

## INTRODUCTION

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To survive you must have hope.

***Man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but only for one second without hope.***

This anonymous quote has been around for quite a while and although the author may be overstating things a bit, I think we can simply say that under all lies hope. Or maybe we should say, “hopes.” Because the people you manage will come to you with a host of spoken and unspoken hopes for themselves, for their families, for their co-workers and maybe even for you.

The people you manage have more hopes than you can imagine. And you should be glad that they do. For hope gives drive to the accomplishment of dreams. Hopes like:

- I hope the boss recognizes my good work.
- I hope she remembers what I’ve done when my performance review comes around.
- I hope I’ll be good enough to qualify for a raise.
- I hope they take that “slug” from engineering off of our team so we can get some work done.
- I hope they think of me for that new position that just opened up.
- I hope they don’t notice my mistake.

Your employees’ lives are filled with hopes and you will need to understand that knowing your peoples’ hopes will make you a more successful manager. If this is an uncomfortable thought for you, take a tip from Anwar Sadat, the former president of Egypt who said, “He who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality, and will never, therefore, make any progress.” So if being conscious of your people’s hopes isn’t on your “management agenda,” give it some more thought.

The old Latin proverb states, “While I breathe, I hope.” And so it is with you and the people you lead.

- I hope I am assigned to lead the new team.
- I hope I am put on the new project management team.
- I hope our company stock price goes up.
- I hope my people will see me as a good manager.
- I hope I said that correctly.
- I hope they didn’t take that badly.
- I hope I can get out of here early today to see Julie’s school play.

To paraphrase philosopher Joseph Campbell, if you think about the hopes of your people, “you realize that you and [they] are, in fact, one. It’s a big realization. Survival is the second law of life. The first is that we are all one.” In so many ways, your hopes are their hopes – and theirs yours.

Now you may say, “My people are well compensated and the only hope they need is to know that there will be another check next week if they do their jobs right.” Consider a quote from author Pearl S. Buck,

***To eat bread without hope is still slowly to starve to death.***

You can pay your people, but without something to hope for their morale will decline - followed by your productivity and your profitability. Companies find themselves losing good talent if they have failed to deal with their employee’s aspirations.

In this book you will note many tips about how to appeal and relate to the people who report to you. Underlying each point is the opportunity to instill a little hope.

When you hold your one-to-one discussions with your employee you will add hope if you remember to stop talking about what they did or didn’t do (the past) and focus on what they will be doing (their future). Your discussion steers them toward thinking hopefully about upcoming successes.

When you listen with your full attention, you give hope to your people that they are fully heard and understood. This gives them hope that you will have a good working relationship, that they can count on you and that you are someone who empathizes with their daily struggles.

True hope is realistic. True hope gives power to the ability to fulfill dreams, to try once more, and once more and yet again. Hope is energy. Lack of hope is lethargy.

***What oxygen is to the lungs, such is hope to the meaning of life.***

Theologian Heinrich Emil Brunner

As a manager, you are in a position to give a level of meaning to the lives of the people who work for you. So, before all else, develop a sensitivity for the hopes of your people. You will be repaid in higher loyalty, higher morale, higher productivity and greater accomplishments.

Reminder:

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## References

