

Why Motivating People Doesn't Work... and What Does

ABOUT THE BOOK

Why
Motivating
People
Doesn't Work...

and What Does
The New Science of Leading,
Energizing, and Engaging

Susan Fowler
Foreword by Ken Blanchard

BOOK SUMMARY

With more than 30,000 copies sold worldwide, Susan Fowler's powerful and influential book, *WHY MOTIVATING PEOPLE DOESN'T WORK...AND WHAT DOES: The New Science of Leading, Energizing, and Engaging*, is now available in paperback, in addition to its hardback, Kindle, and audio editions.

Every leader knows the statistics. The vast majority of their employees – as high as 70%, according to Gallup—are not engaged in their work. Leaders understand the bottom-line consequences of a disengaged workforce, so they implement engagement strategies to boost survey scores, believing that increases in productivity, morale, innovation, safety, and retention will follow. This approach seems reasonable, and leaders are held accountable for the results.

The problem? Most engagement strategies employed by organizations simply don't work. Acclaimed leadership expert Susan Fowler argues that most of the current approaches to engagement have not caught up to the science of motivation, resulting in short-term practices that undermine the long-term engagement they hoped to generate.

In *WHY MOTIVATING PEOPLE DOESN'T WORK...AND WHAT DOES: The New Science of Leading, Energizing, and Engaging* (Berrett-Koehler, 2014), Fowler builds upon the latest scientific research on the nature of human motivation to explain why traditional approaches don't work. More importantly, she provides a cutting-edge framework, model, and course of action to help leaders shape a workplace where people flourish while producing sustainable results.

BOOK HISTORY

As Senior Consulting Partner with The Ken Blanchard Companies, Fowler spent 20 years studying the science of motivation, which led her to develop, test and refine a research-based approach to motivation in real-world business settings around the globe. The key insight from motivation science is that leaders can't motivate employees, because people are already motivated—but too often, not in optimal ways..

The difference between an engaged and disengaged person is not a lack of motivation, but the quality of their motivation—whether the reasons they are motivated promote higher-level values, creativity, innovation, sustainable focus, and higher productivity (optimal), or thwart them (suboptimal).

Following this finding, the key to long-term engagement is the day-to-day shift to optimal motivation—an internal process sabotaged by the external engagement tactics organizations continue to impose on employees. Despite compelling research that proves carrots and sticks don't work, leaders continue to use them—not because they are unaware of the science, but because they haven't understood their alternatives.

BOOK INFO

Why Motivating People Doesn't Work... and What Does

by Susan Fowler

Hardcover: 232 pages

Publisher: Berrett-Koehler

Publishers; 1st edition

(September 30, 2014)

2nd edition, Feb. 1, 2017

ISBN: 978-1-62656-182-3

BOOK PURCHASING INFORMATION

Amazon

Barnes & Noble

BK Pub

Hudson Booksellers

CHAPTER NAMES

Foreword by Ken Blanchard

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1. The Motivation Dilemma

2. What Motivates People: The Real Story

3. The Danger of Drive

4. Motivation is a Skill

5. Making Shift Happen

6. Rethinking Five Beliefs that Erode Workplace Motivation

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SUSAN FOWLER

Susan Fowler has over 30 years' experience as a researcher, consultant, coach, and keynote speaker in over 30 countries around the globe in the field of leadership. She is the lead developer of The Ken Blanchard Company's best-selling Self Leadership product line and the innovative Optimal Motivation program, which have been implemented worldwide.

Fowler is widely known as one of the foremost experts on personal empowerment. Extensive experience and knowledge gained through 15 years of advertising, sales, production, and marketing across the United States prompted Susan to develop methods and tools for leaders and those they lead to gain the mindset and the skill set for achieving their highest level of success.

Susan's purpose is to be a catalyst for people adapting their behaviors so they can thrive and flourish. She is the bestselling author of *Self Leadership* and *The One Minute Manager* with Ken Blanchard and Laurie Hawkins.

She is coauthor of *Achieve Leadership Genius* with Drea Zigarmi and Dick Lyles; *Leading at a Higher Level* with Ken Blanchard; *The Team Leader's Idea-a-Day Guide* with Drea Zigarmi; *Empowerment* with Ken Blanchard; and *Good Leaders, Good Shepherds* with Dick Lyles; as well as audio programs on *Mentoring—Fostering Your Careers Most Crucial Relationships* and *Overcoming Procrastination*.

Susan received her bachelor's degree in anthropology and business from the University of Colorado, and is a professor in the Master of Science for Executive Leadership program at the University of San Diego.

She also serves on the Board of Directors for Angel Faces, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping adolescent girls with severe burn/trauma injuries.

PRESS

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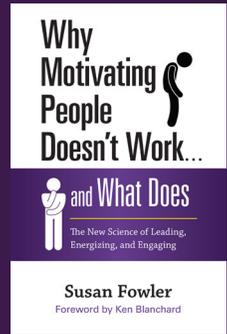
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Why Motivating People Doesn't Work... and What Does



PRAISE

“Richly rewarding book...a romp across the ins and outs of motivation.”

— **People Management**

“Everybody wants to be motivated—being bored and alienated is no fun. Fowler shows how to guide employees toward seeing their jobs in a new way, as potential sources of personal fulfillment. Achieving company goals will become something they own, because now it really matters to them.”

— **Marshall Goldsmith**, Author of the *New York Times* and Global Bestseller *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

“Think of this book as Daniel Pink’s *Drive* for trainers.”

— **TD Magazine**

“In this fascinating book, Susan Fowler shows why you should stop feeding your employees the emotional junk food of ineffective, short-term rewards; and how you can transition your leadership style to produce an optimal motivational outlook.”

— **Steve Davis**, Executive Vice President, CenturyLink

“A compelling reminder that leadership is a skill that can be mastered only by capturing the hearts and minds of the people you lead. The question is not if your people are motivated but why. Susan Fowler presents a new paradigm of motivation, a plain and simple alternative that is long overdue.”

— **Lori Lorenz**, Senior Director, Marketing, Hewlett-Packard

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THE MOTIVATION MODEL

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According to Fowler, a leader's role is not to motivate people, but to shape a workplace and use best practices that enable employees to shift to an optimal motivational outlook, by focusing on fulfilling their three core psychological needs:

- **Autonomy:** our human need to perceive that we have choices, that what we are doing is of our own volition, and our perception that we are the source of our actions.
- **Relatedness:** our need to care about and be cared about by others, to feel connected to others without concerns about ulterior motives, and to feel that we are contributing to something greater than ourselves.
- **Competence:** our need to feel effective at meeting everyday challenges and opportunities, to demonstrate skill over time, and to feel a sense of growth and flourishing.

Regardless of gender, race, culture, or generation, the real story behind our motivation is whether or not our psychological needs are satisfied.

When people experience high-quality psychological needs, they will have an optimal motivational outlook. Conversely, when people experience low-quality psychological needs, they will have a suboptimal motivational outlook. The quality of one's motivation is a day-to-day, moment-to-moment experience that ultimately, over time, results in employee work passion, engagement, disengagement, or active disengagement.

The great news is that people can learn to choose and create optimal motivational experiences anytime and anywhere. Motivation is a skill.

Managers and Human Resource leaders can teach employees how to activate an optimal motivational outlook by:

- **Identifying** the current motivational outlook by recognizing and understanding one's sense of wellbeing and underlying reasons for current actions
- **Shifting** to (or maintaining) an optimal motivational outlook by using the techniques of self-regulation to satisfy psychological needs
- **Reflecting** and noticing the difference between having a suboptimal motivational outlook and having an optimal motivational outlook.

In *WHY MOTIVATING PEOPLE DOESN'T WORK...AND WHAT DOES*, Fowler first teaches leaders how to shift themselves to an optimal motivational outlook. Then, she teaches leaders how to facilitate shifts in their employees through motivational outlook conversations. She identifies specific scenarios that call for an outlook conversation, warns leaders of the most common pitfalls, and provides guidance on how to conduct conversations in the right way.

This process requires leaders to rethink traditional beliefs about the workplace and their role in it, but the results are astounding: a workforce with the positive energy, vitality, and sense of well-being required for sustaining the pursuit and achievement of meaningful goals while thriving and flourishing (and the potential for significantly higher engagement survey scores, to boot).

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THE SPECTRUM OF MOTIVATION

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Motivation is not a black-or-white, yes-or-no dichotomy. There is an entire Spectrum of Motivation based on the quality of one's motivation—whether the reasons for one's motivation at any given time promote creativity, innovation, sustainable focus, and higher productivity (optimal), or thwart them (suboptimal).

To illustrate, think about a recent meeting you attended. Reflect on your different thoughts and emotions as you noticed the meeting on your calendar, jumped off a call early, and rushed to make the meeting on time. Asking if you were motivated to attend the meeting is the wrong question. Your answer is limited to a yes/no or a little/a lot response, rather than the quality of motivation being experienced. Asking why you were motivated to attend the meeting, however, leads to a spectrum of motivation possibilities represented as six motivational outlooks.

The Spectrum of Motivation model helps you make sense of the meeting experience. Consider which of the six motivational outlooks, listed below, best describes your experience before, during, and after your meeting. These outlooks are not a continuum. You can be at any outlook at any time and pop up in another one at any time. In the meeting example, you may have experienced one or all of these outlooks at one point or another:

SUBOPTIMAL

- **Disinterested** – You simply could not find any value in the meeting; it felt like a waste of time.
- **External** – The meeting provided an opportunity for you to exert your position or power; it enabled you to take advantage of a promise for more money or an enhanced status or image in the eyes of others.
- **Imposed** – You felt pressured because everyone else was attending and expected the same from you; you were avoiding feelings of guilt, shame, or fear from not participating.

OPTIMAL

- **Aligned** – You were able to link the meeting to a significant value, such as learning—what you might learn or what others might learn from you.
- **Integrated** – You were able to link the meeting to a life or work purpose, and part of that purpose was giving voice to an important issue in the meeting.
- **Inherent** – You simply enjoy meetings and thought it would be fun.

You may have noticed that three of the outlooks are listed as suboptimal—disinterested, external, and imposed. These outlooks are considered motivational junk food, reflecting low-quality motivation. Three of the outlooks are listed as optimal—aligned, integrated, and inherent. These outlooks are considered motivational health food, reflecting high-quality motivation.

To take full advantage of the Spectrum of Motivation, it is important to appreciate the different effects that suboptimal and optimal motivational outlooks have on people's well-being, short-term productivity, and long-term performance.

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AUTHOR Q AND A

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Why don't external rewards work in motivating people?

Imagine this: You buy dinner for your family at the local drive-through—burgers, fries, and shakes—with the intention of eating it at home together. The aroma of those fries is intoxicating and you end up eating the whole bag. How do you feel after downing the package of French fries? Guilty, most likely. How's your energy? It spikes dramatically and falls just as dramatically. A steady diet of junk food simply isn't good for us. The same is true for what I call “suboptimal motivation,” such as doing something for a reward or doing something because you feel like you should. It can be enticing in the moment, but it will not lead to flourishing. Far from it. People with a suboptimal motivational outlook are less likely to have the energy it takes to achieve their goals. Even if they do, they're not likely to experience the positive energy, vitality, or sense of well-being required to sustain their performance over time.

So what is the key to motivation?

Satisfying your psychological needs. Achieving optimal motivation lies in meeting three key psychological needs that we all have—autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Autonomy is our human need to feel that what we're doing is of our own volition. Relatedness is our need to feel connected to others, to feel that we're contributing to something greater than ourselves. Competence is our need to grow and feel effective at meeting everyday challenges.

Optimal motivation happens when these three needs are satisfied: when a person feels like they have a choice, they're accomplishing something that's tied to a great purpose, and it helps them grow. Take the goal of exercising regularly—chances are you will stick with it if you feel like you have a choice, it's contributing to something greater (such as you being healthy enough to play with your kids), and helps you flourish (like being a happier, more energetic person). The appeal of a massage won't do that—it will simply wear off.

Can someone shift from being “suboptimally motivated”?

Yes! You can shift your motivational outlook by aiming to satisfy your psychological needs. Here's how:

- **Practice mindfulness.** If you have been assigned a task you are disinterested in doing, are only doing for the money, or feel obligated to do, ask yourself why you don't want to do it. Then with each answer, follow up with another why question. Asking why, why, why helps you peel through the layers of distractions and eventually you figure out that you have a choice (autonomy), can find some meaning or purpose (relatedness), and will learn and grow from the experience (competence).
- **Align with your developed values.** Ask yourself what you value more than what you're getting from your current suboptimal outlook. If you are about to eat a bunch of French fries, ask yourself what you value more than French fries—such as your health and well-being. If you are about to send a nasty email because someone made a bone-headed decision, ask yourself what you value more than being right—such as building, rather than destroying, the relationship.
- **Connect with a noble purpose.** I was able to go from a meat-loving omnivore to a strict vegetarian overnight—and sustain the decision. How? The shift happened when I was watching a TV segment on how we treat the animals we eat. I realized that I would never eat meat again not because of guilt, shame, or my health; but because I recognized a profound sense of wanting to do my part to make the world less violent and more peaceful. There are few things in life more powerful than making decisions with a sense of purpose.

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What's a common mistake people make when trying to motivate themselves or others?

Competition. If you're using a contest to "motivate" people, ask yourself why. If you're running a contest to attract attention to an important message, or encourage certain behaviors, contests are risky. They distract people from your primary message, shifting the focus to the contest or prize. Consider this: A recent study followed people who entered contests, promising a prize for losing weight. They found that, indeed, many people lost weight; but within 12 weeks, they regained the weight and then some!

Instead, take the time and energy to provide a values-based rationale for doing what you are asking of them. Consider how people's psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence will be better satisfied by doing what you're asking them to do.

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SUGGESTED AUTHOR QUESTIONS

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1. What problem do you hope to solve with this book?
2. Why doesn't motivating people work?
3. Companies rigorously measure employee engagement scores and implement countless strategies to improve them, yet scores seem to dip lower and lower. What do you think is happening?
4. You seem to be making a distinction between motivation and employee engagement. Please explain.
5. Dan Pink cites three psychological needs in his book, DRIVE: autonomy, purpose, and mastery. You cite three: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. If both of your books are based on research, why are the needs different?
6. Motivation is based on the fulfillment of three core psychological needs. Why is it so hard for people to satisfy these needs?
7. You argue that most of the "go-to" methods of motivating people such as money, contests to win iPads, praising, or even the latest craze—gamification—do not motivate the way people think. Why do you say that?
8. If motivating people doesn't work, then what is the role of managers and HR leaders in employee engagement?
9. What is a widely accepted belief about the workplace that erodes motivation?
10. When you share your insight on motivation with managers and HR leaders, what is a typical response?