element of managing change is timing and for most people their preferred time is "never". Or "later". You need to be, in a planned way, that outside force in your people's behavioural physics. One useful mental model of change-timing is one I picked up from the writing of Charles Handy back in the 80s – The Sigmoid Curve.

### ***Illustration 9.1 The Sigmoid Curve***



Change in nature is often cyclical. Take a plant for example. Initially it expends a lot of energy in just getting going so its actual growth curve drops at the start. Then as it accumulates resources and energy, growth constantly and regularly increases to an eventual peak, followed by a gradual diminishing to some end-point. Various writers observed that this life cycle and growth pattern seemed to also apply to products, companies and teams. (Unless affected by our new friend the outside force). Obviously, this is just a model and there are always exceptions but it's a useful way to simplify and view change over time.

Handy's observation was that we tend to change only when we feel the need to. "If it aint broke, don't fix it". Sound familiar? If you or your team are on the upwardly progressing curve, why on earth would you change? Things are going great and, from where you sit, you cannot see why it would ever stop. But it does inevitably stop at some point and we know that from experience. What we don't know is *when*. Handy argued to be in charge of your own change by self-determining when your asterisk of renewal should be. If you wait until the original curve tops out and starts dropping, it's too late. Then you won't have the resources or energy to start a new curve while still maintaining the old one. You need the old one to sustain the new one in its early stages.

From Handy's heyday in the 80s to today, we have lived through and observed a rapidly accelerating rate and volume of changes. It's a lot easier today to convince people that change is inevitable. And, in their logical minds, your people might see the points of your argument and say out loud that they agree with you. But then they still don't change. It's not that they don't want to. It's not that they don't see the potential benefits. Perhaps they don't know how? Perhaps they still have an emotional and literal investment in the status quo? It's the getting started that you as leader need to inspire and instigate and, you know what might be able to help you? Coffee! But not in the way you might first think.



When I cover this next concept in my workshops, I ask people to raise their hand if they have a coffee loyalty card. Quite a few people do. I then ask people to keep their hand raised if they have more than one coffee loyalty card. Quite a few people do. I then joke about the meaning of loyalty. (Hopefully, I also remember to tell them to lower their hands). It's a cute joke and it helps to make sure that everyone in the room knows what I mean when I talk about a coffee loyalty card – a business card sized piece of cardboard, perhaps laminated and branded, with a number of images of coffee cups which, with each purchase of a coffee earns a stamp or holepunch. Once the stamps reach a pre-determined number, the next one is free. A lot of places do this electronically these days so I need to make sure you have the old fashioned card in your minds' eye.

A large chain of coffee outlets conducted a study. They produced many thousands of coffee loyalty cards in two batches – 50 / 50. One batch had 'buy eight get one free'. The other batch had 'buy ten get one free' but the first two cups were pre-stamped. So, effectively, logically, economically, they were exactly the same. The company released an equal number of the cards into the market and sat back to see how many of each would be redeemed for the free coffee by the end of the months-long campaign. Which batch do you think came back the most?

Statistically you'd expect an even number of each but the second batch – buy ten get one free but with the first two pre-stamped – came back twice as often. Something is happening here and it isn't statistical, economic or logical. It's something very human. It's a phenomenon psychologists call 'Endowed Progress'. People tend to move with a behavior when they perceive they've made a bit of a start. Even if it's just a bit of a start and even if it's just a perception. So, if you want to move your people, you need to provide some evidence that they've made a bit of a start. At a personal level, if you're trying to run a marathon, lose some weight or save some money, you're more likely to stick with it, if you go with some initial momentum. Again, with the physics.

As a change agent, you need to help your people self-identify their metaphorical two free coffee cups.

Stop

Start

Continue

## Chapter 10: Co-Create More Effective Goals (The Main Thing Is Keeping The Main Thing The Main Thing)

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I keep thinking that everyone on the planet must have been thoroughly trained on effective goal-setting by now. That's not the case and even though most of the research around goals was done many years ago, the wisdom is still valid. You can certainly find successful people who have never set a goal in their life and unsuccessful people who have more goals than they can count, but goal-setting, done effectively, does increase your odds of success. It doesn't guarantee it.

The classic and still champion model of goal setting is the SMART model. It's an acronym that stands for:

Specific



**Measured**  
**Achievable**  
**Relevant (The why)**  
**Timebound**

As we've covered earlier, publically declaring your intentions also increases your likelihood of carrying those intentions out, so I've added an extra S to SMART. Here's my SMARTS model:

**Specific**  
**Measured**  
**Achievable**  
**Relevant (The why)**  
**Timebound**  
**Shouted out**

"I want to lose weight" is a vague and unmotivating goal. "I want to lose five kilograms by November 5<sup>th</sup> using this diet and exercise programme so I can fit into my wedding dress" is much better.

Writing goals down increases your likelihood of achieving them. Having them in prime eyelines so they constantly activate your RAS is better. Accentuating them with visuals is even better. I use a simple structure called LifeMaps to get all mine onto a single A4 page. A circle divided into however many segments as you wish, each representing an aspect of your life. These might include health, family, relationships, finance, career, etc. Within each segment, populate it with the text of your goal. I use short phrases or keywords and add a single strong icon or image to make it obvious from a distance as a reminder of what I'm working towards and, more importantly, *why* from my own emotional perspective. (My WIIFM). There's no shortage of apps that are cheap and easy to create such a one-pager. Frankly you could do it with a crayon or cut and paste from magazines to similar effect.

When I'm tired and my eyelids are getting heavy but there's still a bit more to do to finish typing this chapter (for example) as midnight approaches and the publishing deadline is mere days away, it's demonstrably and perceptibly a boost to have that lifemap in pride of

place to draw on the emotional need I have to progress with whatever I'm working on.

That's the aspect I'd emphasise more than the run-of-the-mill goal-setting chapter –*emotions*. It's not just touchy-feely tree-hugging nonsense. It's a proven driver of our actions. Yes you can know and incorporate into your written goal the logic of saving money for a house deposit but it's how having a house will make you *feel* that will motivate you to economise and make sacrifices in the now for the greater future good.

Stop

Start

Continue

# Chapter 11: Purposefully Shape Your Physical Environment

## (The True Test Of Your Influence Is What Happens When You're Not Around)

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A study was done in a particular U.S. school district. Many governments are concerned about the current and future health of their populations, much of which is set in motion by dietary habits in children. My own country had debates around the ‘nanny state’ dictating that unhealthy sodas, pies and chips should be legislated out of school cafeterias. The U.S. study ran a control with some schools doing what they always did. One group simply removed all unhealthy food. Some raised their prices. Some conducted educational campaigns. One set of schools simply moved the unhealthy stuff out of sight and made it an effort to get to. This went on for a limited number of months.

It wasn't what happened to consumption and food choices in those months that was of interest. After this time, all the schools went back to normal and then they compared how choices changed. The most effective at guiding others to choose to change their own behaviour once the controls had been removed was that last approach – making unhealthy food hard to get to. How can you apply this principle with your own people, their motivations versus their distractions, and the choices they make?

I am very easily distracted and I can talk a big game about will power and self-discipline but, for me, the most effective way of not being distracted is to remove potential distractions from my environment. I'm less likely to be a victim of 'shiny things syndrome' if there are a lot less shiny things around.

I worked with one Contact Centre manager who, very deliberately, shifted desks and furniture and controlled the very layout of her department's workspace to minimize unmotivating distractions and to get the largest number of people exposed to motivating aspects of their environment. She had a goal to have facetime with all her team at least once a shift. One method would have been to make a plan and diarise those contacts. What she did was place the communal candy jar so anyone seeking it out had to walk past her desk, thus ensuring that facetime would occur and it wouldn't be an administrative burden to her. A subtle, clever and effort-lowering idea. Probably not a healthy choice foodwise but one problem at a time.

Stop

Start

Continue

## Chapter 12: Recruit Better Attitudes (Structured Behavioural Event Interviewing)

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It might seem flippant to remark in a book about how best to motivate others that it would all be a lot easier if these others were already motivated. In that case, you don't so much need a book as you do a time machine. That way you can go back and make better choices.

Yes, it was flippant. It's not that often we're able to select and build our team from the ground up. More likely the team forms on the go and, as a leader or change agent, you simply 'inherit' some people. Luck plays its part but you can make your own luck and play a better hand with the cards you've been dealt using the tools in this book.

That said, we may not have a time machine but something almost as useful is a technique for making better choices if you ever find yourself in the position of being the chooser of people. This is not a book about recruitment. There are far better qualified people than me to provide you

with advice on that. Nevertheless, allow me to suggest another couple of tools to finish off with. If you do ever have some choices to make as to who you are going to add to your team, it's best to do it in a planned and structured way. These new people, whatever their talents, education and experience are going to impact the culture of your team. It's not just a cookie-cutter person-shaped gap that you can plug any person into.

Before you can choose the right person you need to specify that person. Draft a person spec in consultation with your other team members – people who are already happy and successful in a similar role. Don't just look at skills and competencies but aspects of behaviour that reflect attitude and what you need for them to fit into your team culture and add something too, perhaps diversity. Do investigate the range of behavioural profiling tools that are available, not as a means to screen out applicants but as a means of customising their onboarding into your team if they should be the successful applicant. It's certainly been a theme of this book that people are different. Many aspects of orienting people into a team may well be the same as everyone else but if someone is a detail person (for example) and you're not, their first experience in joining your team may not sit well with them

You want any job interviews you conduct, ideally not to be solo efforts by you. Different views from fresh eyes are always useful. You want a structured and consistent approach. By involving others from the team in the process, you further motivate them, as they feel they're having some control, input or influence into the makeup of the team of which they are a part. It's another opportunity for involvement as suggested by the 'Triple I' model in chapter 2. But with multiple people involved, you need to have a structure to make sure you're comparing apples with apples. Even if that's just making sure the same questions get asked each time and the answers are assessed against the same scoring criteria. This is what Structured Behavioural Event Interviewing is about.

Asking what interviewees think about themselves or what they might do if you employed them is an exercise in creative thinking. In lieu of that time machine, the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour so the bulk of your questions after some initial personal connections should be about past events that relate to the competencies you seek. I spend a few minutes explaining to interviewees what the process is, so they get a feel for it.



Say one of your desired competencies is problem solving. The consistent flow of questions starts:

*“Tell me about a problem you encountered. What was it? What did you do towards solving it? How did it turn out?”*

And for each competency, the format remains the same. If the next competency was teamwork:

*“Tell me about a team you joined. What was it? What did you do towards fitting in? How did it turn out?”*

If they don't answer any part of the question or start telling a story about what someone other than themselves did about the situation, then bring them back to what *they* did.

This topic of recruitment and interviewing could warrant an entire book on its own and I recommend you do seek some out. After spending the entire book up to this chapter detailing how to motivate an existing team, I just wanted to finish up with another tool to add to your motivational toolbox that can lessen your motivational workload later if ever you do get a chance to bring in some people who come with pre-charged motivational batteries.

## Chapter 13: Conclusion

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I'll repeat what I said at the start of the book. You might be a leader or change agent but it's the wrong way to think about motivation to think that you can cheerlead people into action. For those people doing the actual moving towards behavior change, they need to:

- *want* to do it,
- think they *need* to do it,
- think they *can* do it, and
- think they should do it *now*.

The combination of all those conditions is what we label 'motivated'. Any or all of the tools in this book can help you help them help themselves. The next step for you is to take the ideas in this book and make them real, putting them into action and the first target of this action by you should be you. You need to motivate yourself to keep on motivating others. Writing things down and publically declaring them will boost your chances of success so start now. Quickly re-scan the pages of this book and select three things you'll get underway right away. Write them down on the next page, then email a friend or colleague about your plans. While you're at it, email me too. I'd be delighted to hear your plans to move people to move with you and get better buy-in.

## Immediate Actions

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Three things I will get underway immediately after reading this book are:

1

2

3