

Reshaping Culture: Developing Heart-Centered Leaders Who Empower

Influential leadership and high-performance results stem from the efforts we make consistently to empower ourselves and those we influence.

Despite the challenges of leadership and working with so many different perceptions, there is ONE COMMON THREAD. One central need in all of us. When leaders recognize this insatiable need in those they influence and make efforts to fulfill that need consistently, it can result in significant culture change.

So, what is that ONE NEED? I refer to it as.....Necessary Significance

Necessary Significance is a universal need that is innate in all people, despite experience, background, age, or culture. We are and always will be in pursuit of providing value and finding significance in the world around us. When leaders demonstrate intention that aligns with this knowledge in how they lead, the culture can shift towards unity, loyalty, and heightened performance. Below is a chart defining ten of the most important forms of this powerful tool.

NECESSARY SIGNIFICANCE

Acceptance	Recognition
Contribution	Empowerment
Achievement	Engagement
Value	Clarity
Vision	Purpose

According to 2017 statistics from Gallup Poll, 67% of Corporate America is disengaged, costing over \$500 billion per year.

Disengagement can occur when teams do not have a sense of genuine purpose and become tapped out because they are not engaged in using the talents they were hired for or they are feeling disempowered. They are simply given a task list and expected to perform under a leader who is too caught up in the day to day to offer any form of heart centered leadership. Too often leaders, unknowingly, become impervious to the real needs of their team members, due to over-extension, poor leadership, or a lack of cultural awareness.

When team members are subject to inadequate support, intimidation or too much pressure, performance and morale levels tend to drop. These statistics are attributed to neurological, psychological, and physiological factors. One of these factors is because of cortisol, the stress hormone. Multiple studies on the effects of stress reveal that cortisol paralyzes the frontal cortex or "executive center" of the brain creating memory issues, difficulty learning, lower perception, emotional distress, and several other counterproductive reactions.

This in mind, it's no surprise that disengaged teams perform much lower than engaged teams since the frontal cortex is 40% of the brain and is the messenger to primary brain function. Certainly, order, policy and discipline have a place in organizations, but a leader who operates with high emotional intelligence will be more sensitive to create an atmosphere where people thrive.

When compassion is delivered instead of pressure or judgement, there is release of the hormones, oxytocin, and serotonin. These neurochemicals are responsible for producing a sense of warmth, closeness, joy and pleasure, a reaction that can tear down defensiveness. This is especially true in cases where compassion may not have been deserved. *continued...*

Reshaping Culture: Developing Heart-Centered Leaders Who Empower

Producing this reaction in the brain can create a bond which often leads to loyalty and commitment, eventually improving overall team performance. When coupled with empowerment and engagement, compassion is very effective in significantly reducing mistrust and disengagement.

Gallup Poll reports there are 6 benefits to a highly engaged and empowered atmosphere:

- Retention Improved 54%
- Attendance Increased by 41%
- Safety Improved 70%
- Accuracy Improved 41%
- Productivity Increased by 17%
- Profitability Increased by 21%

Source: Gallup Poll Q12 Employee Engagement Survey 2017 top quartile

**“People don’t care about how much you know, until they know how much you care.”
– Theodore Roosevelt**

It is also important to note, that no amount of empowerment will work if you are struggling with your own sense of “necessary significance”. How you choose to invest in yourself, day to day, in terms of your own leadership will increase or decrease your effectiveness. If you spend each day focused on the stressors in your life or work, you tear down your confidence as a leader and your ability to perform well. We are constantly building neuropathways based on what we focus on. These pathways, determine our perceptions on leadership, success, relationships and our own abilities. Over time, a primarily negative focus and inadequate perceptions along with the effects of cortisol can be devastating. The eventual result leads to all sorts of emotional and mental disorders and ultimately self-sabotage to your own efforts in creating success.

Highly effective leaders take 100% responsibility to nurture and invest in personal and professional growth every day with resources that will improve performance and induce a strong state of mind. Without establishing healthy daily routine, the pressures of leadership alone can set off a downward spiral. In turn, this begins eroding one’s ability to lead.