Moving Mountains

How to aspire ordinary people to do extraordinary things!

Based on an article in the HBR, Jan. 2003
Motivating Others

- There is no trick.
- Requires:
  - A clear, unbiased understanding of the situation;
  - Deep insight into the vagaries of human nature at both the individual and group level;
  - Appropriate and reasonable expectations and goals; and
  - A balanced set of tangible & intangible incentives.
Questions

- How do you deal with individuals or groups at different motivation levels that vary in different ways?
- How can you influence the behaviour of a single individual, let alone an organization of hundreds or thousands?
- How can you help people feel enthusiastic and committed, especially in difficult times?
Answers from business leaders, a high school teacher, an undersea explorer and a champion dog sled racer.
Start With The Truth

- Help people first to confront reality – *honest assessment*.
- Then, people need aspirational goals – *setting goals*.
- To cross the uncomfortable gap between the truth and the goal, set very achievable step-by-step measures – *marching toward them*.
Appeal to Greatness

- People get excited by the idea of doing something truly grand.
- The desire to contribute to something everlasting is enormous.
- The knowledge that one is achieving something rare and marvelous is intense and passionate.
Make Them Proud

- Give respect
- Celebrate the gifts an individual brings
- Provide opportunities for them to shine
Stick To Your Values

- Adhere to simple values – things like honesty, fairness and generosity.
Be a Broken Record

- Repeat messages of direction, inspiration, and comfort daily in a variety of ways.
- Constant and consistent communication – while at times sounding like a broken record – is the single most reassuring thing.
Dogs are very intelligent, and you can’t make them do what they don’t want to do.

If they don’t trust you, they won’t go along with you.
Encourage Risk

- Helping people to try things that feel personally risky is the toughest motivational challenge.
- You can’t, and you don’t want to, eliminate all the risks.
- Through open and frank discussions, by making roles and accountabilities clear, by spreading risks across the team and the organization, and providing visible and confident support regardless of the end result, people and organizations can achieve extraordinary results.
People at the top forget how hard it is for people at the bottom.

If the leader can make the people at the bottom feel like they’re cared for, the entire organization will feel inspired and motivated.
One of the hardest things about motivating others is creating a challenge that stimulates the energy and interest of bright people while keeping them anchored.

If people are already reaching for the sky, you need to gently ground them without discouraging them.
Leap First, Ask Later

- When the stakes are high or you’re in an emergency, persuasion is out of the question.
- You just have to make the deal first, then figure out how to get there.
- When they realize that there’s no way out, the team just gets the job done – brilliantly.
Set Different Incentive Levels

- Different groups will have different expectations.
- Each requires different kinds of incentives.
- Executive team needs a sense of ownership and recognition; Mid-level managers need promotion; Line employees need a sense of stability.
- Incentives must respond to their particular needs.
Motivate people by moving quickly toward a goal, especially if getting to the goal involves pain.

Knowing that the organization is committed to quick, decisive action frees people to think creatively and work in concert.