EMPLOYEE
MOTIVATION

What to Do
when what you say isn't working

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Dedication

To all people who call themselves
employers,
managers,
supervisors,
or workers.

Acknowledgments

William Glasser, M.D. is the father of the ideas in this book. He developed the method of counseling called Reality Therapy. It is a no-nonsense method of helping people take charge of their lives. He has been, for me, a mentor, a friend, a confidant, and an encourager. To him and to his wife, Carleen, a thousand thank yous!

His contributions to the field of interpersonal relations extend across the planet. I will be grateful if this extension of those important principles lightens the burden of anyone in the work places of the world.

Preface

In this book you will discover what truly motivates all people. You will realize that people have within them a highly efficient "here and now" engine that energizes them to act. The manager's job is to hold a mirror before the employees and ask them to observe themselves. This is accomplished by a delivery system that is immediately usable, down-to-earth, and results-centered—yet humane and empathic. This delivery system is derived from a practical system of counseling known as Reality Therapy which was founded by William Glasser, M.D. I have applied his ideas to coaching employees, but without therapeutic overtones.

The system is summarized by the acronym "W D E P." Each of the letters stands for a cluster of ideas and skills that are explained in detail throughout the book. We call this the WDEP System.

W   **What do you *Want*?**

Explore employees' wants and perceptions: what they want from the job; from themselves. What their viewpoint is of the current situation—and how to improve it.

D   **What are you *Doing*?**

Ask them to look at their own behavior, describing exactly what they are doing.

E   ***Evaluate* what you are doing.**

Have them evaluate their wants, their actions, their willingness to be productive workers. How are their behaviors helping them get what they want? This is the most easily skipped component of the system. It is also the most important one to accomplish

P   **Make a *Plan*.**

Assist them to plan more realistically and precisely to get what they want and to fulfill the wants (mission) of the organization.

The format of this book includes:

- an overview of human motivation;
- ideas that effective managers need to abandon if this system is to work for them;
- what can be gained from using the system;
- the system itself;
- the wrong way and the right way to manage a wide range of specific situations.

I suggest that after reading this book, you put the ideas to work immediately. They are applicable not only at work, but at home. In fact, the most *personal* satisfaction you may gain may be from asking your children the questions from the WDEP System.

But the main focus of this book is on work behaviors. The ideas described bring W. Edward Deming's famous "chain reaction" into the coaching arena. Quality is improved when workers are coached effectively. When they evaluate their own behavior there is less rework and fewer delays. Productivity increases because it is connected with "joy of work." The product cost is lower, the company flourishes, and more jobs are provided.

Effective coaching is thus an attempt to help managers connect with the inner worker—where genuine motivation begins and ends.

Introduction

My writing style in this book is intentionally terse and simple. As you read it, I suggest the following steps.

1. Read the entire book in one or two sessions and mark the chapters and cases that seem relevant to you.

2. Reread the cases you marked and select the one that is most relevant to you.

3. The third step has two parts which can be done immediately after you complete the book.

A. Ask a colleague to read the same chapter or the same case that was most relevant to you. Then discuss it with him or her.

B. Talk to an employee, using the same principles that you read about and discussed. But don't select the most difficult employee in your office or plant. Start with a person who is fairly easy to work with. After you have become comfortable with the ideas, move to the final step.

4. Use the ideas with all employees—and at home with your own children.

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The cases described in this book should be seen as typical. They represent types of people you deal with every day. You have employees who are similar to (but probably not exactly like) the ones described here. Such employees can often be helped to become more productive. Though you won't be able to make your work place perfect, you can make it better. If you made it 7% to 10% better, you would have a vastly improved organization. If 7% to 10% does not sound impressive, please check with your accountant. Even a seemingly "small difference" can make a major contribution to the company.

Another characteristic of my writing style is the attempt to use language that is non-sexist. Though this sometimes results in the repetition of proper names, I have chosen this style rather than succumb to the exclusivity implied by "he" or "his," etc. On the other hand, I have tried to minimize the use of cumbersome phrases such as "he/she," "his/her," etc. These have been used only when necessary. Also, the proper names used in the cases—Pat, Leslie, Lee, Fran, Lynn, Dale and Jody—have been selected because they can refer to either male or female. The effort to write in such a manner reflects not only the desire for fairness and equality of opportunity, but it also serves to emphasize that the WDEP System is applicable to all persons. For there is

more about human nature that unites us than divides us. We all need to evaluate our behavior; we all need to formulate plans to fulfill our inner wants and needs.

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Chapter One

Why Employees Succeed or Fail

Motivated employees succeed in their work. Therefore, all managers and supervisors—to some extent—seek to motivate workers. If their efforts to motivate fail, some managers move on to create an atmosphere of fear and coercion in which workers may subvert the goals of the organization and provide low quality products or services. A common mistake is the failure to understand that people develop values and motivation from within themselves—not from external forces.

This chapter describes human motivators and the differences between internal and external controls. A discussion on Control Theory follows, including a section on how to tap into the human needs in order to help people find their inner motivation.

I wish I could *make* you feel good about managing and supervising. I wish this book could *make* you a good manager who is seen by your employees as knowledgeable, competent, humane, and in charge of situations. I wish I could *make* you make your employees become dedicated, self-initiating, responsible, prompt, free of interpersonal conflict; people who leave their problems at home. I wish this book could *make* them such! And I wish it could be done instantly—or at least quickly. But that is impossible.

Still, there is a widespread misconception that one person can, somehow, provide a compelling stimulus which causes another person to do something. This erroneous thinking permeates our institutions. Politicians accept it when they believe that stiffer penalties will, of themselves, cure the drug problem. School Boards and Administrators belie this mentality when they waste time seeking more effective punishments with which to control students. Psychologists and others attempt to extinguish, reinforce, and reward behaviors. The world of employment, in which most people spend a high percentage of their time, has surpassed other institutions in affirming the fallacious theory that people can be controlled from above.

Described in this book are ideas that are based upon the belief that employees can be *helped* to be more productive, to feel increased self-esteem, to show initiative, and to do quality work. This is possible only if their needs are met by their work and by the supervising/managing they receive.

So this book is for managers, supervisors, and employers who want to learn how to improve their skills in order to be better coaches for their employees. It is for you—if you are willing to make a real commitment to look fearlessly at your own behavior with a view to changing it for the better. Remember that no person or book can *make* you do anything.

If you make the necessary commitment, you will gain practical, usable, specific skills and ideas. If you have ever supervised or managed an employee who had a case of apathy, resistance, smugness, superiority, boredom, or resentment, you will learn specific ways to talk to such a person.

If you have ever found yourself without words to respond to an employee, or getting defensive, or giving in to the urge to criticize or even verbally attack an employee, you will benefit from implementing the ideas contained in this book. Positive results depend on one condition—*you must put these ideas into practice.* Then you will feel more skillful. Then you will feel more comfortable about your job. You might even look forward to Monday mornings! Your own self-esteem will increase. These are the goals of the coaching method explained in this book. We call it the WDEP System.

Human Motivators

When the inner sources of human motivation are satisfied on the job, the worker feels the "joy in work" described

by W. Edwards Deming. These innate needs underlie the behavior of all workers. The needs are *generic* in that they are not specific to any one person or situation. They are *innate* in that they are not learned. They are part of us as we are born and are perhaps present even before birth.

In my training seminars I ask the participants a very important question. "What do you like about your work?" Below is a typical list from one such program. They are listed randomly.

- The people I work with _____
- Friday at 5:00 PM _____
- My co-workers _____
- No two days are alike _____
- Solving problems _____
- My best friends are at work _____
- I can make decisions _____
- Celebrating after getting a contract _____
- Working independently _____
- The confidence others have in me _____
- The latitude to do what I want _____
- The paycheck _____
- Making an impact _____
- Seeing completion of a project _____
- Freedom _____

- Working as a team _____
- I'm always learning _____
- I can work without interruptions _____
- When I didn't make a mistake _____
- When I'm finished with a report
  and can set it aside _____

Whether or not the participants realized it, they were discussing their needs; relating their daily work behavior to innate motivational forces. When managers come to deeper knowledge of their own motivation and that of others, they learn that creating the right atmosphere and using the WDEP System makes life more pleasant for everyone. And that, of course, helps make the organization a success.

The conventional method for dealing with employees is based on the theory of external reward and punishment: give people enough incentives, or hold their feet to the fire, and they will become motivated to succeed, to perform, and to contribute to the success of the organization.

This book describes a completely different system of motivation, based on the belief that human beings perform at a higher or lower level of quality because of *internal motivation*—not *external* rewards or punishment.

External Controls Versus Inner Motivation

To use the ideas presented in this book, it is necessary to recognize the difference between *external controls* and *in-*

ner motivation. Human beings are driven to choose behavior, not by externals, but by their own inner ideas of what satisfies them.

As a college student I took a summer job for a steel fabrication company. My job was to grind smooth the welds which the skilled welders executed. The job required that I wear a welder's mask and work in virtual isolation for eight hours a day. The pay was enormous. The supervisor said that I could quickly become a welder because I was a very hard worker. I lasted three weeks on this job. The external reward of salary did not compensate for the pain of working in isolation. In subsequent years, I became a teacher, a counselor, a manager, a promoter, a political campaigner, and an organizer—always working with people.

After reading this chapter, it will be clear that choosing to change jobs, or to perform at any level, is based on the aforementioned "joy in work." Additionally, this chapter explains why people experience joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment in their work as well as the opposites: dislike for their work, resentment toward other people, or apathy toward their own performance.

The Human Brain as a Control System

The WDEP System is based on a system of motivation called *Control Theory.* To adopt this way of thinking, it is useful to understand the analogy of the thermostat. It functions as a control system. In a sense, it has the *desire* to