

FORWARD THINKING
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Bill Fox

IGNITE: ENGAGING BRILLIANCE

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET AN EMPLOYEE'S
FULL ATTENTION AND BEST PERFORMANCE

BILL FOX



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This book is dedicated to the brave and visionary leaders who strive to shape the workplace of tomorrow and who contributed to this book. Your commitment to embracing forward-thinking approaches and fostering innovative cultures has inspired the creation of this work. Your time, intellect, and wisdom have guided our journey at Forward Thinking Workplaces. Thank you for embarking on this transformative path with us, and may your dedication continue to pave the way for a future where workplaces thrive in harmony with progress and human potential.

Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers.

VOLTAIRE

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PREFACE

What does it take to get an employee's full attention and best performance?

Preface

After experiencing my third heartbreaking and surprising end to an organizational change initiative in 2009, I looked for a better way to transform and improve organizations.

But how?

To make it real, I interviewed leading change practitioners and other experts in a series I called *5 Minutes to Process Improvement Success*. I asked, "What is your best improvement strategy?"

Remarkably, I rarely got an answer about process improvement. People didn't discuss Agile, CMMI, Lean, Six Sigma, or the latest silver-bullet solution.

PREFACE

Instead, they talked about something deeper: trust, reflection, new questions, new leadership, understanding the status quo, and much more. People shared fascinating and surprising new strategies and insights with me.

I published 23 of those interviews in a book called *5 Minutes to Process Improvement Success*. A review by David Marquet, leadership expert and author of *Turn the Ship Around*, is typical of the feedback:

“Most topics have multiple valid perspectives. A diversity of opinion allows me to see sides of an issue I’d missed, allows my organization to be more resilient when one approach isn’t working, and allows a more nuanced implementation of initiatives. This is EXACTLY what you get with this book.”

Going Deeper

After 50 interviews, I discontinued the *5 Minutes to Process Improvement* series because it wasn’t about process improvement. Something else seemed to happen, and I needed time to reflect on it.

In fact, conducting those 50 interviews was so powerful that it triggered my own inner transformation. My mind became noticeably quieter. I became a better listener. I was less reactive to my circumstances. I also realized there was enormous power in my intentions — and in the questions, those intentions led me to ask.

These inner changes allowed me to have a new conversation. As I became less judgmental, more open, and a better listener, people seemed to feel freer and safer and shared deeper insights with me.

I was experiencing what Michael Neill, transformational coach and author of *The Inside-Out Revolution* and five other books, describes in my interview with him:

“A good meeting is where everyone is listening, and there is space to hear something new beyond what anyone brought into the room with them.”

I also knew how rare that was in the workplace. And I recognized that I and many others felt like aliens at work.

PREFACE

On the surface, we may have seemed happy, committed, and motivated. But look a little deeper; there was more unease and dissatisfaction than most of us admit.

Questions that Open Up New Pathways

Because of the deep and pervasive need for transformation in most workplaces—along with the changes occurring within me and the kinds of insights people were now eager to share—I created a new series of interview questions.

I wasn't sure these questions would work, so I did an experiment: I selected three very successful executives and thought leaders to see if they would answer my new questions. To my surprise, they enthusiastically embraced them and shared intriguing insights and wisdom.

With that, the Exploring Forward-Thinking Workplaces interview series was underway.

What started as an experiment has evolved into an ongoing conversation with over 80 business and thought leaders.

In these conversations, I begin each interview with the same six opening questions:

1. How can we create workplaces where every voice matters, everyone thrives and finds meaning, and change and innovation happen naturally?
2. What does it take to get an employee's full attention and best performance?
3. What do people really lack and long for at work?
4. What is the most important question leaders should ask employees?
5. What is the most important question employees should ask leaders?
6. What is the most important question we should ask ourselves?

PREFACE

This book is an abridged collection of the most intriguing insights from each leader's responses to question #2:

What does it take to get an employee's full attention and best performance?

This question deals directly with one of the top priorities for today's bottom-line-focused executives, and you'll find that the responses are practical and actionable.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the shifting dynamics of the corporate world, the quest for productivity, creativity, and engagement never ends. The compendium of insights, titled *Ignite: Engaging Brilliance*, distillates the practical and actionable wisdom of today's most innovative leaders.

This book tackles one of the most critical questions of our time: What does it take to get an employee's full attention and best performance?

In the frenetic pace of the twenty-first century, we have realized that the human spirit is not a resource to be expended but a source of immeasurable strength to be tapped into. *Ignite: Engaging Brilliance* humanizes performance, emphasizing the need to understand and harness each team member's unique talents and strengths instead of treating them as a cog in a corporate machine.

It outlines a path for leaders to steer their organizations with integrity, create conducive environments for employees to thrive, and cultivate trust.

INTRODUCTION

Over one hundred forty chapters are included in this volume, each with an insightful and experienced perspective. These are lessons from leaders who understand the power of living with a purpose and creating a culture of authenticity and respect. They guide us in recognizing and valuing individuality, listening and truly hearing, embracing accountability, and fostering a culture of continuous learning.

These chapters illuminate the importance of a leader's full attention, the indispensability of trust, the need to recognize the intersection of work and life and the value of an environment that is more than just dollars and cents.

Leadership is not about commanding attention but inviting engagement. You'll discover that this book fosters a mindset that moves away from the conventional 'top-down' approach to a more inclusive model that values co-creation and collaborative problem-solving. It is a beacon for those who aspire to lead their teams toward achieving their full potential.

This book serves as a guide for corporate executives and anyone seeking to inspire and engage those around them effectively. Each chapter is an answer, a perspective, a story that offers a path to ignite the brilliance within individuals and teams.

Ignite: Engaging Brilliance is a journey, an exploration, an adventure that begins with the understanding that people are not just assets, but they are the very essence of a thriving, innovative, and successful organization. Let's embark on this journey together, igniting the spark of brilliance and realizing the potential of human creativity and productivity at its finest.

LEARN WHAT PEOPLE CARE ABOUT

Alan Seale in *How to More Effectively and Authentically Respond*

Find out what they care about and then ensure they're doing something within the company they care about. There needs to be a connection between the individual's life purpose—I call it soul mission—and the soul mission or purpose of the business or organization.

IS THE ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN INTEGRITY?

Alan Seale in *How to More Effectively & Authentically Respond*

There can be layers of this, of course. Is the organization truly operating in integrity with itself and its mission? Are they operating in a way that's congruent with who they say they are and what's important to them? And if they are, then find the connection between that employee and the company's mission.

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE CAN LIVE THEIR PURPOSE

Alan Seale in *How to More Effectively & Authentically Respond*

Create an environment where the employee feels like, “Wow, when I come to work daily, I get to live my purpose. I get to be who I fully am and do what I'm here to do in this world by working for this company.”

IT'S A CHOICE — GO FOR IT

Alan Seale in *How to More Effectively & Authentically Respond*

What if creating these kinds of workplaces is simply a choice, and you go for it? If not everybody in the company is on board with that, that's ok. The people will fall away who need to fall away for whatever reason. But bring the company into alignment with its own soul mission or purpose and ensure that your employees or colleagues feel like they can live their own soul missions at work. It might take some time for this to open out through the organization, but it can happen if you make the choice and move with conscious intention in that direction.

TRUST PEOPLE AND SHOW THAT TRUST EVERY DAY

Alan Zucker in *Why We Need to Empower and Trust People to Do the Right Thing*

TRUST. To get someone's best performance, we need to trust them. And show that trust every day. Trusting managers recognize that people come to work with the best intention. Nobody comes to work wanting to screw up. Mistakes happen. We have all made bad decisions. We expected events to go one way, and they went the other, or we didn't have all the information to make the right decision. As a manager, creating an environment where it's safe to make mistakes (as long as we learn from them) is important. If we create an environment without fear, people will give you their best performance. As a manager, creating real and trusting relationships with your people is important. Really get to know your people. What is their spouse's name? Do they have dogs or cats? What do they like to do on the weekends?

THERE'S NOT A PERSONAL LIFE AND A WORK-LIFE, THERE'S LIFE

Andrew Bennett in *The Surprising Secret of Magic in Business*

I think about work in a way that it's not a separate world. It's all life. There's not a personal life and a work life, there's life. We're whole people, but too many organizations treat people like they're resources. The latest one I cringe every time I hear it is human assets or talent management. In all these ways we are objectifying people as cogs in a wheel to be moved around and disposed of. It's caring about people. Finding out what they care about and what are their hopes and dreams? What do they want for their family? What are they afraid of?

GETTING THE RIGHT FIT FOR PEOPLE

Andy Yen in Space to Speak Honestly Gives Us Power

You need to have an efficient workforce to be competitive. Getting the best performance and full attention is getting the right fit for people. There's always a job description, but it's very rare when someone is a 100% perfect fit down to the last detail. Everybody has their individual quirks, habits, strengths, and weaknesses. Tailoring people's duties to leverage their strengths and weaknesses is important. This requires management to be more flexible and tentative at the beginning. When you get people into a role where they fit, you see that the results improve dramatically.

IT'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST DOLLARS AND CENTS

August Turak in *Take Action & Make the Hero's Journey Yourself*

You have to articulate a vision and create a story. My book, *Business Secrets of the Trappist Monks*, is about the Hero's Journey, mythology, movies, and storytelling. Everyone loves stories. We all want to live a story or an adventure. You have to be able to tell the story. Even when you go to a venture capitalist for money, they say you must articulate the story. What are you going to be doing differently? What is exciting about what you plan to do? It's got to be something more than just dollars and cents.

IT'S ABOUT COMING UP WITH THINGS WORTH DOING

August Turak in *Take Action & Make the Hero's Journey Yourself*

My favorite movie of all time is *Apocalypse Now*. In the very beginning, Martin Sheen is the hitman going after Marlon Brando. In the movie, he says, "I wanted a mission. And for my sins, they gave me one. And I never want another one." Well, how can you not want to watch that movie! This is exactly what you have to be able to do when you stand up in front of your people as a CEO or the manager of a department. You've got to be able to articulate what the mission is going to be.

Our whole society is suffering from what I call the death of a big idea. People don't have big ideas. Lou Mobley, the IBM Executive I used to work for who created the IBM Executive School, said, "Too many executives and managers think that management and leadership are about getting things done. No, it's about coming up with things worth doing in the first place."*That's where imagination comes in place. You've got to have imagination.

WHAT LEADERS MUST DO IS GET PEOPLE INVOLVED IN CO-CREATING THEIR FUTURES

Aviv Shahar in *How to Elevate Yourself, Your Conversations & Your Future*

My experience with this very important question is that nothing energizes and liberates people more than the opportunity to shape and create their own future. That's why this is the central element of my work. Nothing energizes and liberates people more than the opportunity to shape and create their own future. I believe leaders and companies must get people involved in co-creating and shaping their futures. By that, I mean the future of the organization, the future of the business, the future of the department, and the future of the function. By doing so, they will gain their full attention, best performance, and greatest contribution.

I believe it so strongly that I have created a whole thriving practice around that belief and core tenet. In my work with senior teams in Fortune 100 companies, we find that to create and unleash an organizational movement, you must bring people into that kind of conversation. That's how I will offer to think about the conundrum of creating and facilitating fuller engagement and unleashing the fullest creativity of your people.

YOU HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT
THERE'S A DIFFERENT WAY TO DO
THINGS

Bob Gower in *How to Give People Voice the Natural Way*

Hope. Let me explain my response. I've done a lot of work in the technology sector, and now I work in heavy industry. I have seen that there are many bad teams and environments out there. Organizations are mostly made up of pretty good people, but I believe they're responding to many forces. Many people rise in management simply through inertia. They start out of college in a cubicle and then slowly graduate to the corner office. They tend to manage in the way they were managed from habits that were built up inside these organizations. That's not necessarily a bad thing. I've also seen some great teams inside these organizations. But I see a lot of really bad teams. I see many people just putting in their time, waiting for the day to end, and then waiting for the pension to kick in.

GETTING IMMERSED IN A PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Bob Schatz in Exploring Forward-Thinking Workplaces with Bob Schatz

Getting people immersed in a problem to solve is also important. This is especially true for people who do knowledge work. Give people the tools to do their work and basically get out of their way. If you're a manager or a leader, you can't be on top of these people. They need autonomy to be able to do their work.

WHEN WE DO OUR BEST WORK

Bob Schatz in Exploring Forward-Thinking Workplaces with Bob Schatz

Getting people into an interesting problem-solving situation where they are challenged with some type of scarcity and have to work as a team brings out the full capacity of people. I know for myself when I've been in those situations where you don't have anything, and you want to solve a problem that you have passion for, that's where I did my best work.

FULL ATTENTION AND BEST
PERFORMANCE ARE ABOUT
ALIGNMENT

Claude Cloutier in *Create Habitats for Everyone to Flourish*

For me, it's about alignment - horizontal and vertical. The vertical is about aligning the high-level purpose of the organization with the individual's values. That aligns the heart. The horizontal is about aligning the individual's strengths with the work to be done. That aligns the head. The other aspect is the alignment of leadership's purpose(s). A servant-leader approach is one of care. It essentially provides ongoing answers to how a leader can help the individual flourish.

YOU CAN REALLY ONLY CONTROL YOURSELF

David Marquet in Give People More Control

I would ask the question a little bit differently. I would say, under what conditions do employees give their full attention and best performance? Because the question is from a mindset that I'm manipulating my employees. I'm getting them to give me my best attention and performance, as opposed to, you know what, I really can't control that. I can really only control myself, but if I set the environment right, I can move in the direction of getting their full attention and best performance.

LEADERS FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT
— FOLLOWERS FOCUS ON THEIR
BEHAVIOR

David Marquet in Give People More Control

It's like farming. I plant the seeds in fertile land and fertilize and water them. I don't order seeds to grow, but they will grow. We think there is a duality: the leader focuses on and is responsible for the environment. The employee focuses on and is responsible for their behavior. The best situation is when people take responsibility for their behavior, knowing that our behavior is powerfully shaped by the environment and vice versa.

TREAT PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND TRULY LISTEN

David Shedd in *How Do We Get Less Command & Control Leadership?*

To get an employee's full attention, we need to treat him or her with respect and truly listen to them. This makes all the difference and gets their full attention and engagement. It's also important to give people compliments when they deserve them and to thank them for their work. And we must give our people the time to do their jobs well.

ALLOW PEOPLE TO CO-SHAPE THE JOURNEY

Dennis Wittrock in *Creating a Work Environment I'd Actually Like to Work In*

It requires an ability for employees to co-create and get an inner alignment with their purpose. If employees can co-shape the organization's journey to fulfill the purpose they signed up for because it resonates with their own personal purpose, then there's no big friction. There's a natural joy and a natural resonance with what needs to be done. The question doesn't come up in the first place.

REMOVE THE BARRIERS SO PEOPLE CAN EXPRESS THEIR FULL SELF

Dennis Wittrock in *Creating a Work Environment I'd Actually Like to Work In*

I think human beings just want to express their full self in work, so it's not a question of how we can make them do that but how we can help remove the barriers of them doing so out of their own accord. I think a big part of it is that you have to have the opportunity to work self-directed and within a larger context that aligns your personal purpose with an overarching purpose you consciously sign up for.

WE FIND OURSELVES IN A
CORPORATE WORLD THAT IS
UNNATURAL AND HIGHLY ARBITRARY

Dennis Wittrock in *Creating a Work Environment I'd Actually Like to Work In*

This question arises from the unnatural condition that we find ourselves in this corporate world where it's highly arbitrary and feels like "What does it have to do with me?" And if it actually doesn't have anything to do with me, I need to be incentivized and motivated, but I think the inherent need in the universe is to express your full potential. If you look at a flower or anything in the natural world, it's striving to express its purpose, its beauty, and its natural potential. A tree grows as high as it can and as beautiful and magnificent as possible.

LOOK BEYOND THE COMPANY LEADERS AS THE ONLY "VISIONARIES"

Dianne Collins in *How to Be a Powerful Agent in the World*

We find that employees are looking for a vision – for themselves, what they’re accountable for in their work, and for the company or business unit they’re working in. That vision needs to be expressed and valued. Yet, we think of company leaders as “the visionaries.” They’re the ones who are creating the vision and trying to get that vision heard amongst the employees, aligned on, and embraced. The unfortunate word for it – “buy-in.” That sets up an “us and them” situation where “they” try to convince “us” to buy into their vision. This is really an old world-view approach. It’s not the most effective, as we know!

EVERYONE HAS ONE UNIQUE ASPECT OF THE VISION

Dianne Collins in *How to Be a Powerful Agent in the World*

Ask an employee what is your vision for your work here, and you start to see everyone has one unique aspect of the vision. When you put it all together, and employees feel they're participating in that overall vision, that's when the vision comes alive. That's when the top-level leader doesn't even have to worry about their vision being embraced. Because when each person sees how their personal vision is getting fulfilled in the collaborative vision, it starts humming and buzzing. People become passionate about what they're doing. I think that's a very big part of it. You're recognized, and you're valued.

HAVING AN INTENTION THAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE BEING VALUED

Dianne Collins in *How to Be a Powerful Agent in the World*

My work and passion are about having us go from knowing what to do, “knowing” the wisdom – to actually living it—to being the walking, talking, and embodiment of these values, these virtues. That’s where conscious intent comes in—for everyone—whether you’re the manager or the person reporting to that manager. You relate to people with the intent that they experience being valued. Of course, it takes conscious action as well. What should managers be asking employees? How about, “What do you think?” When you are asked, What do you think? What’s your vision? What’s the direction you think we should be going? – it is understood, in the subtext as they say in the movie business, that the person experiences being valued because you ask them to contribute their thinking and point of view.

BECOME AWARE OF THE
PERFORMANCE LIMITING
CHARACTERISTICS OF LEAST-ACTION
PATHWAYS

Dianne Collins in *How to Be a Powerful Agent in the World*

Let's talk briefly about what can limit us in the day-to-day culture of work environments. It is what I call "Least-action Pathways." Because of the automatic habits engendered by a formula-driven, mechanical, Industrial Age way of thinking, thought can become a Least-action Pathway.

A Least-action Pathway is the route the thought takes simply because it's been that route before. It's the most mechanical, automatic way or action—the least conscious way of thinking about something. We have cultural Least-action Pathways, family Least-action Pathways – just about any area of life. For example, the Least-action Pathway in our current news reporting is to tell us what went wrong, is wrong, or will go wrong (smile). That's the automaticity of current news media. The importance of noticing Least-action Pathways is so we can move beyond them so they don't have to limit us. Please don't give them any meaning – good or bad. They're simply automatic habits. We don't even know how they got here – and truly, the "why" and "how" of them is irrelevant.

LEAD PEOPLE TO STATES OF MIND
THAT ARE MORE PRODUCTIVE,
ATTENTIVE & PRESENT

Dicken Bettinger in *The Most Important But Least Recognized Variable in Business*

There are two main approaches. One is you try to get their attention externally, which is a constant effort where the responsibility for getting someone's attention is on the leader. The other approach, which I obviously subscribe to, is that the leader helps the person gain an understanding that leads them naturally to states of mind that are more productive, attentive, and present-centered. That work is extremely rewarding because when people begin to take responsibility for their state of mind, it's very different than if people try to create that from the outside. It is much more effective to help people access their capacity to be fully present and engaged.

GIVE THEM YOUR FULL ATTENTION AND BEST PERFORMANCE

Erika Andersen in *How Can We Be More Capable of Change in Today's World?*

We're so deeply wired for fairness and what has come to be called equity.

What I've noticed over the years about managers and leaders in every regard, and it's especially true of change, but it's always true: You know the thing they tell you in airplanes about putting on your own mask before attempting to help others? Be fully present, do your best work, and be honest, authentic, and sincere in what you say.

That is such a model for people—not everyone, because some people are too defended or too scared or too whatever—but for most people, it calls out from them the same thing. They see that it's safe when you're modeling it. Then they're willing and able to be that too.

RESPECT. THAT'S MY ONE-WORD ANSWER.

Esther Derby in *Get Out of That Extractive Mindset*

It really does come down to respect and interest in that person as a human and connecting the employees with why their work is important. And that seldom has to do with shareholder return, being number one in the industry, meeting some financial target, or the CEO getting his bonus.

It seldom has to do those things, which seems obvious when you say it, but those are very often held out as the things that will motivate people, like some financial target or some date, and what engages people is doing something that matters.

That might be solving a really challenging technical problem. It might be making a difference in someone's life. It might be, you know, solving some problem that people have. But I think respecting people and then connecting them to the meaning of their work is what really makes the difference.

HIGH LEVELS OF PRODUCTIVITY
OCCUR WHEN WORKERS CAN
DEVELOP THEIR STRENGTHS

Eva Maria Schielein in Letting People Do What They Really Want to Do

If we apply Positive Psychology, which is the science of happiness, to the field of business, then there are many proofs that a very high level of productivity is reached when workers can develop their strengths.

POSITIVE EMOTIONS BROADEN
AWARENESS & LEAD TO CREATIVE
THOUGHTS

Eva Maria Schielein in Letting People Do What They Really Want to Do

Positive emotions broaden our awareness and lead to creative thoughts. If we create workplaces that fuel positive emotions, we earn high levels of creativity in return. If I talk about positive emotions, I don't mean the "always-smiling-positive-thinking" bullshit. I rather think about developing a constructive communication culture, e.g., with the help of appreciative inquiry, or developing a culture of gratitude, e.g., celebrating success together.

THERE'S MUCH MORE TO LISTENING
THAN PAYING ATTENTION, ASKING
QUESTIONS AND BEING SILENT

Felicia Spahr in *What do I need to embody?*

I like this question a lot too. I think it builds well on the first answer, which is starting with the change from the inside out. If you start there, then I feel like the next step in response to this question is taking the time to listen to someone. But I want to expand on what I mean by listening because it sounds very simplistic, and it's starting to become a bit of a tired word. What I mean by listening is that it's not just sitting down with someone and asking them questions and being silent when they're speaking. My interpretation of listening is keeping someone in your heart. You're not just paying attention to them when they're in front of you; you are thinking about them. You are noticing small details that maybe someone else wouldn't notice that give you clues about where that person is at.

LISTENING FROM A DEEPER ABYSS REVEALS THE RIGHT INFORMATION

Felicia Spahr in *What do I need to embody?*

I think this is important—things they can't necessarily articulate. Maybe they're not even aware of it. So I think with this kind of listening, you are listening in the deeper abyss of the ocean if you will, rather than just listening to someone's words—taking them at face value. I think that's a place to start because it reveals the right information to you and gives you almost a map for developing a good relationship with that person and understanding what they need.

EVERYONE'S LOOKING TO THE TOP
FOR WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO ACT,
SO IF THEY'RE NOT DOING IT, WHY
WOULD THEY?

Felicia Spahr in *What do I need to embody?*

I think one of the biggest reasons why it isn't necessarily something that's always talked about or focused on is because many people say I don't have time. I don't have time to do that. I have this project, I have this meeting, and it's sad because those things are the short-term focus where all the trouble and all the problems that come up could easily have been solved with a little bit of extra time in the beginning. That's a principle that I feel isn't necessarily always embodied, so people don't do it. Everyone's looking to the top for what to do and how to act, so if they're not doing it, why would they?

CONTROL DOESN'T ALLOW FOR WHAT ELSE IS POSSIBLE HERE

Gwen Kinsey in How Do We Create that Environment that Uses Natural System Wisdom?

Can I let the contrarian in me come out? I think this is the wrong question. That question points us to how we influence somebody so that we can control their behavior to suit our goal. Control doesn't allow for "what else is possible here?" If an employee can't see how they make a difference with my unique contribution, it's tough to get excited.

ACCOUNTABILITY IS AN OUTCOME
THAT COMES FROM PEOPLE BEING
AUTHENTICALLY INVOLVED

Gwen Kinsey in *How Do We Create that Environment that Uses Natural System Wisdom?*

Sweat equity is the term I like to use. Sweat equity means you feel connected to something. Your heart is in it. You feel a passion for it. You sense the connection between what you're doing and why that matters to you and why that matters to the community. As a result, when that connection is alive, you are accountable because what matters to you is on the line. That's the outcome.

OUR AWARENESS GETS HIJACKED

Helena Lass in *Who Is Leading Our Lives?*

If you don't know what awareness truly is and how to use it, then your awareness remains on the monkey mind regime. You become aware of things but in a random way. Most people have monkey minds because there is no education about how to discover where your awareness is and how to keep it where you need it—and for as long as you need it to be there.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ATTENTION AND AWARENESS?

Helena Lass in *Who Is Leading Our Lives?*

When awareness is dependent on stimulus, we call it attention. When it's your own skill, we call it awareness. Attention is always random. Awareness always listens to your own will and is always self-directed.

BEST PERFORMANCE IS WHEN
PEOPLE GIVE US 100% UTILIZATION
ON VALUE, NOT TASKS.

Hillel Glazer in *Why Do We Go to Great Lengths to Do Things Right Yet Make It Impossible to Achieve?*

There are an infinite number of things that people can do that are not tasks but are entirely valuable. The confusing thing for many business leaders is that they have conflated best performance with 100 percent utilization on tasks. That's not when they're giving us their best performance. Their best performance is when they give us a hundred percent utilization on value. And sometimes they are going to be more valuable to us by having them learn the job better, learn the work better, learn more about the whole project, learn more about the product or the customers or the market, or learn and do adjacent tasks to theirs.

Value flows more easily when they have that slack. The time between tasks to do other value-accumulating activities. A silly but useful way to think of it is this way. If you're ordering food from a delivery company, say you're ordering a pizza to be delivered. When the pizza gets to you, you realize the value of the pizza you purchased. When there's less traffic on the road, you get the pizza faster. So less traffic is more slack. More slack means faster arrival

times for the value. Faster travel time is equal to sooner pizza. And if you think of it in terms of the business, the more pizzas that can be delivered, the more trips the individual deliveries can make, and the more value it is for the company. It's a silly but relatable analogy that when people are not giving us everything, it's probably because they're bogged down somewhere that needs to be replaced with something that will be more valuable.

ALWAYS BE OPEN AND HONEST

Howard Behar in *The Person Who Sweeps the Floor Pushes the Broom*

I think, first of all, it's about always being open and honest. Lots of communication. Setting expectations so that they're clear and getting agreement on those expectations. It's primarily what I talked about in the previous question, if people feel like they're trusted and that they have responsibility and accountability, they'll give you their attention. It's just automatic.

ATTENTION FOLLOWS WHEN PEOPLE FEEL TRUSTED AND NOT JUDGED

Howard Behar in *The Person Who Sweeps the Floor Pushes the Broom*

Employees want to hear you because they know you want to hear them. It's the same thing that happens in a family. What allows your kids to give you their attention? It's when they feel trusted and not judged. When that happens, they open up to communication that gets closed down when they're not. When you're constantly after them, when you're always setting rules and regulations then what happens? They close down.

WE SOMETIMES LACK SHOWING WE'RE IMPERFECT

Hrund Gunnsteinsdottir in *Shifting the Center of Gravity*

One of the barriers we sometimes have in the workplace is basically the lack of people showing that they're imperfect. Let's say I'm a leader in the workplace, and I want people to excel in an area. If I have the self-confidence to show that I make mistakes, and I sometimes say silly things, and I don't know everything, then people are more likely to do that too, and they relax.

EXPLORING, LEARNING, AND ASKING QUESTIONS TOGETHER

Hrund Gunnsteinsdottir in Shifting the Center of Gravity

Let's say you have a workplace that's been around for decades. You've been doing things that are traditional, and now you need to be innovative. You need to do things differently, so that's shifting the center of gravity in how we approach work – and I think that's what we're all going through in one way or another. It means we are exploring, learning, and asking questions together.

CHOOSE TO CARE IN A WAY THAT MATTERS

Irene Ricotta in *Be Open and Curious about the True Voice of People*

People must feel that we care about them and that they are important. The difference is not in the degree but in the choice to care. It's not easy to be a leader. It's not easy to be a coach. It's also not easy to be an employee. Sometimes the difference shows up in the amount of responsibilities each person has. Therefore, it's important to be open and authentic. Doing so allows them to be and do the same.

CREATE SPACE THAT ENHANCES
PERFORMANCE

Irene Ricotta in *Be Open and Curious about the True Voice of People*

Acting with complete integrity as leaders allows employees to do the same, creating the space to enhance the level of performance.

ENCOURAGE AND MOTIVATE THEM TO WANT TO DO IT

Jeff Dalton in *The Future of the Workplace*

This is a complicated question with many inputs and qualifiers. I've struggled with this idea my whole career. But if I'm proud of anything in my career, I've done a decent job bringing great performance out of people. I think the way to do that is to encourage and motivate them to want to do it and to be excited about what they're doing.

A MISSION AND A GOAL ISN'T ENOUGH

Jeff Dalton in *The Future of the Workplace*

I'm always reminded of the mantras of the Armed Services. The Navy says, "People, People, People" is their focus. The Army says, "Process, Process, Process." And the Air Force says, "Mission, Mission, Mission." You hear military professionals talk about these things as being what really drives them in their particular branch. I've learned in my company that people want to be excited about all three of those things. The mission is the most important one. It isn't enough just to give them a mission and a goal. You also need to focus on the people, making it easier for them to focus on the mission.

PROCESS IS IMPORTANT TOO

Jeff Dalton in *The Future of the Workplace*

Finally, the process is important too. The process is nothing more than a definition of expected behavior. I find that the right amount of process guidance can be very liberating and powerful in growing your culture. So, it's a three-legged stool – and architecture of sorts. Laying out a very clear mission that's exciting to them, laying out a clear vision for a culture that helps people be successful, and laying out the process in a way that makes their job easier and more successful. All three things together have to be intertwined and work together.

THERE ARE NO SILVER BULLETS
UBIQUITOUSLY ACROSS ALL HUMANS

Jim Finkelstein in *The Workplace of the Future Has to Honor Mass Customization*

You can't find those silver bullets to say that this is what it requires ubiquitously across all humans. There are two things that I find to probably be the most relevant to really get into people's minds.

CREATE EXPERIENCES, ENVIRONMENT
AND EVENTS THAT INTERSECT WITH
PURPOSE

Jim Finkelstein in *The Workplace of the Future Has to Honor Mass Customization*

We really have to be able to create experiences and environments, events, and other ways to intersect with them in a way that they fulfill their purpose. In theory, what we're trying to do is understand not only their unique motivational profile but what wakes them up in the morning, floats their boat, melts their butter, and brings them to a place where they can do the best they can, fulfilled with purpose and with some great direction.

PEOPLE SHOW UP FOR DIFFERENT REASONS

Jim Finkelstein in *The Workplace of the Future Has to Honor Mass Customization*

People show up for different reasons. Some show up specifically for the money – how do you create a reward program that taps into that motivational profile? How do you create a work environment for people who really want status? They want to create a hierarchy and be at the top of the hierarchy—there are different workplace experiences there. Again, once we stop trying to solve these challenges with the “one best solution” we will truly find innovative ways to tap into people’s full potential.

WHAT THE WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE MUST CREATE

Jim Finkelstein in *The Workplace of the Future Has to Honor Mass Customization*

The future workplace will create an environment of purpose, a culture that honors uniqueness, a development system that allows people to truly learn and grow, and a reward program that reinforces their motivational profile.

THE FIRST ROOT IS PURPOSE

Jim Haudan in *Why Are So Many Unwilling to Say What They Think, Feel & Act On?*

I don't want to jump to what I've written in my book, but in *The Art of Engagement*, there are four roots of engagement. I think it's a powerful metaphor for getting people's best performance. The number one point is a purpose. You have to engage with somebody in an organization on why we are doing it and what we do. The first root of engagement is that we all want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. The goal is not to find yourself; it's to lose yourself in a cause you believe in, a problem that's defied a solution, or join an organization that you believe is on a path to finding a better way. I think the most important point is to be part of something bigger than yourself.

SENSE OF BEING VALUED

Jim Haudan in *Why Are So Many Unwilling to Say What They Think, Feel & Act On?*

The second point that I increasingly feel particularly strongly about is to have a sense of being valued. In times of change, we face uncertainty, and uncertainty can make a sense of being valued very fragile. I think many times, people are questioning whether they're valued. If you don't feel valued, you'll spend all your time justifying it for yourself rather than creating it with others. And so, the absence of that sense of value or even the presumption that you should feel valued, I don't think, is adequate.

Ubuntu's a great African word: "I see you, and you are valued." I think that's important. Maslow talks about a sense of belonging, which is probably in that same family. But when we look at change, there are so many people that think that just because they have not done this before that they're on the "can't do it" list, and they're just waiting to be told that. I think that's the natural part of the fear of being a beginner again after you've succeeded or when stepping into the discomfort of the unknown. It's important to truly have a sense of value and be valuable to the future.

WHAT DOES MY AUDIENCE NEED TO KNOW?

Joel Schwartzberg in *How to Use the Power of Language to Lead, Inspire, and Engage*

Leaders make a mistake if the first question they ponder when they create communication is what do I want to say or what do I need to say? Because that's all about them. That's not even connecting to what the audience wants and needs to know. So that's the wrong question. The right question is, what does my audience want to need to know?

ALL WORK IS MEANINGFUL, NO
MATTER HOW MENIAL

John Bell in *Voices Will Matter, People Will Thrive, & Innovation Will Become Ingrained in the Culture If...*

Generally, every employee needs to know that their work, no matter how menial, is meaningful. For example, what would happen to a restaurant if the floors weren't swept and the kitchen wasn't scrubbed? Management's job is to continually reiterate the importance of cleanliness, reward for it, and ensure that this success factor is shared with everyone. Even though somebody may have a very boring or tough job, there's a reason for it. We as leaders have to share that, honor it, respect it, and make sure everyone in the organization knows it.

ELIMINATE THE “US AND THEM” MINDSET

John Bell in *Voices Will Matter, People Will Thrive, & Innovation Will Become Ingrained in the Culture If...*

When I was a CEO, we had a very lucrative bonus plan in place. But because the company was unionized, half of the employees were excluded, creating a “them and us” wedge. The union didn’t like “variable” compensation because they want to know exactly what they were getting. There can’t be any variables, it’s a fixed deal. So when it was time to renegotiate the contract, I had to find a way to include a bonus plan. Once the regular wage rates and benefits were settled, we simply added the bonus element. And the results were phenomenal! Everyone got a bonus the following year because the company was profitable and growing. I’d walk into the plant, and employees would walk up to me and say, “John, we’ve got a lot of inventory in the warehouses. Are things slowing down?” They were worried because bonuses were based on sales and profits. Because it was the same for every employee, you didn’t have to go through their performance to pay them a bonus.

RECOGNIZE PEOPLES' DILEMMAS & SHOW THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED AND TAKING ACTION

John Ryskowski in *How to Get Beyond the Way Most of Us Are Working Today*

To get people's full attention and best performance, you have to recognize their dilemmas and somehow be able to show that you are concerned and taking action. You can invest 90 seconds in a meeting, shift the perspective, and light up or ignite people.

But just remember: After that, they'll be watching, so the follow-up needs to happen, and it needs to be righteous, and it needs to be heartfelt. If you don't follow up, you're just "full of it." You don't get many tries, right? So you've got to take advantage of each one. Even if it doesn't work, people will forgive you for that, but you've got to at least give it a shot.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU'RE GOOD AT & GET BETTER AT IT

John Toussaint in *The Future of the Workplace*

From the standpoint of understanding the human dynamics of why and how people work, focusing on your strengths is one way to try to help figure out how you, as an employee, can best help your organization. We've found that to be very helpful because, first of all, everybody has different strengths. From a team perspective, you can leverage each team member's strength if you understand what it is. Then when we put each team member's strengths together, we can really do some pretty amazing things that we wouldn't be able to do if it was just one person at a time who has a certain role.

LEVERAGE PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS
AND BUILD SYSTEMS THAT CREATE
VALUE

John Toussaint in *The Future of the Workplace*

I think it gets back to this balance of let's make sure we leverage the strengths of the people we have in our organization, which can make them excited to come to work. But let's also build the systems to understand how we create the maximum value for our customers.

HOW ARE WE ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO THINK DIFFERENTLY?

Jon Mertz in *How to Lead More Holistically*

I think the way you do that is by how you encourage strategic thinking within your organization. There's an interesting book that came out a couple of years ago called *WorldMaking: The Art and Science of American Diplomacy*. It was a fascinating read because it showed how different generations worked with each other and how they offered ideas to build a better world together. We need to be centered a little more on the process of how people think. If we want to get the best out of our teams in our organization, it goes to how we are really encouraging people to think differently. Or how to think about how they are approaching certain challenges and solutions. Questioning some of that thinking because out of that, we'll get better thoughts, plans, and results

GIVE PEOPLE THE FULL BREADTH OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE CULTURE

Judith Glaser in *How Do We Tap into the Best Conversations People Can Have?*

When people join an organization, they do so because they think the organization will help them find a new role or identity in the world. They move into a company, and either they become like that company, or they become a better contributor. But I think sometimes leaders don't think about it that way. They don't go the full run of what their employees want. They want to bring in new employees to help with certain things, certain projects, and so forth. Every time a new employee joins a company, there's a huge shift in what their identity is going to be. They will either come out of this company feeling validated and honored for what they can bring, or they're going to come out feeling, "Ok, we were just another person that was put into this particular job because there was a key need there", but a lot of time companies don't give them the full breadth of understanding of the culture and being part of it.

GIVE NEW EMPLOYEES AN ORIENTATION TO WHAT THE COMPANY IS ALL ABOUT

Judith Glaser in *How Do We Tap into the Best Conversations People Can Have?*

The bottom line is when new employees come in, make sure that they get an orientation to what the company is all about and what the projects are all about. Don't just throw them in and thank them for joining, but really help them understand where they fit into the bigger picture of what's going on. That creates a better employee. That gives them a sense of importance. When people have roles and things they can do that are clear in their minds, it changes everything.

EVERYONE WANTS TO BE HEARD

Karen Mack in Culture Makes the Difference

Everyone wants to be heard. People respond when they feel heard, respected, and part of the process. Once this happens, you are more inclined to get employees' full attention and best performance. People should be asked: "What do you think or how do you think (XYZ) will work best? Are we following the best process? Are you able to complete this work in a certain amount of time? What needs to change, and how would you change it?" Employees are more likely to be engaged if they are included and involved.

IT TAKES A CLEAR MIND AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE ENGAGED

Ken Manning in What Does the Wisdom in Me Move Me to Do Right Now?

They would have to have a clear mind and be engaged with something they're interested in. The company would have to offer an opportunity for them to be interested in engaging in a place that's meaningful to them.

SUPPORTED TO BE AT THEIR BEST IN
WHATEVER THAT MEANS FOR EACH
PERSON

Ken Manning in *What Does the Wisdom in Me Move Me to Do Right Now?*

What would get someone's best performance? It would have to be an environment in which they feel supported—to be at their best whatever that means for them, which would be different from person to person.

ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BE THEMSELVES

Kent Johnson in *How to Help Employees Engage with Passion*

Help people understand what's motivating them. Many people simply don't think about what it is that really energizes them. They simply react to their feelings. Why not ask, "What is it that really makes you feel like you're doing something significant here, something that's positive?" "What is it about work that makes you feel disengaged?" In short, leaders should free up the dialogue about deeply held principles and beliefs about religion to help employees connect their core identity with their work.

TREMENDOUS NEW ENERGY AND
COMMITMENT RESULTS WHEN
PEOPLE CONNECT CORE BELIEFS
TO WORK

Kent Johnson in *How to Help Employees Engage with Passion*

When people feel uncomfortable connecting their core beliefs to their work, they live in two worlds. They'll go to their respective houses of worship, or places where they do their religious activities or their book clubs. Then they'll go to work. Work becomes a necessary evil, a way to make money to survive. Their faith seems irrelevant to their daily work. They'll long for the day when they can quit work and start living in accordance with their core beliefs all the time. But when people are permitted to make those connections, you will see tremendous new energy and commitment. The sense of "When I run, I feel God's pleasure!" characterizes their work.

WHAT WE REALLY NEED TO DO IS GET LEADERS' FULL ATTENTION

Lance Secretan in *The Future of the Workplace*

That's funny you ask that question. I'm not sure we need to do that. I think we need to get leaders' full attention. If we've got leaders' full attention, then I think the employees would be fully engaged, and there wouldn't be an issue. I think if a leader can't get the employees' attention, that's a leadership problem — not an employee problem. The leader needs to really understand how to inspire and serve people.

YOU CAN'T PERFORM AT A HIGH-
LEVEL IF YOU'RE ALWAYS
FRIGHTENED

Lance Secretan in *The Future of the Workplace*

Everybody's afraid at every level. Leaders are afraid they will get ripped off by employees, get called out by shareholders or by the press, or who knows. Maybe they groped somebody 30 years ago and don't even remember it because they were in high school at the time, and so on. There's no idea how many people wake up today wondering what's going to happen and would I survive the day. Well, we need to take that away. That's one of the things that holds us up.

GIVE EMPLOYEES A PURPOSE AS A COMPANY THEY CAN GALVANIZE AROUND

Lindsay Pedersen in *What Is the Most Powerful Tool You Have as a Leader?*

Assuming they have psychological safety, I think that's the underlying condition. Once that's true, how do you get the most out of this employee?

It's an overlap between what the employee cares about and what a company's purpose is. When there is something the company stands for that human being who is an employee cares about, they will devote more of their cognitive resources.

So number one, make employees feel psychologically safe. And number two, give them a purpose as a company that your employees can galvanize around.

YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO TAKE INTENTIONAL ACTION

Liz Gutheridge in *Fostering Psychological Safety and a Growth Mindset*

Attention is one of those things that I find interesting in that we just assume we can get people's attention, and we can't. For example, you have to be able to cut through the clutter. If I want to get your full attention, I have to be able to take intentional action.

It often helps to say your name and talk about something emotional to pique your interest. Then I can start moving into something more detailed.

If you want to get my attention, you've got to make a similar effort to ensure I'm focusing on you. And are you sure I'm not distracted by certain things? Is it a time of day that will not work for me? I remember years ago, I was in an organization where I worked with somebody in an office next to me who always wanted to grab people, especially mothers, at the end of the day as they were running out the door to pick up their kids at daycare.

And if you know anything about daycare, they close the doors at certain points. So he wanted to give them something new to do, and they couldn't really concentrate because they were so needing to get

out the door to pick up their kid. He was just creating a bad situation for both of them by doing it that way. However, I think we've got so many things going on in the workplace that it's not ideal for getting people's attention. Attention is very delicate because you really need both parties to pay attention at the same time.

UNDERSTAND AND LEVERAGE THE DIVERSITY PEOPLE BRING TO THE WORKPLACE

Lynne Cazaly in *Why You Need to Rattle Your Cage*

You know how your leader or manager on your team knows you. Unfortunately, they only see a little sliver of what you do. And sometimes you're perhaps what I call a "narrow hire." They've scoped out what they want a person to do and recruit for that. The person gets the role, but then you do all this other stuff. I think if we were to understand the diversity that people bring from their experience, then our employers would be way more attentive and use more of our capabilities. As I look back on some of my experience in broadcasting and radio production, I'm probably using some of it now in talking to you. I also use it when I'm speaking in public and when I'm training and facilitating, but wouldn't it be great for me to use more of those skills with some of my client projects?

WHAT ARE THE SKILLS, CAPABILITIES
AND EXPERIENCES THE WORKPLACE
COULD BE MAKING USE OF BUT
AREN'T?

Lynne Cazaly in *Why You Need to Rattle Your Cage*

A good question for people to think about is, “What are some of the skills, capabilities, and experiences I have that my workplace could be making use of right now and they’re not?” I’d suggest that you have many capabilities and experiences that are not being used. If they were explored a bit more, and if we were bringing our whole selves to work, that would be an interesting boost to our thinking, engagement, and level of performance.

WE BRING OUT THE BEST IN OTHERS
BY BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN
YOURSELF

Mara Gleason in *How to Unleash Your Human Operating System*

I remember saying to my Dad once, who is still sharing the Three Principles in his company with new employees as well as many who have been learning about it for years. He once asked me, “Mara, how would you define leadership?” I thought for a moment and said, “I think leadership is bringing out the best in others by bringing out the best in yourself.” I don’t think it’s humanly possible to bring out the best in others if you don’t bring out the best in yourself. I think that’s the funny thing about humans. I always joke (and I don’t really mean this), “I don’t know why human eyeballs face outward. It would help if they face inward!” I say that only because I think everything about us wants to look outside us first. What made me feel that way? How do I fix that person? What needs to be better in my life out there? As if those things are somehow real. What I’ve learned from studying the mind and human experience is that the only thing we’re ever experiencing is ourselves and our mind. The clearer my mind is, the clearer the world looks.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS
EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO SCALE
MOUNTAINS

Marcel Schwantes in *Human-Centered Leadership Empowers People to Scale Mountains*

I think every answer I give will be biased based on my working philosophy of leading by valuing the human. Valuing them not only as employees but also as people. There's always a person before they're an employee. To me, it always starts with building the relationship because when you do that, you show people that you value them as an individual and show that you care. This philosophy is also consistent with the research on servant leadership. The research says that when you meet the needs of others, it empowers them to scale mountains, which addresses the business outcome question. Sure, you want reasonable relationships, but not at the expense of results. When you do that, you get both.

HAVING PROPER TOOLS FOR THE JOB

Mark Ricketts in A Virtual Space for Collective Minds to Imagine and Create

I almost surprised myself here. My top answer was having the proper tools for the job. Once again, I guess that's laden with the problems experienced by teachers in schools. We never quite seem to have the right room, the right tools, the right calculators, the right equipment, working computers, and so it impacts your time. You spend most of your time patching the system up.

THERE'S GOOD TEAM SPIRIT WHEN
THERE'S NO COMPETITION WITH
EACH OTHER

Mark Ricketts in *A Virtual Space for Collective Minds to Imagine and Create*

It's always been important for me to have everyone working together. Teaching is one of those places where you can have a good team spirit because nobody seems to be in competition with each other for the next job up the line. Other responses include an atmosphere of support from the people you work with, a good team of people who respect each other, and encouragement and support when things go wrong. And my least answer was recognition when things go right, which is quite interesting because I'm normally a person who likes to be patted on the back when I do things right.

LEADERS NEED TO ASK AM I PAYING ATTENTION TO YOU AND YOUR IDEAS?

Martha Kesler in *Why is Role Clarity So Important in Today's Workplace?*

What you're asking isn't necessarily about getting their attention. You can't compel people to pay attention. As a leader, the question is more about how you bring their attention to bear. The one thing you can control is your behavior. Leaders need to ask themselves, "Am I paying attention to you and your ideas?". If they genuinely value employees and bring their attention to the conversation, the employees will bring the same. Additionally, and not surprisingly, employees will be more forthcoming with questions of their own, "Where can I contribute?", "How do I fit in?", "How can I make a difference?" If leaders genuinely value employees and bring their attention to the conversation, the employees will bring the same.

SPENDING TIME UP FRONT TO DEVELOP A SHARED UNDERSTANDING ISN'T A TIME SINK

Martha Kesler in *Why is Role Clarity So Important in Today's Workplace?*

Leaders need to listen, and I mean really listen. To listen means being present to someone and hearing out an idea. Leaders need to create the space and provide opportunities for employees to be vulnerable and not necessarily completely polished in what they're saying. Listening involves asking questions and inquiring further. Perhaps Covey's fifth habit, "seek first to understand, then to be understood," says it best. There are a lot of people who think spending time upfront to develop a shared understanding is a time-sink because work isn't being done. The rule of thumb I try to follow calls for about forty percent of a team's time to be focused on talking about how the work will be done. The second forty percent of the time should be focused on doing the work. The remaining twenty percent should focus on lessons learned and celebrating success.

MOST PEOPLE ARE AT THEIR BEST WHEN THEY WORK IN TEAMS

Masa K. Maeda in *Vanishing Mental Barriers that Limit True Collaboration*

The Self-environment comes into play again here. In addition, adding value through participative collaboration—using tools and techniques that make it easy for people to work together—to get more work done with better quality. Having people in isolation in their cubicles eventually try to integrate what each person did on their own isn't nearly as effective. Most people are at their best when they work in teams. A lot is missed when someone doesn't interact with the rest of the team, and therefore, there's rework, poor quality, delays, and so on.

WE NEED TO IMPROVE THE WAY WE LISTEN AND OBSERVE

Masa K. Maeda in *Vanishing Mental Barriers that Limit True Collaboration*

To increase employees' attention, leaders have to improve the way we listen and observe. I co-active coach using three levels of listening. We listen at Level 1 when we hear what we want and not what the person is saying. We listen at Level 2 when we pay attention and capture what the other person is saying. And Level 3 is the same as Level 2 but also considers the context within which the person is saying things. Level 3 is the mature level of listening. I extended the concept to include observation and invite leaders to observe at Level 3. Once we achieve it, it becomes easier to help our employees listen and observe at Level 3.

ORGANIZATIONS JUST NEED TO TAP
AND CHANNEL DESIRE FOR SELF-
ACTUALIZATION

Meredith Haberfeld in Leadership Behavior Set the Tone

We live at a time when people look to work as a place for self-actualization. These days, when you go into a cafe, you see people hard at work on their laptops, pouring their time, energy, effort, creativity, and innovation into building something. Human beings want to create and give our efforts towards something. Organizations just need to tap and channel that.

SEE PEOPLE AS HUMAN BEINGS, NOT RESULT PRODUCERS

Meredith Haberfeld in Leadership Behavior Set the Tone

Tapping into that desire involves allowing people to channel their full capabilities as human beings, accessing more of their creativity, passion, and "internal real estate" of their brains. The job of the workplace is to unlock people's potential and see each worker as not just a result producer for the business but rather as a human being.

LEADERS NEED TO SHOW UP AS THE
ENGAGED EMPLOYEES THEY WANT
EMPLOYEES TO BE

Michael Anderson in *Let's Figure Out Why That's Not Happening*

I teach leadership, and I don't think we can get an engaged, performing employee unless we as leaders, show up like that as well. I'll give you a real-life example. I was facilitating a strategic retreat with a CEO's executive team. During the first hour of the retreat, they shared their company information and values with me. One of their values was Tight. I asked the CEO, "What do you mean by Tight?" He said, "That means everybody shows up engaged, proactive, on time, and everybody's got their work ready. So we're Tight. We run a Tight organization." I said, "Oh really, are you Tight?" He said, "Heck yeah, I'm Tight." I said, "Are you really? You blew off two conference calls with me, and the latest one, you were late to arrive. Is that true? Are you Tight? He gasped, "Ah no, but I want everybody else to be!"

PEOPLE WANT LEADERSHIP THAT IS HONEST AND TRANSPARENT

Michael Anderson in *Let's Figure Out Why That's Not Happening*

If you're asking people to do things you're not showing up and doing, I don't think you can ever have engaged employees and workforce. We talk about leading by example, and we also talk about how low engagement is in the workplace. Worldwide it's 13% and 32% in the US. The way you get engagement is to show up the way you want your employees to show up. That doesn't mean you must go to the warehouse and ship boxes. Your people want you to be the leader and be honest and transparent with them."

DEMONSTRATE BY YOUR BEHAVIOR THAT PEOPLE ARE IMPORTANT

Michael Anderson in *Let's Figure Out Why That's Not Happening*

For example, I caught myself when I was a boss when we did quarterly reviews with our employees. We had a habit when things came up with customers of putting off reviews for sometimes one, two, three, or more weeks. I didn't realize it, but the employees put so much weight and faith into the reviews because this is when they really get to connect and get specific feedback from their boss and management. This was really important to them. I was really showing them that they're not a priority in my life and I'm taking them for granted. So that's one of the things I changed about my behaviors. So if I'm an employee and my boss keeps changing my review, and he doesn't even have enough time to sit down with me and go through how I can do better, then how am I going to be engaged."

CREATE A SPACE FOR OPT-IN ENGAGEMENT

Michael Bonamassa in *How Voices Are Heard, Passion Is Followed and Innovation Is Empowered*

I think to really get the most out of employees, we need to create a space for opt-in engagement. We need to listen to them and listen on multiple levels. When I say opt-in engagement, I've been doing a lot of experiments at our company. We gather direct feedback during the experiment and meta data from engagement feedback.

EXPERIMENT, LISTEN AND OBSERVE

Michael Bonamassa in *How Voices Are Heard, Passion Is Followed and Innovation Is Empowered*

I've done experiments on performance management. When we look at the metadata, we start to see that a few people are engaging, but that's probably because they want to impress someone who's senior to them. But the clear majority is not opting in on this, so there's something wrong. We not only listen to their direct feedback but also listen to indirect feedback. We observe where people sit back and don't truly engage. What this information does is it allows me to tailor my response then. Being who I am, I tend to be blunt and basically will bring what I'm observing to the forefront and say, "Hey, I see no one's really engaging. Is this something you don't really care about? Is this not aligned?"

ENGAGEMENT IS ALSO WHEN PEOPLE
OPT NOT TO ENGAGE

Michael Bonamassa in *How Voices Are Heard, Passion Is Followed and Innovation Is Empowered*

I think a lot of times, we want engagement, and we think engagement is when people are talking to us. I think engagement is also when people opt not to engage. We need to figure out what that is and directly attack it to get to the root of the problem. Doing this opens up the door for true engagement because now we're really listening to our associates.

GIVE FULL ATTENTION TO GET FULL
ATTENTION

Michael Neill in It's not about working harder, or even smarter

I think getting an employee's full attention is a give-to-get game. I think fundamentally enough, human beings are pretty simple in that way. You will wind up with their full attention if you give them your full attention.

UNDERSTAND THE NATURAL VARIANCE IN THE STATE OF MIND

Michael Neill in It's not about working harder, or even smarter

Best performance is a function of clarity of intention, buy-in, and state of mind. If the people working for me know what their job is, they know what they're up to, and they've bought into it, we're more than halfway there. If they also understand the natural variance in a state of mind, so they can come from the highest and best place within them and do less damage when they're off their game, then you're going to get optimal performance.

POINT PEOPLE TO AN
UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THEIR
MIND WORKS

Natasha Swerdloff in *Realizing How the Mind Works*

When people understand that the only thing that stops them from performing well and being motivated deeply is their thinking, it's often a revelation to them. When employees find out what they're looking for is already present inside of them, that makes a big difference in getting the best performance out in the workplace.

It's true for everyone that there's a space inside where we are at ease, have well-being, and are resilient in the face of changes. Unfortunately, this space inside is often covered over by our thinking. How we think of a struggle or challenge in a certain way often makes us unable to access this space of well-being inside. But once people realize how the mind works, it's like we get full access to this space within—which is where performance comes from.

ALLOW PEOPLE TO SEE THE IMPACT THEY ARE MAKING

Nem Bajra in *How to Allow Kindness and Compassion to Be the Essences of Work*

At Kyocera, Dr. Inamori introduced a concept called Amoeba Management. Amoeba Management is simply a small business unit. A business unit was defined by General Motors a long time ago. But an Amoeba business unit is different in the sense that it can be very small — even as few as two employees. This unit manages itself like a small business, where employees define their product, set their price, and manage their own accounting.

At Calsoft, we have ten Amoebas. One Amoeba focuses on the travel industry, but the other Amoeba focuses on manufacturing, distribution, and other industries. But in our travel Amoeba, this team of people focuses on providing software to the travel industry. They know the travel industry very well, so they can create software optimized for those people. They get their sense of fulfillment by using their talent to create software for a specific industry. They can see their impact, so they become fully engaged.

GIVING CREDIT TO INDIVIDUALS PUBLICLY MAKES THEM FEEL LIKE THEY'RE HAVING AN IMPACT

Nick Hughes in *How to Incorporate Purpose & Values to Build a Thriving Community*

It's funny you ask that question because if you think about the scenario I described, which is when people have new ideas and bring an idea to the table, the worst thing is to have the leadership or others take that idea get credit for it. Giving credit to individuals openly and publicly makes them feel like they're having an impact and their voice matters. Public recognition goes a long way. Seeing others recognized based on their production or great quality of work inspires others to do the same thing. Public recognition for the betterment of the company is what I've experienced as a very strong indicator of getting the most out of your employees.

COMMAND PEOPLE TO DO GREAT
THINGS, ASK QUESTIONS AND
PRAISE THEM

Norman Bodek in *Discover the Spirit of Self-Reliance*

One, go back to Ohno and what he said: command people to do great things. Two, use Shingo's method of asking questions. And third, praise the heck out of people.

ALLOW PEOPLE TO MAKE MISTAKES

Norman Bodek in Discover the Spirit of Self-Reliance

We go to industry, and we rip people apart. Everybody's afraid to make mistakes because they're going to get fired. Well, that's crazy; that's the way they learn! Stop this nonsense, and then you'll build up a dynamic workforce.

DISCERN WHEN TO USE DIRECTION & GUIDANCE VS. ENCOURAGEMENT & ENTHUSIASM

Patrick Ross in *Don't Overlook This Key Distinction When Giving Ownership*

It's important to remember that we're all individuals, and I think Ken Blanchard's *One Minute Manager* provides a lot of value here. Blanchard suggests you focus on individual employees using two scales. The first scale is the X-axis, which is the level of direction and guidance you give. And the second one is the Y axis, which is the level of encouragement and enthusiasm you bring. An employee working on a new project is initially very excited. They don't need a lot of encouragement; they need a lot of guidance. Then they start hitting roadblocks and doubting themselves. To engage them more, you could start to provide less guidance as they start to get it. When they really get it, and they're "cookin'," you don't need to do a lot of engagement or enthusiasm, but you have to recognize that maybe the employee will get a bit stalled or bored and consider what could be their next challenge.

WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO IS MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND MORALE

Patrick Ross in *Don't Overlook This Key Distinction When Giving Ownership*

What it really comes down to is monitoring employees' performance and morale. Managers need to know when to apply the appropriate level of guidance or encouragement and when to back off. If you've already gotten it, you don't need cheerleaders chanting in your ear every day. So direction vs. guidance and encouragement vs. enthusiasm are the two balances you need to calibrate.

ALIGNMENT, AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Paul Akers in *Leading a Lean Thinking and Lean Health Revolution*

The first step is applying the 3 A's (Alignment, Autonomy, Accountability) of Respect to the people who work for you. And that's a very difficult concept because most people are unwilling to do that—maybe only about 3 to 5%. It seems very harsh.

CREATE HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Paul Akers in *Leading a Lean Thinking and Lean Health Revolution*

You have to create high expectations. You have to be willing to train people to meet those expectations and hold people to those expectations. Then if the group of people you're surrounded with after you've invested time and effort to train, support and nurture them is unwilling to try to reach those expectations—but would rather remain comfortable—you need to sort them out of your presence.

THIS THING THAT'S LARGER THEN
THEMSELVES IS THE TEAM, ABILITY
TO PROVIDE INCOME AND THEIR
RELATIONSHIPS

Paul David Walker in *Getting Leaders to a New Level of Understanding*

You have to communicate with employees. You have to see and hear them if you will. You have to create a collaborative environment where they feel like they're part of something bigger themselves, something important. It's not necessarily the business mission because some companies' business missions are not that noble. This thing that's larger than themselves is the team, the ability to provide an income for their family, the relationships they have with one another, and the relationships they have with their leaders.

YOU HAVE TO HAVE A HUMAN RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE

Paul David Walker in *Getting Leaders to a New Level of Understanding*

You've got to keep in touch with your employees. You've got to stay engaged with the people who work for you and make sure you understand what's going on for them both personally and professionally. You have to have a human relationship with people. The relationship doesn't eclipse the mission, but the mission has to be something they can see and feel—have a visceral sense of it. It's a way for them to become part of something greater than themselves.

REFRAME CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES IN DISGUISE

Paul McMahon in *Is Upside Down the Key to Moving Forward?*

In other words, the approach I took was to show the team how the problem they were letting get them down was really a great opportunity in disguise. It wasn't long before the low morale turned around, and the hung heads started popping up as one team member after the next started chiming in with different possible creative approaches to solving the challenge. I also told them that if they came up with an innovative solution, they could publish it and become famous.

LEARN NEW THINGS EVEN IF THEY AREN'T RELATED TO WORK

Paul McMahon in *Is Upside Down the Key to Moving Forward?*

This is a great way to gain their full attention and best performance. It may seem backward or upside down because we suggest they do other things to get their full attention and best performance. But it can be an effective technique. Show your worker that you are willing to support them in learning things they want to learn even if those things do not appear to be directly related to the current job you want them to do, and you might be surprised at how it helps to gain that employees full attention and best performance.

HELP PEOPLE LEARN HOW THEY BEST ENLIST OTHER PEOPLE'S COOPERATION

Perry Marshall in *How to Get 80/20 to Work for You*

But there wasn't a tool that said this is how people enlist other people's cooperation. Some people do it with numbers, facts, proof, and spreadsheets. Some people do it by telling stories. Some people do it with graphics. Some people do it by inventing something in the moment. Some people do it by proving how incredibly reliable and trustworthy something is. So, I created something called the Marketing DNA test. It actually comes as part of the 80/20 Sales and Marketing book, and we also sell it separately. Now I'm talking about this test is particularly helpful in customer-facing employees. If they're an engineer in the back office, this particular tool doesn't apply. Well, it doesn't appear to apply. Let's put it that way.

FOCUS ON BEING OF SERVICE TO THE ORGANIZATION

Pierre-Boris Kalitventzeff in Bringing More Humanity to the Workplace

I believe getting an employee's full attention, and best performance requires being focused on being at the service to the organization and connected to its purpose. We know how important acknowledgment and appreciation are to people. But I believe it's much more than that, so I would like to share my truth here. We are spiritual beings having a physical experience — not the contrary.

WE ARE MUCH MORE THAN OUR EGO
NEEDING TO BE RECOGNIZED AND
APPRECIATED

Pierre-Boris Kalitventzeff in *Bringing More Humanity to the Workplace*

So, what does this require from the organization? It requires showing genuine appreciation. It's not a manager saying, "I'm a manager, so, therefore, I need to appreciate my employees." No, it should be genuine. It should be spontaneous. It should come from the heart, and this requires us to grow as human beings. And for the employee, what does it take? Well, it's doing what is expected from a whole person who is living her purpose. When you do things from your energy, you expect nothing in return. When we love what we do and when the organization has removed barriers to our self-expression, then we can reach our best performance.

WHEN PEOPLE CAN FULLY EXPRESS
THEIR TALENTS, THEY FEEL
IMPORTANT – AUTOMATICALLY

Pierre-Boris Kalitventzeff in Bringing More Humanity to the Workplace

They do not feel important because of some rewards, they feel it because they can really get from their self a sense of importance because they make a mark. They leave something behind, and they reach resonance. This is the sense of importance that will feed their performance.

INDIVIDUALIZED ATTENTION IS OFTEN THE PRIMARY FACTOR

Rob Allen in *How to Build Cohesive Teams that Have Impact*

It depends on the employee. There isn't a single cookie-cutter solution. Just like when we talk about student performance, individualized attention is often the primary factor that decides whether a student will get what they're looking for or what they need out of their education. It's similar to the workplace. With the people on my team, I give them at least a half-hour a week of one-on-one time. In addition to that planned time, because we've built a rapport over the past several years, they're comfortable pulling me aside or coming over to speak more fluidly when things arise for them. If they can't just come over and talk in the office, they know they can reach me on Slack through a direct message and get my undivided attention.

ONE-ON-ONE ATTENTION AND TAILORING RESPONSES TO THEIR NEEDS

Rob Allen in *How to Build Cohesive Teams that Have Impact*

How you react when they need attention is where the individualization comes in. When people just need to vent, you need to let the wave crash over and carry on. Some people are expecting an answer somewhat soon, so you need to respond so they feel heard and carry forward without trying to solve the problem in a way that could be harmful. In summary, it's the one-on-one attention and tailoring your response to their needs as it arises.

LACK OF ATTENTION CAN BE A DIRECT RESULT OF USELESS INFORMATION

Robert Fuchs in *What if corporate culture is perfect, but I'm not?*

Our internal resources are limited by our capacity, utilization, and availability to process new information. The smaller our capacity and the higher the utilization, the smaller the availability—in this case, our attention to processing new information. We have to be aware that our brain is in constant problem-solving mode as long as we have problems to solve. The more problems we concurrently have to process, the less we are able to focus on the problems at hand. In other words, the more private or personal problems we have, the more our capacity is utilized, resulting in less availability for new problems. In this case, the employee cannot perform better until other problems, which rank higher, are solved. For example, if a child is sick or the employee has to look for a new apartment, the new branding guideline of corporate marketing ranks much lower on my internal priority list.

RESTFUL SLEEP, HEALTHY DIET,
REGULAR EXERCISE, CLEAR AND
MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION, AND
CONSCIOUS REFLECTION

Robert Fuchs in *What if corporate culture is perfect, but I'm not?*

The more skill in pattern recognition the employee has, the easier it is to make sense of information and derive meaning. In addition, the greater one's fitness or level of pattern integration, the easier it is for employees to stay attentive. In other words, I would say that performance is based about 1/3 on the pattern recognition ability, 1/3 on the integration ability of new with existing knowledge, and 1/3 on physical fitness. Everybody has firsthand experience with attention when we have sleep deficits. Some companies even pay their workforce bonuses for sleeping eight hours at night. Just look around during your next meeting and check how many of your co-workers are well-rested.

FULL ATTENTION AND BEST
PERFORMANCE, WHICH MEANS BEING
A PART OF A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
TEAM

Rod Collins in *Challenge the Status Quo to Become Skilled at Innovation*

Full attention and best performance means being part of a highly effective team. When employees feel those two dimensions of attention and performance, that's what you've got. I recently found an article summarizing Google's exploration of this basic question. Google likes to measure things, and they are focused on excellent performance. They asked a couple of people to research, "What is it that characterizes high-performing teams?" They looked at all the usual attributes. They looked at teams that had highly ordered agendas. They looked at teams that did agenda on the spot. They looked at teams that were quiet and respectful, listening to everybody. Then they looked at other noisy teams where people talked over everybody. They didn't find that any of these attributes distinguished a high-performance team. But they kept digging deeper and deeper and finally came across the two common elements that all effective teams have.

EQUALITY OF VOICES AND SAFETY
ARE TWO COMMON ELEMENTS THAT
ALL EFFECTIVE TEAMS HAVE

Rod Collins in *Challenge the Status Quo to Become Skilled at Innovation*

The first element was equality of voices, and the second was safety. It didn't matter if you had a messy meeting or a structured meeting if you have a facilitative leader or a directive leader. As long as the voices equally contributed, no single person dominated or hijacked the discussion, and as long as people felt safe to express their ideas, especially when they were contrary to the majority of the group when those two attributes were present, you had a high-performing team. I think creating a safe environment where there's an equal distribution of voices is probably the key to getting an employee's full attention and best performance.

IT'S ALL ABOUT CLARITY

Russell Dalglish in *The Starting Point is Always Strategy*

I believe in leading any team, it's all about clarity. It's all about making it absolutely clear where it is we're going and how the individual member of the team and every member of staff fits into that.

ASK PEOPLE WHAT THEY THINK — IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Russell Dalgleish in *The Starting Point is Always Strategy*

I think everybody—if they have an opportunity to participate and to reflect—has a sense of what would make things better, but often they're not asked. I've heard that repeatedly over the years. No one ever asks me what I think we should do. No one ever asks me what I think would make a big difference. Now that's not always true, and there are certainly very healthy teams and companies, but people are often not asked, "What makes sense to you? I'm interested in your common sense. I'm interested in what your wisdom says would be helpful."

CLARITY IS REQUIRED FOR PEOPLE TO BE ENGAGED

Russell Dalglish in *The Starting Point is Always Strategy*

What we see in the business world could be the objective maybe we're going to start raising publicity for the company to gain access to a new market. You could be sitting on the help desk going, "Well, that's not really relevant to me," unless we actually communicate relevant needs. I think for members of staff to get engaged, it requires clarity about the objective, clearly explaining it, and then making it relevant to them individually. Additionally, you've only achieved clarity once the person you're trying to share it with can actually explain it back in their own terms that make sense. We've got an awful habit of broadcasting and saying, "I told you!" Yes, but you may not have understood, so our communication and attempt at clarity have failed.

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE MIND WORK QUIETS THE NOISE

Sandra Krot in Do you see the true paradigm or not?

When I walk around the corporations I work with, what strikes me is how busy people's minds are. It is very difficult to get people's full attention. What is needed is for all of us to realize how the human mind actually works. When I saw that my experience can only come from thought in the moment, this realization took so much thinking off my mind. I stopped fretting about things. I stopped thinking about whose fault it was. I stopped having these long dialogues in my head about why this was unfair and who was to blame, and what I needed to do to feel good about myself. There's so much extra thinking that people do. It keeps them preoccupied.

YOU HAVE TO CARE ABOUT PEOPLE
ENOUGH TO LET THEM FIND
SOMETHING ELSE THAT WILL
ENGAGE THEM

Sarah Elkins in *How to Leave People Feeling Confident, Connected and Valued*

You have to care about them. If you care about the person, you want them to do well, and when they know you want them to succeed, they will succeed. You demonstrate that care. There are people that won't be engaged, and that's when you have to care about them enough to let them find something else that will engage them.

PEOPLE NEED TO FEEL SUPPORTED, SAFE, STRETCHED AND CHALLENGED

Sarah Rozenhuler in *How to Create the Right Conditions for Stunning Conversations*

It's really important that people feel listened to. That to me, is just fundamental. If people are feeling sidelined, or if they're just feeling that they're an expendable resource or easily replaceable, they are not feeling valued as human beings. I know I wouldn't be engaged if that's going on inside me. I wouldn't be giving my best thinking to a project. Feeling listened to is absolutely critical. Feeling stretched and stimulated, and involved is important, too, so that there's genuine curiosity from co-workers and other team members. For example, do people want to know what your ideas are or what your experience has been? Are you being asked to share your wisdom? What is the unique human being you are? What are you seeing? Are people properly engaged in a conversation?

YOU NEED TO GENUINELY DESIRE AND BE THERE FOR PEOPLE

Sesil Pir in *Why Aren't 21st Century Employees Thriving?*

As a psychologist and human being, I genuinely believe we all want to be seen, heard and cared for. When you take those factors into the workplace, we also want recognition for our contribution. To get someone's full attention, you need to desire and be there for them genuinely. I know no other way. For example, if I am in a restaurant with my husband when a service person comes to take our order, I try to look at them in the eye and connect before I respond. I want to recognize they are another living soul. They deserve every bit of respect, care, and everything else that I seem to think I deserve for myself. I see us as equals. That's very hard to do in our modern lives. I'm sure there are cases where I also looked at my phone when someone came to the table to take our order. I don't mean to say I'm a perfect human being. That's not the point. It is a genuine struggle we share in our modern lives. If we commit to remaining mindful and conscious of our interaction with others, I think that's the inspiration.

THERE'S BOTH AN INDIVIDUAL AND AN ORGANIZATION AT PLAY IN ACHIEVING DESIRED PERFORMANCE

Sesil Pir in *Why Aren't 21st Century Employees Thriving?*

It invites a challenge for leaders, too. They want a pill. They want a formula. Take this pill, and suddenly, we all become more productive. I wish it were that easy. I can say that both an individual and an organization are at play in achieving desired performance. Individually, a mindset shift may help. First, to understand we are human. Second, to understand we are enough. And third, to feel at the core we are worth it. If you are in a mindset where you recognize your humanity, you know you're enough. You feel you can belong and that you're worthy. You feel recognition and appreciation for the value you bring. Then you can already put yourself in a thriving state where you can reach productivity.

Organizationally, there are several things we can do, including having a clear purpose for why someone has to do something. Giving people autonomy is also important – providing the space to do it and coaching them to mastery. If they have to learn something new or different, or if they've done something well, note that they have done so, so they can repeat it. In summary, having that

BILL FOX

purpose, autonomy, and mastery focus really helps. That's my take on performance.

CLARITY AND DIRECTION

Simon Heath in What Is the Most Important Leadership Skill You Possess?

My answer to your question is clarity and direction. People need to know why they're doing what they're doing. One of the things I talk about is communicating strategy, but what I see in the workplace is directive. By directive, I mean communicating in a way that talks about 'this is what we're doing, how we're going to do it, and how you fit within it.'

REMOVE THE WORDS TELL AND EXPLAIN FROM YOUR VOCABULARY

Simon Heath in What Is the Most Important Leadership Skill You Possess?

One of the first things I say to clients is I want to remove the words *tell* and *explain* from their vocabulary. I want you to replace those words with *inspire and convince*. If you can convince people that this is a great strategy or here's the direction we're headed and why we're headed in that direction, why it's a good thing, and here's how you can help, then people bring their full attention. Why? Because people know why they're doing what they're doing and how they can help. It's essential to move away from telling people information and towards convincing people of ideas. You have their full attention when you convince people and focus on inspiring them.

CHANGE THE CULTURE OF MEETINGS FROM INFORMATION TOWARDS IDEAS

Simon Heath in *What Is the Most Important Leadership Skill You Possess?*

I remember one organization that told me they had two types of meetings in their company. There are meetings when you walk out, and you have less energy. Then there are meetings when you walk out, and you have more energy. Most of our meetings are where you walk out with less energy, and very rarely do you walk out with more energy. We want more of the second kind. How can we do it? So I started talking to people asking questions to determine the difference between these two types of meetings. The meetings where people walked away with more energy were usually because somebody had an idea. They said they spoke their idea, and that sparked somebody else's thinking. What became apparent very quickly was that the ideas sparked the energy.

STRUCTURE MEETINGS TO PUT IDEAS AT THE FOREFRONT

Simon Heath in *What Is the Most Important Leadership Skill You Possess?*

What we did next was very simple – we worked on agendas. Every single meeting had to have a single clearly articulated point. For example – here is the idea we are trying to address in this meeting. It was sent out in advance, so people could walk into that meeting thinking about the idea. What that meant was that people came prepared for the meeting. The meetings were shorter because they had clarity and purpose and sparked a lot more energy because they were built around ideas. When people are involved and engaged in ideas, that's when you can have their full potential and best performance.

IT'S NOT ABOUT A METHODOLOGY OR PROGRAM BUT LOOKING AT WHAT'S INSIDE EACH PERSON

Simon and Maria Moraes Robinson in *Helping People to See More and Value Everyone's Contribution*

The key point is engagement. Normally organizations have a mechanistic way of thinking. They think they must implement some methodology or program to engage people more. It is not about bringing something from the outside into a business, but it's about starting with a look at what is inside each person. Engagement means that I want to wake up and go to work and am happy to do that. I have enthusiasm for what I do, and so again, we have to work with meaning. In many cases, we are helping organizations and leaders to introduce dialogues that explore the meaning of work with their teams, exploring questions such as "Why are you doing what you are doing?", "Why are you important for the organization?" and "Where does your work contribute to the strategy?" Engagement is related to meaningful work, meaning why I am doing what I am doing, so leaders need to invest the time and effort to help people understand the contributions of their work to the overall strategy of the company, which will result in them being more fully present and engaged at work.

EXPLORE HOW TO CHANGE THE WAY
YOU SEE THE WORLD IN A MORE
MORE MINDFUL WAY

Simon and Maria Moraes Robinson in Helping People to See More and Value Everyone's Contribution

It can be common to see in organizations many people whose daily experience at work is only one of continual problems, and these are problems which they identify as being outside themselves — “It’s my boss, it the environment, it’s the market, it’s the clients, it’s always the third person.” The person has difficulty in seeing themselves, what they are doing, why their relationships are not so good, and why things are happening to them. So I often help to coach executives to help them explore how they can change the way they see the world here and their lives in order to really evaluate in a more mindful manner what they are doing if they wish to continue doing it or not, and if they wish to change something in their lives.

PEOPLE WANT TO FEEL RECOGNIZED AND VALUED AS A PERSON

Steph Holloway in *Compassionate Communication Is the Key to Everything*

This is an easy one because I work with so many people. It's to feel recognized and valued as a person. Many people (including ones on this platform) have mentioned feeling valued as an employee. This is something different I am talking about — it's feeling valued as a person! I say that because a lot of my work is going into toxic workplaces and trying to detoxify them. In an age where narcissism and toxic behavior are rife, the reality is that many of the people I come into contact with in my work have lived with, are living with, have someone in their life, or have a boss, manager, or someone else at work that communicates to them unreasonably or inappropriately.

GRACIOUSNESS IS THE ULTIMATE
TOOL & BENCHMARK FOR GETTING
THE ABSOLUTE BEST OUT OF PEOPLE

Steph Holloway in *Compassionate Communication Is the Key to Everything*

Treat others as you would like to be treated. If you wouldn't treat someone like that in front of your kids or mother because you'd be embarrassed about it, then don't do it. What will people say about your communication style after you've gone? Graciousness is the ultimate tool and benchmark for getting the absolute best out of people and their full attention. Graciousness is at the heart of everything I do. It is the ultimate tool and benchmark for getting the absolute best out of people and their full attention. We notice those people. They inspire us, and it is a learned behavior – not everyone is born with it. If there's a formula for graciousness, it might be to create time and space and stay present. People who 'run' on busyness and think it's a clever struggle to be gracious to people or stay present. Take the time to be fully present. Ask opinions. Include people and watch in wonder as the results unfold before you.

DO MANAGEMENT PRACTICES DISRUPT OUR ATTENTION?

Steve Tendon in *Getting Teams and Individuals into the State of Flow*

I think trying to figure out how to focus on the work is an exercise every individual needs to engage in. But I think that is not only the way to frame attention. The major culprit is the dispersal of attention of the business in its own right. Why? Because there are many conventional management practices that actually encourage multi-tasking. These practices, in turn, encourage the need to give attention to everything all the time without any means or mechanism of prioritizing and deciding what matters.

ARE EXECUTIVES THE REAL CONSTRAINT?

Steve Tendon in *Getting Teams and Individuals into the State of Flow*

The people in an organization with the least attention are executives and managers. So in this discourse of how we can give the employee the capability to use full attention and best performance, let's start with executives. They are the ones in terms of attention that are the real constraint. We need to find ways of conducting business that allow executives to focus on things that really matter. If executives get into that frame of reference and mindset, it will trickle down.

ASK A POWERFUL, OPEN-ENDED QUESTION, AND THEN LISTEN

Sue Elliott in *How to Get Beyond the Way Most of Us Are Working Today*

People are starting to use the phrase deep listening. I like active listening. I believe that active listening requires us to be fully present. We have to let go of preconceived notions of how things should be and stop thinking about what we want to say next or what we want the other person to understand. We have to get out of our heads and fully focus on what the other person is saying. And not just the words coming out of their mouth: Does their body language contradict what they're saying? Are they getting more tense? Are they getting more relaxed? What's happening in that person's energy, and how can we understand it better? Asking very simple questions can help like I just noticed a shift in you. What happened there? Or: This is really interesting, and I don't know as much about it as I would like. Tell me more. Simply be present and show interest.

DON'T SETTLE FOR MEDIOCRITY BY
EXPECTING OTHERS TO FULFILL
YOUR HAPPINESS JAR

Susan Taylor in Making a Commitment to Daily Work Activities
as a Vehicle for Change

This is an interesting question because following the first question implies that getting an employee's full attention and best performance is only the organization's responsibility. When I think about this question, accountability comes up for me. So I'd say accountability, and here's why... Learning is innate within us. That's the good news. If you could make organizations accountable for providing transformative learning through daily work activities and make employees accountable for participating and getting results, that would be really great because, in my opinion, high performance is not an option. And this is where I think both organizations and employees go wrong. People are settling for mediocrity, expecting others to fulfill their happiness jar.

ACCOUNTABILITY IS AN ATTITUDE
THAT EMPOWERS WHEN YOU DON'T
LOOK AT IT FROM A PLACE OF BLAME
AND COMPLAIN

Susan Taylor in *Making a Commitment to Daily Work Activities as a Vehicle for Change*

Accountability has some pretty negative connotations attached to it. But only if you look at it from a place of blame and complaint. From my perspective, accountability is an attitude that empowers. Building a culture of accountability requires a mindset where results are owned by everyone and controlled by no one—where everyone owns the consequences of their choices in delivering the agreed results and helping other people do the same.

ENGAGEMENT AND HAPPINESS
COMES FROM WHAT HAPPENS INSIDE
THE EMPLOYEE

Susan Taylor in *Making a Commitment to Daily Work Activities as a Vehicle for Change*

We've all seen or heard from the famous Gallup Polls that 70% of employees are not engaged at work. I think an automatic expectation comes with that—that the solution lies solely with organizations. Leaders have blindly bought into this idea that employee engagement and happiness come from what happens inside the office. In fact, engagement and happiness come from what happens inside the employee.

TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO SUCCEED DESPITE CIRCUMSTANCES

Susan Taylor in *Making a Commitment to Daily Work Activities as a Vehicle for Change*

The big thing leaders miss is that you cannot have empowerment without accountability. The level of personal accountability people exhibit in their lives is the level they will exhibit at work. Instead of spending precious resources discovering how to change the circumstances in your organization to meet the happiness needs of your employees, spend time, money, and energy teaching your employees how to succeed in spite of those circumstances. It's the old adage about giving a man fish vs. teaching him to fish. Make the commitment to develop people to be resilient, agile, and personally accountable. This gives them skills they can use in all areas of their lives and builds confidence. And once people gain confidence, you'll find engagement increases.

IDENTIFY PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS AND
INCLUDE THESE STRENGTHS IN THEIR
WORK OR HELP THEM FIND THE
RIGHT POSITION

Tobias Theel in *How to Create Spaces for Everyone to Grow Their Ideas*

I think an employee brings everything all ready to give their best performance, but what the organization can do is help each individual use their strengths. Help them identify their strengths and include them in what they do. Everybody has a job description or something to do that is included in a process or management structure. This can't be avoided. Some things need to be done in the organization as they are. But if you identify all those strengths and people include these strengths in their work or even help them find the right position that can maximize utilization of their strengths, then you get the most out of the organization for the organization. Then you get the most out of people but in a great sense. You don't use people to do what you want them to do, but you help them grow as a person first. Then, as a result, you help your organization grow and be more successful.

PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH A GOAL THEY
CAN COMMIT TO AND SUPPORT

Tom Cagley in *Why Leadership Needs to Facilitate Engagement*

You provide them with a goal that they can commit to and support. It's important that they see the importance of what they're doing and see how they can contribute to the overall goal attainment of that goal.

A STRONG CENTRAL METAPHOR SO PEOPLE CAN FOCUS

Tom Cagley in Why Leadership Needs to Facilitate Engagement

There also has to be a strong central metaphor so that people can focus. There are various techniques to help people focus and perform well. You can talk about things like the Pomodoro technique, Getting Things Done, and other mechanisms at a tactical level. But I think it starts with a top-level goal and people wanting to attain that top-level goal. The combination of the right goal and people are important to the organization in order for it to deliver value.

PEOPLE GET UP IN THE MORNING
WHEN THEY CAN INFLUENCE WHAT
THEIR FUTURE IS IN THE
ORGANIZATION

Tom Cagley in *Why Leadership Needs to Facilitate Engagement*

If you are a corporation, you have to stay alive. You have to satisfy your stakeholders and stockholders if you're a public company. Those are absolute mandates. But if that's the only reason for doing it, the only people who will get up in the morning to do that are the corporate bankers who buy and sell companies. That's not why Joe in IT or Betty, who is a programmer gets up in the morning. They're not coming to work for that. They're coming to deliver value and to see how they can influence what the future is within the organization. That's what gets them up in the morning. So that goal, whatever that goal is, has to resonate with the people that are building value.

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE
PEOPLE CAN SENSE AND RESPOND
TO WHATEVER'S NEEDED

Tom Thomison in *How Do We Start & Make It Real?*

First, don't make them employees! At my new endeavor, encode.org, we're working to move beyond employees. With these new operating and self-management systems in place, we're grounding those systems legally, allowing individuals to show up as full legal members wherever they are in their careers. This does not have the connotation that it's big and heavy weight with lots of responsibility and capital investment. It just means a member that cares about the organization's purpose can show up to sense and respond to whatever's needed to participate in the running instruction of that organization and not be an employee.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO TRY DIFFERENT THINGS

Valeria Maltoni in Bottom It Up and Top It Down

People want to do a good job. They really do, but sometimes we don't do a good job of understanding their definition of a good job. For example, when I first came to the US where I was working in a non-profit organization, and to my delight there was opportunity galore. You could dig yourself and bury yourself under work, burn out. And so the opportunity there was to try and test different things and see, "Hey, this works for me better than this other thing."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Forward Thinking Workplaces is a global narrative uncovering exciting new perspectives to help you succeed and be a forward-thinking leader and workplace in the 21st century.

I help CEOs and leadership teams start and have new strategic conversations that engage and leverage the collective voice, energy, and wisdom of everyone—to attract, retain and grow exceptional people and results.

I'm also the author of *The Future of the Workplace* (Apress, August 2019) and *5 Minutes to Process Improvement Success*.

I invite you to contact me at bill@billfox.co to share which questions you find most helpful and intriguing or share your questions with me.

To your forward-thinking life & success!

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