

LMI Journal



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Become Self-Motivated in a Changing World

By Paul J. Meyer

Socrates said, "Know yourself. The unexamined life is not worth living." Awareness and understanding of your own feelings, attitudes, and expectations are essential to understanding the behavior of other people and to helping them become self-motivated in the midst of a constantly changing world.

Dramatic changes in technology, communications, geopolitics, globalization, and fierce international competition all characterize the last few decades in the business world. Even more remarkable changes can be expected in the coming years. Change affects every level of business activity. Managers feel pressured to keep up with technological advances, team leaders are required to learn and teach new skills, and all workers face the challenge of constantly upgrading present skills to keep up with new technology and increasing competition. The productivity of every individual in the organization is a critical concern of leaders. Consequently, the need for leaders who understand human behavior intensifies from year to year.

Understanding human behavior pays big dividends. Understanding people and their behavior implies that you care about them and have their best interests at heart. It gives you the basis for becoming a more effective leader and makes it easier to get people to accept your ideas and

follow your leadership. Understanding human behavior stimulates you to grow personally and to use more of your own potential; as a result, you can lead associates to grow and develop more of their potential.

Examining personal experiences and attitudes as a basis

for gaining self-understanding is one of the most interesting challenges you can encounter. You view life through your own uniquely tinted pair of lenses; your attitudes and feelings affect your behavior and motivation. Failure to recognize and understand your own feelings and attitudes prevents you from understanding the behavior of others and hampers your ability to lead them.

Understanding yourself and others gives you the ability to transform motivation into action. You can accomplish your own personal and professional goals and also help the people you lead accomplish theirs, as well as ensure that the goals of the organization are achieved. As illogical as human behavior sometimes appears, it all has purpose and meaning. People generally have reasons for acting as they do because behavior is caused. If you know the causes, you can build bridges of understanding between yourself and those you lead, and you can more effectively help them to become self-motivated.



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The Process of Motivation

Leaders sometimes tend to think of motivation as a neatly packaged bundle of techniques or procedures they can use to force people to try harder and produce more. The ability to develop self-motivated people consists of much more than a formula or a system. Truly lasting and effective self-motivation is an entire way of life – it is an exciting philosophy for living.

The art of motivating individuals to take action is an ancient one. Every successful leader throughout the history of government, education, the military, religion, and business has excelled at the process of getting other people to take purposeful action. The success of all these leaders hinged on one secret: Discovering a basic human need – a drive, desire, or emotion strong enough to produce action – and then selecting the proper triggering device to activate it and to focus its power toward a desired outcome.

As a leader today, you are dealing with people who are well educated and enlightened. But they are not likely to be motivated to use their full potential, apply their knowledge, or exert extraordinary effort to be productive. Society has, unfortunately, conditioned people to get by with the least possible effort, to expect someone to give them what they need, or to tell them what to do – and when.

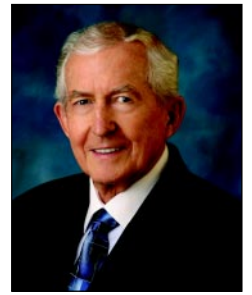
To be successful in developing motivated people, you must understand the desires, drives, and emotions that are currently operating in their lives. But before you can understand other people, you must first understand yourself. When you analyze yourself, you may not like everything you discover, but facing up to who you are is part of the price of success.

You cannot grow personally until you know where you stand now. You cannot encourage and motivate others over a long period of time if your own personal conflicts and unsatisfied needs go unheeded. It is a basic characteristic of the human personality that your attitudes toward others are a direct reflection of your attitudes toward yourself. If you can tolerate yourself, you generally can tolerate others. If you can forgive yourself, you are able to forgive others. If you sabotage your own success through self-defeating attitudes and behaviors, you tend to exploit and manipulate others. Only when you know and like yourself can you find it possible to know and like others.

Once you understand people in general, the next step is to recognize the relationship between yourself and those you lead. You must be able to sell yourself and your ideas. Motivational ideas depend on individual needs, desires, and emotions and must be discussed with each team member separately.

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– Paul J. Meyer



To sell the idea of self-motivation, you must know your team members personally. By observation and discreet probing, you can discover each one's particular aims, dreams, and desires. But that's only the first step. The second step to inspiring motivation is to present the benefits of achievement in terms of how that success can satisfy those individual wants and needs.

Few people are aware of their own deepest needs and desires; even fewer are able to verbalize those needs. To add to the confusion, they sometimes experience desires that conflict with their basic needs as they strive for fulfillment and self-expression. The resulting tug of war below the level of consciousness exerts a profound and often devastating effect on the self-image and the attitudes that control behavior.

As a result of conflicting needs and demands, most people need continued reassurance from others of their individual worth. Few possess the inner strength to reassure themselves on a sustained basis. This important fact enables you, the leader, to perform a vital function for your people. Be alert to the signals that reveal their basic needs and desires.

Motivation Today

The world continues to change and evolve from an agricultural society, to an industrial society, and now to a service-based and information society. In a world economy based on intangibles, people have become ever more important to the success of businesses. Traditional competitive advantages, such as access to raw materials, geographic location, cost efficiencies, and technological advances now seem to only last for weeks rather than years. It is becoming easier and easier for competitors to catch up and match these advantages. “People resources” have become one of the last areas that can differentiate one organization from another. People truly have become an organization's greatest competitive asset. Your ability as a leader to develop and sustain self-motivated people is a critical determining factor of your organization's success or failure.

Bring Out the Best in Team Members

Maintaining a motivational climate sets the scene for maximizing the talents and abilities of the individuals who make up the entire organization. People who are motivated, who maintain a positive attitude toward the organization and their role in it, and who are enthusiastic about their work always look for opportunities to grow and develop.

They want to grow in personal effectiveness, in career standing, and in job productivity. The most effective impact a leader can make on the “bottom line” is to help team members develop and use more of their full potential.

People grow personally and become highly productive in a climate that is conducive to personal and professional development. Growth is further accelerated in a work environment that offers the freedom to try new ideas, to fail and try again, and to learn from experience. It makes sense, then, to use each person’s existing strengths to the fullest extent possible.

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New Beginnings



David Byrd
President, LMI

Where would we be without the opportunity for new beginnings? New beginnings bring hope. With new beginnings we can start over with a blank slate.

One of the most significant new-beginning opportunities is represented by the first month of the calendar, January- the New Year. In reality time never stops, but the New Year gives all of us a psychological, new beginning; personally we all think of New Year resolutions and businesses get to close the old books and start anew. All of this may seem like mere philosophical rambling, but effective leaders understand the significant opportunity offered by every New Year.

There is only one time during the year when most people in your organization are open to new beginnings. Growth sounds like a good idea. Talk of making things better is commonplace. The effective leader takes advantage of this organizational mind-set by using the first of the year to implement appropriate levels of leadership development and planning at every level of the organization.

There are six New Year questions that should be answered by every effective leader at the beginning of each New Year.

1. Do I have a written plan for this New Year defined by specific measurable goals?
2. Do I have a defined “Plan of Action” with target dates for each goal?
3. Have I effectively communicated these goals and Plan of Action with all the members of the organization?
4. Do I have the necessary “buy-in” from the people in the organization to execute this plan?
5. Do I have a schedule of results management meetings, with the appropriate people, to consistently track results?

These are the questions I ask myself at the beginning of every New Year. The psychological advantage of new beginnings is now in your favor, but you must act quickly. After the first quarter, you lose the advantages offered by the New Year. LMI has over 40 years of experience in helping leaders of organizations answer the above questions. If we can help you, give us a call.

With Positive Expectancy,

David Byrd
President, Leadership Management Institute™

Managing Communication in the Office

Telephones, faxes, and e-mail can be master timesavers or tyrannical time wasters. The determining factor is your ability to manage your attitudes, behaviors, and actions. It is amazing how people who calmly handle a production crisis, preside over an important meeting, or skillfully deal with irate customers are easily distracted at the insistent, but impersonal ring of a telephone, the sound of a fax arriving, or a signal that a new e-mail or voice mail has arrived. Some sort of compulsive conditioning seems to say that every ring of the telephone, every fax, and every e-mail and voice mail get immediate attention no matter how important the activity of the moment.

Management of the telephone and other communications equipment begins with management of yourself. When you set priorities and identify what is most important, you are then able to set up a workable system that meets both your requirements and the requirements of those with whom you need to communicate.

The worker assigned to answering incoming calls should be trained to handle calls in the most efficient manner to protect the time of the whole staff from unnecessary interruptions. Screening calls to find out who is calling and something of the nature of the business allows each call to be referred to the right person. Of course, the nature of your organization and your own particular position in the organization determine the type of screening needed. Be sure that you adequately instruct the person who answers incoming calls about the right way to handle calls for you.

When a call is accepted for you, the caller's name should be relayed to you. When you know who is calling, you are ready to give immediate attention to that person's need. Because any momentary confusion over recognizing a voice is avoided, you can answer the call with an appropriate attitude and sense of attention. When you know that the caller is a valued client, you are not likely to answer in a half-abstracted tone that clearly implies, "I resent being interrupted." Hearing the caller's name subconsciously stimulates an appropriate reaction.

Make certain that office personnel know how to handle the telephone effectively. From time to time, observe their telephone techniques to be sure they are projecting in

telephone contacts the image you want your organization to have. Make telephone training available. If your organization is large and several people are charged with telephone duties, it might be worthwhile to have one person in the organization responsible for training all personnel in basic telephone techniques. Even if such training is provided, you must accept responsibility for specific training of the people who directly handle your calls.

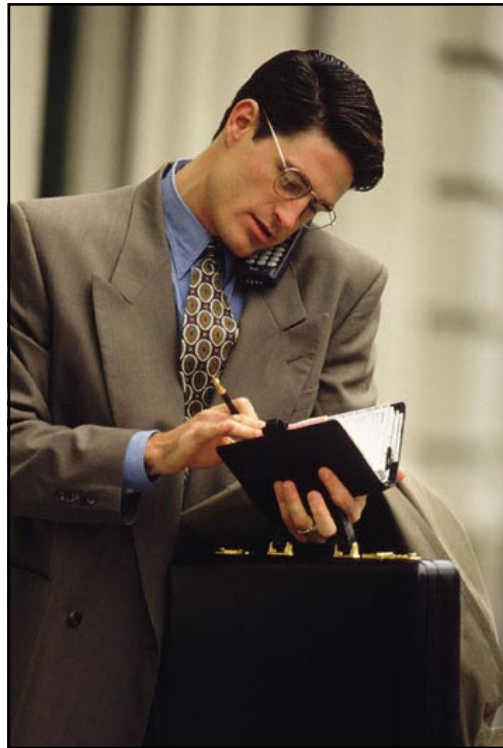
You can save time in using the telephone if your assistant can place certain calls for you. This saves you the time that would be spent waiting while your calls go through a

switchboard and an assistant before reaching the person with whom you wish to speak. You may have a few calls that you want to place directly. If so, keep a list of these frequently-called numbers close at hand, either in an easily accessible desk drawer, a rotary file, or your planning system. When making any call, it helps to remember that during the business day your prime goal is to conduct business. Although people are social beings and some amount of social interaction must surround all contacts between people, this can be kept to a minimum without damaging business relationships. If you have several items to cover, start your call by saying, "I have three items I need to discuss with you." You can be pleasant and still be businesslike. Show concern for others

by saying, "I know you're busy; so I'll get right to the point." Most people are both relieved and grateful to forego the small talk.

The finest techniques of communicating with others are even more effective with proper equipment. The different types of equipment and options available today are as varied as the needs of people – for example, cellular phones, cordless phones, pagers, conference calls, voice mail, answering machines, speaker phones, interoffice intercom systems, speed dialing, call forwarding, and, of course, e-mail.

Explore the vast array of possibilities of equipment to enhance your effectiveness and increase your productivity. Remember that you manage the equipment; the equipment is not supposed to manage you. When you understand your needs and use the correct equipment to meet those needs, your productivity is bolstered to new and higher levels.



Communicating for Results

Investment of time and energy to successfully communicate with your team members and team leaders always pays rewarding benefits. These rewards are far reaching and mutually beneficial. The goals of your team and your personal goals can be reached through effective communication to prevent crisis situations, save time and effort, enrich relationships, and increase your effectiveness.

To maximize your success as a team, follow these steps to facilitate good communication:

- ▲ *Focus on the goal.* Put all your attention on your goal and your specific responsibilities for doing what it takes to accomplish it. This attention will directly reduce the number of distractions you face on a weekly, daily, and hourly basis. When you know what you need to do to reach your goal, anything that takes you off track is clearly a distraction. Keeping your attention, and your communication, focused on the goal minimizes distractions. Nonetheless, some distractions may develop. The more quickly you can see distractions for what they are, the more quickly you and your teammates are able to push them aside and move on with actions that help you progress toward your goal.
- ▲ *Make communication a top priority.* To improve in any area of life, you must move from mere talking and wishful thinking to setting goals and taking action. This is especially true for enhancing your communication ability. First, you could choose to begin by improving your listening skills – a very important skill for becoming an effective team member, or for that matter for becoming more successful in any endeavor. When you communicate, make sure you stay focused on the goal of the team and your personal responsibilities for reaching that goal. Also choose the method of communication that is most appropriate for the message you want to send or for information you are requesting. Be sure to use every opportunity to make communication a top priority.
- ▲ *Handle conflict right away.* Whenever people come together as a group, it is only natural to have different points of view and differing opinions. Instead of letting these differences build into disagreements or barriers to progress, use them as stepping stones toward clearer communication, an improved way of reaching the goal,



and more effective teamwork. To resolve conflict constructively, follow these guidelines:

- Focus on the problem, not people or personalities.
- Be sure to study and examine the situation from every angle.
- Consider all the best suggestions for dealing with the issue.
- Actively give and receive feedback.
- Treat others as you would like to be treated as you work through the conflict.

While most attention is given to sending messages, the ability to listen is especially helpful in handling conflict constructively. Active listening:

- keeps the communication channels open
- provides opportunities for learning
- enables you to understand the other person's point of view
- reduces friction, misunderstandings, and conflicts
- enlists the support and favorable responses of others
- increases productivity by saving time and effort
- alerts you to opportunities for continuous improvement
- enables you to reach personal and professional goals you have set.

▲ *Seek to understand others.* As a responsible team member, your job is to do your utmost to understand what other people are saying and what they mean. When you do that with them, they will tend to do it for you. The result is mutual understanding, a good basis for making progress toward the team's goal. Understanding what

someone is saying does not necessarily mean that you agree with what that person says. The feeling of mutual understanding is possible even when two sides have different answers to the same problem. When you listen and seek to understand others, you may discover a new appreciation for what others have to offer to the team.

- ▲ *Inspect what you expect.* If you review and evaluate the work as it progresses, whether it is your work or the work of someone else on the team, you will know almost instantly if you are on track or if some adjustments need to be made to improve the performance. From customer feedback to a conversation between team members, make sure you keep track of what is going on. Then you can focus your attention wherever it is needed to ensure that you are making progress toward the achievement of the team's goal. Clearly it is much easier, less expensive, and less time consuming to fix things when they are slightly cracked than waiting until they explode into a full-blown catastrophe.

Focusing on How to Grow and Develop

People – like their attitudes, skills, and interests – are never static. They either grow and develop or stagnate and deteriorate. A person who is productive today will be producing substandard work in a few years or even months unless regular and continuous learning takes place. This is true for people at every level of the organization.

As a leader of the organization, you have the responsibility to provide adequate opportunities for continuous improvement. Team members need to consistently grow in three key areas to increase their productivity and use more of their full potential.

- ◆ *Knowledge and information.* Every field is changing. New methods, technologies, and approaches are being developed daily. It is now predicted that the amount of information in the world doubles every five to seven years! Valuable information you possess today can become obsolete tomorrow. Information and knowledge are abundant. There are literally millions of different sources and suppliers of information. Although knowledge and information are critical for team members to be productive, they are the most easily obtained. The difficult task is to locate and identify the right information at the right time. The key is to clarify the specific information and knowledge each team member needs and then make it readily available to him or her.
- ◆ *Skills and behavior.* Management, communication, sales, and time management are personal effectiveness skills that can be sharpened by appropriate training. Training may be informal or formal. It may take place in brief segments or a long, connected period. It may be on-site or at another location. It may be conducted by a leader, by an organizational training department, or by an outside specialist. The type of training should fit the needs and personalities of the people involved.
- ◆ *Goals, attitudes, and motivation.* Organizations spend enormous sums of money on teaching new information and upgrading skills through training for their employees.

Unfortunately, most organizations neglect the most important area of personal growth – the goals, attitudes, and motivational factors of team members. People may have access to unlimited amounts of information, they may have received training in every conceivable skill, but if their goals are faulty or unclear, if their attitudes are negative or unproductive, or if their motivation is lacking, the huge investment of time, energy, and money will be for nothing. Information and skills are only the tip of the iceberg. Just like an iceberg, as much as 90 percent of a person's potential lies beneath the surface, hidden from view. Ultimately, a person's success is determined by his or her focus on clearly defined goals, an enthusiastic attitude, and compelling motivation. A person who has these qualities will always find the information and develop the skills necessary to succeed. Without these qualities, a person's knowledge and talents deteriorate and waste away just like an unused muscle becomes weak without consistent and regular use.



“Personal and professional development is most effective when planned around the requirements of the organization and when carried out according to a carefully devised plan of action.”

Personal and professional development is most effective when planned around the requirements of the organization and when carried out according to a carefully devised plan of action. Maintain a specific, ongoing development plan for each person under your leadership and evaluate the effectiveness of each team member's effort. When you know where growth is needed and what results can be expected, you can realistically plan for its achievement.

A systematic development program brings several benefits to the organization. A primary benefit is that well-trained, knowledgeable, goal-directed, and motivated people are always available to complete the needed tasks. Morale remains high because people know they are appreciated and considered valuable to the organization. An even better benefit of a systematic development plan is that individuals become more productive, resulting in the overall growth of the organization and ultimately bolstering the bottom line!

Understanding Human Behavior

Understanding human motivation enables you to achieve results through people, while understanding team members and their behavior implies that you care about them and have their best interests at heart. Investing the time and effort required to understand human behavior and to motivate employees offers readily observable benefits:

- ◆ A reduction in personnel turnover
- ◆ The identification of effective motivational leadership methods
- ◆ An increase in employee productivity, creativity, and loyalty

Understanding yourself and your team members gives you the ability to transform motivation into action; you meet your own personal and professional goals and help employees meet theirs.

As illogical as human behavior sometimes appears, it all has purpose and meaning. People generally have reason for acting as they do because behavior is caused. If you know the causes, you can build bridges of understanding between yourself and those you lead.

Human beings are complicated, and there are no simplistic rules for understanding their behavior. Certain principles, however, provide insight into why people behave in certain ways. One way of looking at human behavior is to see it as caused by needs and wants. These needs and wants can be classified into four types that might be called the Four P's: protection, pleasure, profit, and pride.

The need for protection is expressed in the universal desire for a feeling of security, safety, and protection from danger, from confusion, from domination and loss of freedom, from pain and poor health, and from uncertainty. This need is also expressed in a desire for a feeling of freedom from all kinds of loss – including loss of status, reputation, time, money, or oppor-

tunity. In very practical terms, this need demands that team members perform at their best, yet feel free from the fear of losing their jobs at the whim of an unpredictable leader.

Pleasure reflects the need and desire for comfort, convenience, companionship of others, or participation in enjoyable activities. Pleasure also includes feelings of assurance and a sense of belonging. Receiving attention fulfills a pleasure need because we all want recognition and approval from others. A sense of achievement is also an important pleasure need; all of us want to feel that we are capable of accomplishing and completing worthwhile goals.

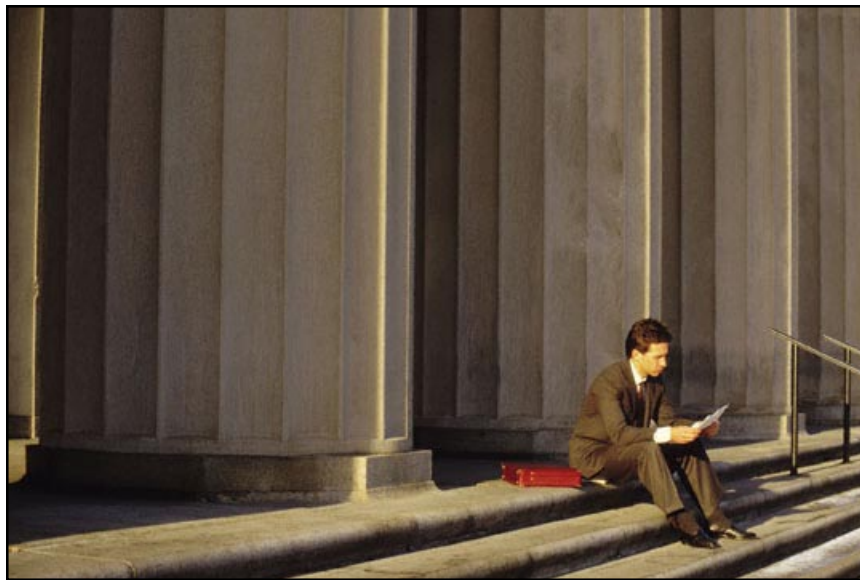
The desire for profit is seen in the concern for monetary gain, increased earnings, and other financial advantages. Some individuals are motivated more than others by the desire for profit, but nearly everyone has this need to some extent. Thrift and avoidance of waste are also expressions of the desire for profit.

A sense of pride is fostered by feelings of self-esteem as well as feelings of significance and respect from others. As you treat others in ways

that make them feel good about themselves, you are meeting their need for pride. People want to feel respected, to enjoy equality with others, and to achieve prestige in groups they consider important.

All of these various needs are active at one time or another in you and in your team members. When a particular need is noticeably unfulfilled, other needs temporarily take a back seat. Later, new needs may become more urgent. The ability to recognize the needs of employees makes it possible to choose the most workable methods to

appeal to them and to lead them to use their full potential. Show them that they can meet their personal needs by making a significant contribution to the achievement of organizational goals.



“People want to feel respected, to enjoy equality with others, and to achieve prestige in groups they consider important.”

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