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The cover article in the latest issue of *Harvard Business Review* focuses on "Creating a Purpose - Driven Organization." Business school professors Robert Quinn and Anjan Thakor report, "when an authentic purpose permeates business strategy and decision-making, the personal good and the collective good become one. Positive peer pressure kicks in, and employees are reenergized. Collaboration increases, learning accelerates, and performance climbs."

In his book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel Pink writes, "we're learning that the profit motive, potent though it is, can be an insufficient impetus for both individuals and organizations. An equally powerful source of energy, one we've often neglected or dismissed as unrealistic, is what we might call the 'purpose motive.'"

Research keeps finding that if the main reason for a company's existence is profit, it's often less profitable. The dollar sign isn't a cause. It doesn't stir the soul. Operating margins and return on investment don't excite and inspire.

Pushing profits as the primary goal is like taking a set of elaborate architectural drawings for a huge, luxurious dream home in to your team and saying, "If you all work real hard, someday this will be all mine." Or, "If you all work really hard, we can make our shareholders richer."

Studies of the role and impact of values or ethics on corporate performance show that profits follow from worthy and useful purposes. Fulfilling the purpose comes first, and then the profits follow. Profits are a reward. The size of our reward depends on the value of the service we've given others. Developing a purpose aimed at serving others adds a deeper sense of meaning to our lives. It taps into the deep craving we all have to make a difference. We need to feel that the world was in some way a little bit better off for the brief time we passed through it.

Over the years we've seen the incredible power of purpose. Here are a few examples:

- A school bus company: "Carrying our nation's future."
- A financial services company: "Helping our clients build their financial freedom and security."
- A municipal public works department: "Building and leaving a legacy for our children and grandchildren."
- A mining company: "Stewards of the earth's resources for the benefit of its people."
- International footwear company: "Shoemaker to the world."
- Franchisor: "Succeeding with you."
- Pharmaceutical company: "Preserving and improving human life."
- Hotel company: "Making people away from home feel they are among friends."
- Discount retailer: "Making our customers' lives better through lower prices, greater selection, and higher value."
- Software company: "Enabling people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential."



These statements are just pretty words if they're not brought alive by strong and effective leaders building powerful cultures anchored around these aspirations. Great leaders, as Simon Sinek writes in his book, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, "are able to inspire and give people a sense of purpose or belonging that has little to do with any external incentive or benefit to be gained... those who are inspired are willing to pay a premium or endure inconvenience, even personal suffering. Those who are able to inspire will create a following of people -- supporters, voters, customers, workers -- who act for the good of the whole not because they have to, but because they want to."

This issue starts with a focus on (purposeful) persuasion power. Do you lead like Joel or Denise? How do you know? You can also read more about the latest conference on Positive Psychology. This new field focuses on flourishing grounded in a sense of meaning and purpose.

Purpose has a major influence on our hardiness and resilience. This was the basis of psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's classic bestseller, *Man's Search for Meaning*. The book described how he survived the horrors of the Holocaust and outlined his belief that striving to find meaning in our life is the primary and most powerful driving forces in humans.

And what do you see in the people you're leading and coaching? If you're seeing a flock of turkeys, a purposeful team or organization will never get off the ground.

Position versus Persuasion Power

Joel's a high IQ manager with strong analytical skills coming from a deep technical background. He hates meetings ("they get in the way of real work") and resents having to sell changes or get people on side. "I don't care if they like me," he's fond of saying, "I only want their respect and implementation." He likes nothing better than solving tough technical problems with practical, well-designed solutions. He runs his organization "by the numbers." He focuses on continuously improving existing processes and technologies. He sets high targets and relentlessly drives everyone to meet them.



Joel's always the smartest person in the room (at least in his mind). Irrational, emotional behavior drives him nuts. He often dismisses contrary points of view with comments like, "That's only their perception, that's not reality." He then proceeds to prove "reality" with facts, rational arguments, and analysis.

Joel believes that most people see their work as a four-letter word and must be tightly controlled, threatened, or bribed before they'll work hard enough. He prides himself on being a tough manager who rolls up his sleeves and digs deep into operational details. He exercises tight control with policies, directives, and rules. His mood swings cause the team's emotional tone to wildly gyrate from high to low with much time being spent figuring out how to read him and avoid his wrath. Joel's main tools for influencing behavior on his team are threats, punishments, and "shooting down people who haven't done their homework."

Denise balances a concern for people (high EQ) with a strong technical background. She realized some time ago that leadership work often happens in meetings. So, she has trained and worked hard at developing her facilitation and team leadership skills.

Denise sees possibilities in people. She believes that people want to take pride in their work and be part of a winning team. She's learned that motivation or morale problems are often rooted in leaders failing to engage people in the broader ideals of the organization. As more people search for meaning in their lives and in their work, this disconnect creates much of the frustration and lack of purpose found in so many workplaces today. Denise works hard at connecting people to her organization's vision, values, and purpose. Denise's high energy

and optimistic attitude sets a strong and positive emotional tone throughout her organization. People are inspired to face tough problems with confidence and teamwork.

Denise uses a collaborative approach to partner with people. She sees people as adults who are generally self-managing (with some exceptions). Joel treats them like kids to be managed "with a firm hand" (with some exceptions). Denise cares about people. Joel dehumanizes and objectifies them. Denise uses the power of persuasion (leadership) to get things done. Joel uses position power (management). Denise builds a cause and case for change, appealing to the head and heart to get buy-in. Joel tries to overcome resistance to change with facts and force; like someone traveling in a foreign country who can't speak the local language, he'll just talk louder to be understood.

Denise shares as much information as she can and builds strong multi-channel and multi-directional communication loops. Joel gives people information on a need-to-know basis; he only "empowers" people as a motivational technique to manipulate people to do what he wants. Denise partners with people so they feel naturally empowered to reach their mutual goals.

We see plenty of Joel's -- and not nearly enough Denise's. Their differences are obvious enough.

- Whom would you rather work for?
- Who is the stronger leader?
- Who is likely to get the best results?
- Would your team consider you to be most like Joel or Denise?

Positive Psychology Conference Insights and Themes

Last month I participated in the **Canadian Positive Psychology Association's** 4th conference at the University of Toronto with 400 researchers, counselors, facilitators, coaches, and psychologists (visit our **Positive Psychology** resources section or **Flourish** for background on this new field).

I was especially struck by three key themes at the conference:

1. **Building strengths is key to effectiveness – strengths have been defined as** talents, skills, interests, values, and resources. Our own **strengths-based leadership** approaches focus on skill development. Positive Psychology's Character Strengths are mostly about values and include talents and interests. One study showed 9 to 18 times more flourishing when we're aware of and using our top strengths. Workers were most engaged and least stressed when using their strengths.
2. **Physical fitness is intertwined with positivity and well-being** – taking good care of our bodies with nutrition, exercise, and sleep is proving to be vital to our happiness and mental health. Speaker and author, **Tom Rath**, gave us an inspiring example with his presentation -- and his life. Diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder at age 16, he's been battling cancer and tumors for almost 30 years now. Told he'd likely die before age forty, he's outlived that gloomy forecast with hope, positivity, and "progressively having better days by making the little decisions on moving, eating, and sleep." I downloaded and have been inspired by his book, **Eat, Move, Sleep**.
3. **Purpose is central to a meaningful life** – **Carin Rockind** is a speaker and workshop leader who was an early graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's **Master of Applied Positive Psychology**. She spent years looking for happiness but found shattered dreams, divorce, and an unfulfilling -- though successful -- career. Through her research and personal application, she's come to define purpose as "the active way in which you uniquely impact the world." Meaning is a key element in the **PERMA framework** central to



Positive Psychology. The framework and importance of meaning was discussed throughout the conference.

Tom Rath challenged us to answer the question how can we make the greatest contribution to others? "If you can't be in an organization, community, work, etc., that isn't improving well-being, what's the point of staying there?" This brought to mind the important question of "**what's the meaning of your work**"? Is it a job, career, or calling?

Tom gave us three questions for identifying where we can make the greatest contribution:

1. What are the defining roles you play in work and life?
2. What have been your most influential life experiences?
3. What are the greatest contributions you can make before you're gone?

Positive Psychology is a rapidly emerging and powerful new field. UPenn's **Positive Psychology Center** defines it as "the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play."

Conferences like this add to our understanding of how to keep moving further along that path.

Coaching Head Check: Do You See Eagles or Turkeys?

A leader's coaching skills are vital today. Millennials especially want direct feedback and supportive guidance. Leaders aspiring to build coaching skills need to do a "check up from the neck up." Am I in a growth or fixed mindset about the people I am coaching?

Ineffective managers ask, "How am I expected to soar with the eagles when I'm surrounded by a bunch of turkeys?" Effective leaders with growth mindsets see people as they could be -- eagles in training. Managers with fixed mindsets simply see them as turkeys. They're both right. Research shows managers and leaders often get what they expect.



In his *Harvard Business Review* classic "Pygmalion in Management," J. Sterling Livingston draws from the ancient Greek myth of Pygmalion, a sculptor who carved a statue of a beautiful woman that came to life. George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* (which was the basis for "My Fair Lady") used a similar theme. In the play, Eliza Doolittle explains, "The difference between a flower girl and a lady is not how she behaves, but how she is treated." Livingston presents a number of his own studies, as well as other research, to prove that "If a manager's expectations are high, productivity is likely to be excellent. If his expectations are low, productivity is likely to be poor."

"The Pygmalion Effect" was uncovered years ago by psychologist Robert Rosenthal at Harvard University. He told a group of students that high or low intelligence was bred into laboratory rats through genetic manipulation. One group of students were given the "bright" rats. The other group of students drew the short straw and got stuck with the "dunce" rats. When tested in their ability to navigate a maze, the bright rats dramatically outperformed the dunce rats. What the students didn't know was that there was no difference in the rats' intelligence levels. Both groups of rats were the same. The only variable was the expectations of the students handling the rats.

Educational research supports the theory that we get what we expect from people. In his book, *Self-Fulfilling Prophecy*, Robert Tauber, a professor of education at The Behrend College of the Pennsylvania State University at Erie, compiled over 700 doctoral dissertations and countless journal articles on stereotyping, perception of social differences, race, gender, ethnicity, body features, age, socioeconomic levels, special needs, and other personal and situational factors showing, "What we expect, all too often, is exactly what we get."

A study by David Upton of Harvard Business School on the billions of dollars invested to increase manufacturing flexibility concluded, "Plants that managers think are flexible tend to get a lot of practice and get better at it. It's a self-fulfilling belief. We've found that flexibility is determined much more by the people in the plants, their industry experience, and the practice they get, than by the use of a certain type of technology."

It's a vital head check for would-be coaches -- behaviors reflect what he or she sees. Whether the leader thinks they can or thinks they can't, they're often right. They become what we expect.

Hardiness and Resilience: When Giving In Can Give Us a Lift

When you experience failure, loss, or a serious setback do you see it as temporary or permanent? Is failure an event or who you are? Is it a learning or crushing experience? Does it traumatize you or become a springboard for growth?

Confucius said, "our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." That's the thinking behind Japan's Daruma Doll, a good luck charm with a rounded bottom. When knocked down, it **bounces right back upright**.



We tend to think of unwavering steadfastness and never-say-die persistence as important leadership qualities. To a point, they are. But resilience in the face of the hurricane-force winds of change is as often about being flexible like a palm tree rather than unbending like an oak.

Like so much of life, it's about balance. W.C. Fields was on to something about resilience when he quipped, "If at first you don't succeed, try again. Then quit. No use being a damn fool about it." Sometimes the wisest thing to do is to let it storm, find shelter, and look for an alternate route to our dream. Maybe it wasn't even the right dream; we may need to accept what the universe is trying to tell us and reset our destination.

Psychologists Gregory Miller and Carsten Wrosch contrasted and studied people who are relentless and unbending and people who accept and flex with life's twists and turns. They found that flexible people were much healthier than their steadfast counterparts. Stress levels were quite a bit lower, and a protein indicating bodily inflammation linked to diabetes and heart disease was much lower. The flexible, resilient group was able to bounce back more effectively from serious defeats, less likely to dwell on the past, set new goals, and get on with their lives.

Professor, social psychologist, and positive psychology researcher, Barbara Fredrickson, has found,

"resilient people are the ones who bend without breaking and who eventually bounce back from even the most difficult life challenges. Instinctually, they can see some form of light in the darkness they face. In study after study, my collaborators and I find that it is precisely this infusion of positive emotions into negative emotional terrain that drives resilient people to bounce back."

How we use the F-word (failure) has a major impact on our personal, team, and organizational effectiveness. Failures are inevitable. Suffering is optional.

Tweet Reading: Recommended Online Articles



This section summarizes last month's LinkedIn Updates and Twitter Tweets about online articles or blog posts that I've flagged as worth reading. These are usually posted on weekends when I am doing much of my reading for research, learning, or leisure. You can follow me on Twitter at

<https://twitter.com/JimClemmer>

My original tweet commenting on the article follows each title and descriptor from the original source:

Zenger Folkman research shows the top 8 behaviors bosses score as the most inspiring.

"Inspiring Or Driving: Does It Matter Which Your Boss Thinks You Are?" -- Jack Zenger
www.forbes.com

"How can you inspire your boss? Using three different leadership studies, I found the best ways to be viewed by your manger as more inspiring."

Strategic and effective leadership development has a dramatic impact on organizational results.

"How Some Companies Are Aiming High In Leadership Development"-- Jack Zenger
www.forbes.com

"What is the aim of current leadership development efforts? One way of determining the current aim is to identify what is happening in most companies."

High-performing cultures have a heart-stirring "reason for being" transcending strategies and objectives.

"Creating a Purpose-Driven Organization" -- Robert E. Quinn and Anjan V. Thakor, *Harvard Business Review*, July-August, 2018 Issue
<https://hbr.org>

"When an authentic purpose permeates business strategy and decision making, the personal good and the collective good become one."

A Zenger Folkman study found eight skills needing further development for leaders to continue developing and growing.

"The Skills That Got You A Promotion Won't Let You Keep It" -- Joe Folkman
www.forbes.com

"A new young leader can make a big difference in an organization and set themselves on a path to have a very successful career, but only if they develop a new set of skills."

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May the Force (of strengths) be with you!



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