

Bringing Out the Best in Others!

By Thomas Connellan

Introduction – Why Do Good People Fall Short?

- It's all about human behavior - regardless of who you are dealing with children or adults, students or employees
- The issue is to optimize the performance of those you lead whether it's sales, product quality, productivity, teamwork, grades, etc.
- This book identifies the tools that can be used to change their behavior for the better.

What Creates Consistently High Performance?

- In general, firstborns perform at higher levels. Firstborns make up 35% of the population (including only children) yet -
 - Two-thirds of entrepreneurs are firstborns
 - 21 of the first 23 astronauts were firstborns
 - 55% of all supreme court justices have been firstborns
 - Over half of U.S. presidents were firstborns
- What are the environmental factors that make firstborns top performers?
 - It's the presence of three factors that makes the difference, not being first born
 - The three factors are – Expectations, Responsibility and Feedback

Expectations – The Power of the Positive

- Numerous studies show that the expectations of the supervisor can have either positive or negative consequences on a subordinate's production – called the Pygmalion Effect.
- Numerous studies also show that if you give patients anything at all, you heighten their expectations of getting well (on average by 30%) – called the Placebo Effect.
- Conclusion –
 - We often tell people what we expect of them by our words or body language. Sometimes simply by the way we make eye contact.
 - To bring out the best in your employees, students or children you must communicate positive expectations, clearly and consistently through your words, your tone of voice, and your body language.

Accountability – The Strength of Discipline

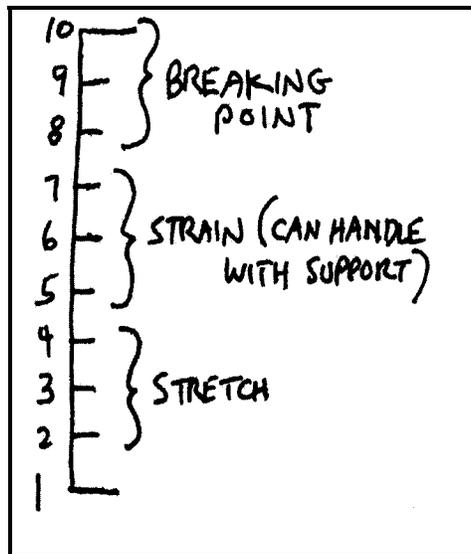
- Anything that is everyone's responsibility quickly becomes no one's responsibility. Lack of accountability paves the way to mediocrity.
- The key ingredients in accountability
 - Establish accountability not blame
 - Set clear-cut goals

Bringing Out the Best in Others! (continued)

- Develop action plans for how the goal is to be achieved.
- Engage – the more that people are engaged in identifying the goals, developing plans and measuring progress, the more accountable they become.
- The advantage of goal setting
 - Goals create a proactive rather than a reactive mindset
 - Too many people fall into the “activity trap.” They get caught up in the activity and lose sight of the goal.
 - You want people accountable for reaching stated goals.

The Gradient Stress Concept

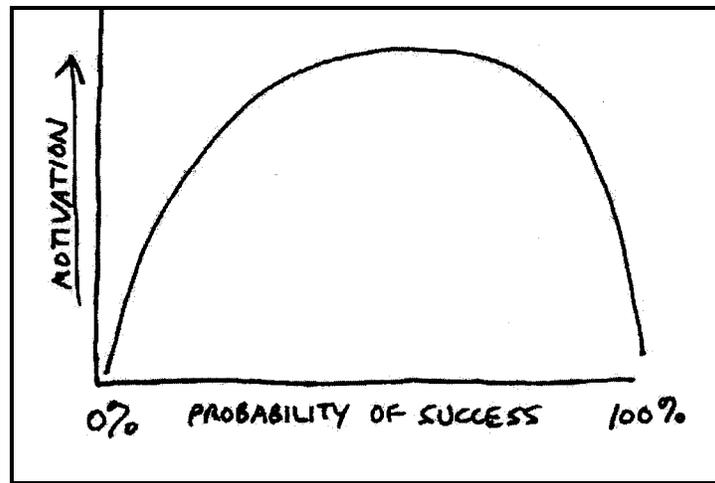
- On the scale shown below 1 represents little stress
- At stress level 2, 3 or 4 you're stretching people
- At stress level 5, 6 or 7 you're straining them – but with support they can handle it.
- At stress level 8, 9 or 10 you're taking them to the breaking point regardless of additional support.



- To get the most out of others use gradient stress.
 - Increase a person's level of stress so it is a stretch or even a strain.
 - Once a person has grown comfortable at stress level 5, it becomes that person's new level 1.
 - Now stress level 9 or 10 becomes a stress level 5 which the person can handle with support.
 - The key to setting difficult goals beyond what many people think is possible is providing support
 - Support comes from positive expectations and positive feedback.

The Inverted Motivation Curve

- Two schools of thought on how to set goals
 - Set goals so high people have to stretch to reach them
 - ✓ Advantage – motivates some to overcome all obstacles and hit the target
 - ✓ Disadvantage – discourages others from trying at all
 - Set goals that are low enough that people are sure to achieve them
 - ✓ Advantage - in reaching the goal they will be motivated to produce even better results
 - ✓ Disadvantage – if the goal is too modest, there's no challenge, and people lose interest



- The maximum motivation seems to be in the area where there's a high probability of achieving some success but still some risk and challenge involved.
- The best way to set goals therefore is
 - ✓ Agree with the person on the minimum level of performance to be achieved
 - ✓ Then set breakthrough goals
 - ✓ This provides both kinds of motivation: the satisfaction of meeting the easier goals and the challenge of trying to achieve the tougher ones.
- People often fail to perform as well as they could because they don't know what's expected of them.
 - Keep track of a few key indicators
 - If you don't agree on what constitutes success, how can it be achieved?

Develop Action Plans

- Action plans spell out all the steps, large and small, that must be taken to meet overall objectives.
- For example, your goal might be a 25% increase in sales volume – your action plans might include targeting five high-potential clients, creating a sales call plan, creating an e-mail marketing plan, etc.
- The more engaged people are in the development of goals, plans and feedback, the more accountable they become.
- Put the action plan on paper
- Most people want to be held accountable for getting results but left to reach their goals on their own.

Feedback – The Focus of Self-Awareness

- Three types of feedback to bring out the best in others
 - Motivational feedback
 - Informational feedback
 - Developmental feedback
- The football game analogy
 - Informational feedback is like the yard-line markers- it gives the fans and the players a way of measuring progress.
 - Motivational feedback is like cheering a football team – the clapping and cheering motivates the players to succeed.
- Developmental feedback occurs when corrective action is necessary to improve someone's performance.

Motivational Feedback – Accelerating Improvement

- Three types of feedback
 - Positive feedback = reinforcement
 - ✓ It's energizing
 - ✓ It validates your efforts
 - ✓ It makes you want to achieve even greater things
 - Negative feedback = punishment
 - ✓ It often results in a renewed effort to perform better, but not always
 - ✓ People consistently punished for trying eventually stop trying
 - No feedback = extinction
 - ✓ It's even more punishing than negative feedback
 - ✓ It's the least motivating because you feel ignored
 - ✓ It's the most common type of feedback – if someone performs well consistently we often say and do nothing at all
- **Critical importance: Bringing out the best in others requires that we reinforce improvements, even if they're not "there" yet.**

Bringing Out the Best in Others! (continued)

- Five principles of giving positive reinforcement
 - 1. Reinforce immediately.
 - 2. Reinforce ANY improvement, not just excellence.
 - 3. Reinforce specifically.
 - 4. Reinforce new behaviors continuously.
 - 5. Reinforce good habits intermittently.
- Two types of reinforcement schedules – continuous and intermittent
- Continuous feedback
 - The individual is reinforced for any steps that he takes in the right direction
 - Best used for developing new behaviors
 - Reinforce every improvement of someone who is performing below an acceptable level, however small
- Intermittent feedback
 - Once he has reached a good level of performance you switch to intermittent reinforcement
 - Occasionally, surprise him with a good word or a pat on the back

Informational Feedback – Roadmap to Success

- Simply put, informational feedback provides information on performance
- Three factors to good informational feedback
 - It should be on agreed upon goals
 - It should be immediate
 - A graph can give an instantaneous readout of progress – it has much more impact than a number

Developmental Feedback – Course Corrections

- Define the Issue
 - State the performance issue
 - Don't make judgment statements or blame anybody
 - Important: describe the behavior in performance terms rather than judgmental terms
- Ask for solutions
 - Avoid questions that are historical in nature, that can be answered yes or no, that begin with "why" or "who." "Why did this happen?" These types of questions invite excuses.

Bringing Out the Best in Others! (continued)

- Ask future-oriented questions, such as “How can we correct this problem?” These types of statements encourage positive solutions.
- Explore options
 - Encourage brainstorming
 - Once ideas are laid out, ask, “Which of these ideas could we realistically implement
- Reinforce Positive Responses
 - Focus positive attention on the best solutions
 - Keep asking questions that steer the discussion toward future goals
- Close the deal
 - Wrap everything up and propose an agreement
 - Goal: get the individual's commitment to accomplish a certain task
 - Include positive expectations about the individual's ability to improve
 - Finally, as a part of the agreement, arrange a time to meet again.

Putting It to Work – What to Do Next

- In order to change the behavior of others – you must first modify your own behavior.
- Ask yourself, “What do I have change in order for others to do their best?”