The 7 R's to Team Motivation

--Marcia Hughes and James Terrell

Motivation is your team's commitment to mobilize its three primary resources: time, energy and intelligence. We guide you through understanding how to motivate your team in Chapter Four of *The Emotionally Intelligent Team*. There's no cookie cutter approach for creating motivation – the right strategies need to connect with your team. There are tools for success! As a team, focus on the values supporting your work, the relationships and the rewards available.

Our last article on Motivating Hospital Teams pointed out the research by Daniel Pink that three critical elements support individual motivation: autonomy, mastery and purpose. These are all essential for team as well and you'll see these principles included in the 7 R's below. Autonomy includes the chance to operate with independence and to influence your work. Mastery gives the team as a whole as well as individual team members the opportunity to be great at their work. Purpose is unquestionably the driving force for why we do what we do. It's the source of pride in our work, the core of authentic motivation.

Leaders use their influence and behaviors to motivate teams through the 7 R's.

Reason - match team members' WIIFM – help them answer the questions of "What's in it for me?" and "What's in it for our team?" Create a reason to engage. Tie the reason for the team's existence to their *purpose* and help them develop *mastery* in their skills.

Respect – take time to get to know the members of the team and demonstrate that you value each and every member. Deliberately share respect between team members. *Autonomy* is a key component of respect and can unfold in multiple ways by giving the full team some creative time as well as providing the time to individual team members or to sub-groups. Google is one of the best known companies that have gained great results by giving teams autonomy, yet the teams are also expected to collaborate intensely. This requires integrity and real engagement – and leads to powerful productivity. Respect for the team and team members is an integral component of an overarching *purpose* that everyone is excited about.

Relationships – you can't bend on this one – compromises are costly. Lead your team to connect with one another and to consistently demonstrate regard. When teams are focused on accomplishing a powerful *purpose*, there is a natural inclination to build strong relationships to accomplish the common good.

Resilience – let the team know you are committed to engaging with them and that you'll help gain the resources needed to the best extent possible. Resilience is supported by optimism, which is best experienced as a contagious sense of hopefulness around the team. Resilience is a big concept and casts a powerful web to support success. When all three components of *autonomy, mastery and purpose* are actively present team resilience expands.

Responsibility – hold people consistently accountable. Let them know their responsibilities are tied to the team accomplishing its mission and providing value. Thus when *autonomy* is provided, ask the team to then come back and report on what they learned. It's fine if the creative project wasn't a huge success, what's important is that they learned and that the learning is shared in a collaborative spirit.

Rewards & Reinforcement – notice daily positive accomplishments and say something positive right away. Don't fall into the trap of thinking money is the way to motivate your team. Surprisingly money can demotivate a team. What team members need in addition to respectful pay is to be treated with respect, included in the discussions on why the mission/*purpose* is valuable, and acknowledged for work done well – promptly. Supporting their ability to develop *mastery* so they can do their job well is one of the strongest rewards available.

Role Model – like it or not "monkey see, monkey do" holds a lot of truth for human behavior. Researchers have found that our mirror neurons are one of our most powerful sources for learning. Develop your *mastery* and hold yourself accountable to act the way you would like your team members to behave.

This is the stuff of motivation and results in team productivity accomplished by a team that is experiencing emotional and social well-being.