

**THE TRUTH  
ABOUT**

# GETTING THE BEST FROM PEOPLE

“Get rid of  
the carrot and  
the stick...”

Martha I. Finney

Leadership consultant and President/CEO of Engagement Journeys, LLC



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
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 As a people leader, your job is simple: You are the link between organizational mission-critical objectives and the effort your employees invest in achieving those objectives. And you just have to keep those two pieces working together smoothly. See? Easy.

Yeah, right. As a people leader, your job is to inspire your employees to bring their personal greatness to work every day and to invest their best in your business. And that's a *hard* job. It's an emotional roller coaster. You experience the exquisite highs of engagement and teamwork when everyone is pulling together. Your heart breaks when you have to make really tough decisions that negatively affect the personal lives and well-being of people you truly care about. And it can be absolutely frightening when you deal with hair-trigger personalities who don't belong in a safe workplace.

But even more routinely—and just as challenging, if not more so—you have to deal with yourself and your beliefs about life, about people, and about motivation and trust. Every day. Even on the ho-hum days. And that's when we get down to some pretty simple principles. Although this book by no means trivializes all the behaviors and beliefs that go into bringing out the greatness in your employees, the material you discover in these pages is based on a few very accessible assumptions:

**People leaders discover that leading is impossible when they forget that they're people first.** It may be paradoxical, but nothing makes a person come face to face with real—or perceived—limitations faster than a promotion into a managerial spot. On the outside you may be projecting, “Can do!” (or at least hoping you are), but on the inside you may be saying, “Uh oh, what have I gotten myself into?” Your first managerial assignment? Manage yourself into keeping in mind that you're not expected to be perfect. You're just expected to reach a little further for some brand new stretch goals.

**Most people want to do good work in a job they love.** Marketing consultant (and former Senior Vice President of Marketing for Starbucks) Scott Bedbury speaks about what he calls the “Five Human Truths.” We need to be understood, feel special, feel as though we belong, feel that we're in control, and know that we have

the chance to reach our potential. Although these feelings may not necessarily be what we want from a cup of coffee, they're certainly what we want almost universally from the work we do. (But ask me at 4 in the morning when I'm cranking against deadlines, and I may have a different answer for you.)

**Great people leaders don't have to be clever, complicated, politically astute, or even especially wise.** But they do have to be kind, honest, focused, positive, and authentic. If your company is committed to supporting you as you cultivate a grounded, authentic, compelling leadership style, you will see first-hand that creating great employees isn't about being magically charismatic. It's about being you.

**There is no "u" in team, but there should be.** As a people leader, you're also a team member. Sometimes you're the coach; in fact, you might often think of yourself in the top leadership spot. But you're also the water carrier. And if your team is working so well and independently that all they need is a regular infusion of refreshment, that's a great position for you to play.


Enjoy this book. When you learn that creating great employees can be fun and personally rewarding, the first great employee you'll create will be yourself.



TRUTH

1

You don't need the  
carrot or the stick



Take a moment, if you will, to imagine the perfect day at work. By the time you arrive, everyone is already there.

In fact, *you're* the last one to show up, and you're a half hour early! Other than the sound of fresh coffee brewing in the break room, the only other noise coming from that area is the sound of laughing as two coworkers share the fun of remembering the great day they had yesterday. Another conversation is focused on exploring ways that your team can put more quality, accuracy, functionality, and affordability into your flagship product that has already received every major industry award out there.

You sit down at your desk and log on. After a quick glance at the day's spreadsheet to confirm that all projects are ahead of schedule and on budget, you check your email. You're thrilled to see your email Inbox is crammed with messages from exuberant customers (many of the names you recognize from months and years of doing repeat business with them) thanking your department for yet another fantastic job. There are also at least 50 resumes there, all sent from your employees' friends who want to be considered for the next—rare—opening. And, look at that! An email from the CEO letting you know that you're in line for this year's Chairman's Award for best performance in the company. Again!

You look up from your monitor and around the room at everyone who works with you. You know something meaningful about every one of them. You're quite sure by the way they're so dedicated to their work that each one of them must have read *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, done all the self-assessment exercises, and determined that their mission and purpose in life can be best fulfilled in your company, in your department. They all love their jobs. They are known these days as *engaged employees*.

Engaged employees are everywhere. And they have these general traits in common:

- Engaged employees believe in the mission of their organization.
- Engaged employees love what they do and understand how their jobs serve the bigger picture.

Engaged  
employees believe  
in the mission  
of their  
organization.

- Engaged employees don't need discipline; they need clarity, communication, and consistency.
- Engaged employees augment their skill sets with positive attitudes, focus, will, enthusiasm, creativity, and endurance.
- Engaged employees can be trusted, and they trust each other.
- Engaged employees respect their managers.
- Engaged employees know that their managers respect them.
- Engaged employees are a constant source of great new ideas.
- Engaged employees will give you their best.

Engaged employees are a manager's dream.

Engaged employees are a manager's dream. Put them to work on a clearly defined mission or goal and set them free to do what they do best. The hardest part for you is the possibility that you may have to change your mind about your own skills and assumptions as their leader. Engaged employees can smell stupid management tricks a mile away. And nothing will disengage them faster than the experience of being handled. They only need to be lead with inspiration.

Not everyone has the potential of being engaged, of course. Some people still just want to punch in, punch out, and cash their check. But don't assume you can tell which is which—especially if you've spent your past years driving poor performers. With most people, there's a little gem of engagement potential glowing deep inside. Find that gem, and lead with that. You could find yourself leading a transformed department—and even loving your own job more.

With engaged employees doing their work—and doing it exceedingly well—your biggest problem as manager may end up being what to do with all that extra time.

