

The Motivational Hierarchy

Quest for Commitment and the Importance of Gratitude in the Workplace

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A grasp of this basic concept can offer straightforward methods to help us understand why we do what we do and more importantly, why we don't always respond the way we know we should.

When it comes to understanding behavior, the simpler the better and knowledge of the basic principles of **The Motivational Hierarchy** can readily help us manage the motivational challenges that are surrounding us everyday. Incorporating this formula into our thinking can aid in us becoming better predictors of behavior, influencers of people and stronger leaders. By having the ability to set meaningful expectations, we can ultimately move towards finding that deeper level of **commitment** that often is hiding just below the surface.

The Basic Hierarchical Principles:

With every action we take, with every choice that we make, we can describe the response with one of these three words:

Compliant, Obligated, Committed

Compliant behavior can best be understood with the visual of some one standing over another, beating them about the head us with a stick. When in the **compliant** mode, actions are usually a response to someone else's will, rules or demands. Externally motivate, **compliant** behavior is rarely "self sustaining." Unless the reason for conforming to requirements have been properly communicated and because "buy in" is at an absolute minimum, **compliant** actions will not persist after the outside pressure has stopped.

Obligated behavior, the most common mode, is generally the safe zone where most people spend their lives. Operating out of **Obligation** is certainly a step in the right direction as it reflects ones desire to be responsible. Feeling **obligated** is an adequate response as long as we don't constantly and thoughtlessly default to this mode. As we evaluate the choices we make and consider those which rise out of **obligation**, it is important that we maintain a healthy balance. Quite often, feelings of being **obligated** and treading the safe, proper or politically correct path, can be limiting and can set us up to underachieve.

Committed behavior is the obvious target goal and can be described as:

“I’m all in and I’m willing to give 100 percent!”

When we are operating as **committed** individuals, motivation is not in short supply. A truly **committed** response requires little support from the outside and “just because it is hard” is no longer an excuse. It is driven from a deeper understanding of the mission statement, a willingness to respond and a personal desire to be the best that one can be. This is indeed the ultimate goal.

Operating within the frame work of committed behavior is the personal choice. One that we all have the option and the ability to make!

The Million Dollar Questions?

These questions then arise; “How can I find ways to facilitate movement in the right direction and create a behavioral shift in others towards **commitment**? How can I help to transition their behavior in a direction that will advance **commitment** and counter **compliant** or **obligated** attitudes?”

One simple solution....is **Gratitude!**

Gratitude when appropriately applied will always manifest itself with more committed results. **Gratitude** and **Commitment** go side by side as a gratified individual is a committed individual.

The statistics that support the effects of increasing the “**attitude of gratitude**” in the workplace are impressive and workplace appreciation is the very best tool in building a culture of **commitment**.

Conversely the effect of a lack of appreciation and the damage done by the negative employee is even more startling, as this encourages lack luster, compliant behavior and is obviously movement in the wrong direction.

Acknowledging and addressing the most basic need to feel valued is the starting point for showing improvements in performance, productivity, employee retention and **commitment**. Remember that gratitude cost nothing and when appropriately offered will bring with it a guarantee of achieving better results.

Gratitude is for most in very short supply, as so often seems to be the level of **commitment**.

The Bottom Line:

We must discipline ourselves to remember the importance of gratitude and realize that a simple ‘thank you’ is often all that it takes to achieve a higher degree of personal productivity, performance and commitment.

Consider that the “Pat on the Back” might be more important and meaningful than that bonus or pay increase. Remarkably the solution often times to deterring a valued employee from “jumping ship” for greener pastures is as simple as a long overdue expression of appreciation.

The one expression of gratitude that you offer to another individual, just might be the only real positive thing that person hears all day.

A few facts to consider:

- Praise is rare in most workplaces.
- One poll found that an astounding 65% of Americans reported receiving no recognition for good work in the past year.
- The #1 reason people leave their jobs on their own is that they do not feel appreciated.
- Managers and employees who actively spread positive emotion, even in small doses, will see the difference immediately and that difference are inexpensive or even free as all it takes is a little initiative.
- The magic ratio that makes things work or go well for life is 5 positive interactions for 1 negative interaction.
- Increasing positive feedback could lengthen life span by years.

Positive feedback is not a trivial luxury but instead is a critical necessity for optimal functioning!

And consider this.....Along with simply telling your people that you appreciate them, one of the most beneficial methods to show your gratitude is through training and education. In addition to the obvious benefits of increasing the knowledge base, offering ongoing personnel development states loud and clear...

“We appreciate you and are committed to helping you to be the very best that you can be. You are an important part of this committed team!”

In this current environment, as economic factors come into play, there are certain things that we might have to cut back on. A simple and heartfelt “thank you” costs nothing and is indeed one of the most effective ways to show gratitude. These **Best Practices** can be applied to our lives and in our workplace, helping to move toward **Commitment**, the most sought after mode of **The Motivational Hierarchy**. **Thank You!**