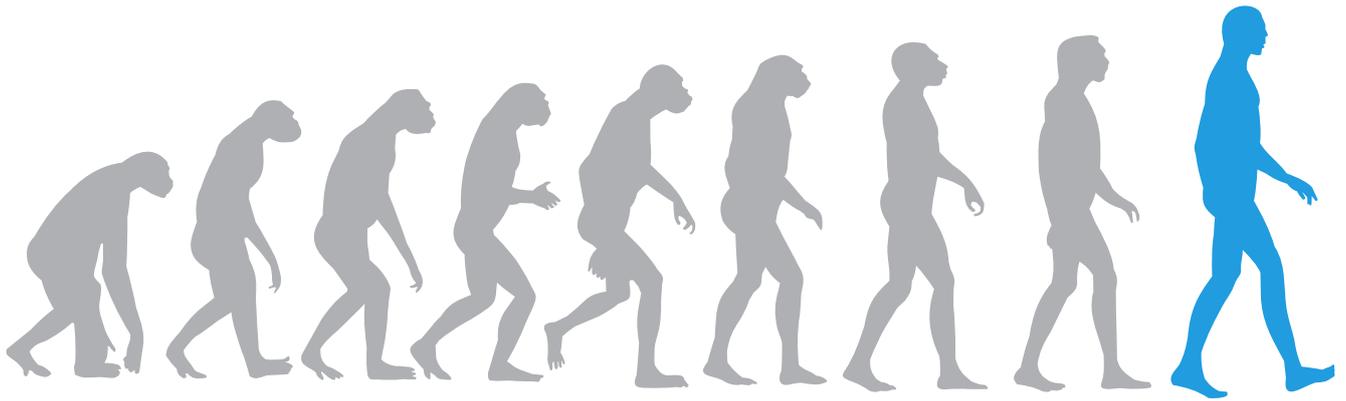


WORKING WITH HUMANS - THE MANAGERS TOOLKIT





So you've read our ebook "The Missing Manual For Working With Humans" and you'd like the practical stuff? Start here...

This ebook contains a set of specialised tools that have been carefully developed for working with people. Some may be similar to things you've seen elsewhere, but this is the first time this collection of tools has been put together in one place, and we hope you'll find it useful.

We have made it as straightforward as we can - no technical language or obscure psychological constructs involved - but some of the ideas might take a little thinking about, re-reading a number of times and then carefully rehearsing with colleagues or friends before using them for real. Straightforward is not the same as simple.

In here you'll find:



- 1 Setting them up to succeed
the 4C model for intelligent performance



- 2 The ABC of conversations
getting it in the right order



- 3 Talking about change so it happens
Taking an idea for a walk



- 4 The language of understanding
the right words make all the difference



- 5 Let's blame the scapegoats
holding a no- blame conversation



- 6 That didn't work...
defusing difficult situations



- 7 Performance Development Discussion
our free review template – also available **here** as an Excel sheet



- 8 More reading and references
for those nights you just can't get to sleep

One more thing. Take great care when attempting to influence other people. The more you absorb and practice using the ideas, techniques and so on in this ebook, the more advantage you will have in negotiations with other people. Use it wisely (Luke), and never, ever, attempt to persuade anyone to do anything unless it will lead, in the end, to their underlying needs being met better.

CHAPTER 1:

Setting them up to succeed



Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, three sets of conditions have to be met for it to work well. This applies whether you are having a social conversation or doing brain surgery.

We don't talk about these things much, so when things go wrong we tend not to understand why. So here are three vital questions to ask your people, and yourself:

1. Are they completely clear about what they are doing? This is all about communication and language – see chapter 4 The language of understanding. It is astonishing how often people are expected to get on with jobs that are inadequately defined, in language they don't really understand, for reasons they don't get, for a customer they feel no connection to. This is not very motivating... So, in brief, your staff need to understand clearly and accurately who they are working for and why – what difference will it make to the customers' lives. They need to have a clear picture of what their own team is supposed to be doing, and to feel that the rest of the team have the same picture. And they need to be certain of their own expected performance because it has been defined in concrete language – work will not generate motivation otherwise. We'll come on to this in more detail in a moment.
2. Do they have what they need to do it? This is more straightforward – but even in the best organised workplaces there will be times when people just do not have the knowledge, skills or resources they need in order to work well, at least for some of the time, and especially when roles or job specs are changing. WeThrive will diagnose these resource gaps for you automatically and regularly, keeping your team's capability where it should be.

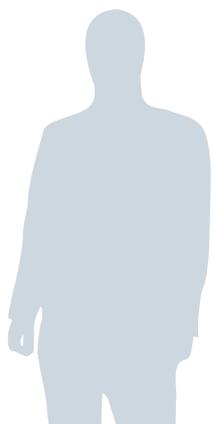
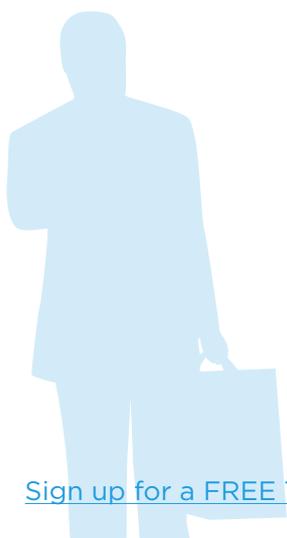


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3. Do they want to be there? This gets you to the sixty- four thousand dollar question: why do people want to do some things and not others? Why do they put 100% into some activities but then just mark time? It's very rarely anything to do with money, it's about much subtler human emotional systems, and to get to the bottom of this you need to understand intrinsic motivation. If you can arrange for your workplace to meet the innate needs of your people they will want to be there. Arrange for the work to work properly for them and they will want to do it – and will do it well. The next page explains more about how to get to the bottom of your team's motivation gaps.

The easiest way to find out all you need to know about why your team aren't doing as they should (or are doing what they shouldn't) is to use the WeThrive online system – you can sign up to try it on five members of your staff absolutely free, **here**.

The most likely time for managers to start using WeThrive is when the annual performance reviews are coming up and they want something really useful to put in the goals for next year (hence the name).

However, exactly the same principles apply if you don't have a review or appraisal system and you just want to get to the bottom of what's not working as well as it could. Whether it's a formal appraisal or an ad-hoc interview, every discussion goes better when it's run in a way that works with the nature of the people you're talking to.



5



CHAPTER 2:

The ABC of conversations



In any conversation – especially reviews and appraisals – it can be hard to review the last year without causing upset. It's often difficult to know what to put in as goals for this year, especially after some years of limited progress. And as time goes by the staff's enthusiasm for achieving those goals falls off as well.

The same can apply in everyday conversations, and we know how many managers would love a framework that makes them easier.

Try doing it in this order:

A. Something that works

Wherever possible start by talking about something that has gone well. This raises serotonin levels, making both parties feel better. A positive mood improves rapport, raises intelligence and improves communication, and increases the chance of getting an agreement over what to do next.



B. What could be better?

Now to the issue(s) at hand. You may have to go over stuff that didn't quite work, but you risk generating a soup of emotions – embarrassment, resentment at having been left exposed, feelings of guilt or stupidity and so on. This risks souring the next phase when you'll need to collaborate to set useful goals. However, on page 12 there's a framework for holding a no-blame conversation – practise this hard because it gives you the best chance to get something useful out of the process. Then look at the section on reframing on page 16 – turning disappointments into opportunities changes the atmosphere and increases the chance of useful change.

C. Build the future

People are most likely to co-operate fully and change for the better if they feel that you really know what's getting in the way of success and care about sorting that out. So knowledge – careful consideration of comprehensive data – is vital here. If you can home straight in on the places where improvement is most needed and will bring the best results, your team member will sense that you know how to help – that you are acting as a leader, in other words, and will want to join in. Having read *Setting them up to succeed* you can use that as a basis for discussion, but it will be quicker and easier to let WeThrive ask the questions and deliver you the most important goals on a plate. These are the things that really matter, so you'll automatically get an easier buy-in for them.

If you have used WeThrive to set the priorities for your conversation, you'll have a head start, as just doing the questionnaire will already have the team thinking about how things could be better. But to help you make sure the ideas go in, you can plug this framework into the bigger idea in the next chapter – talking about change so it happens.

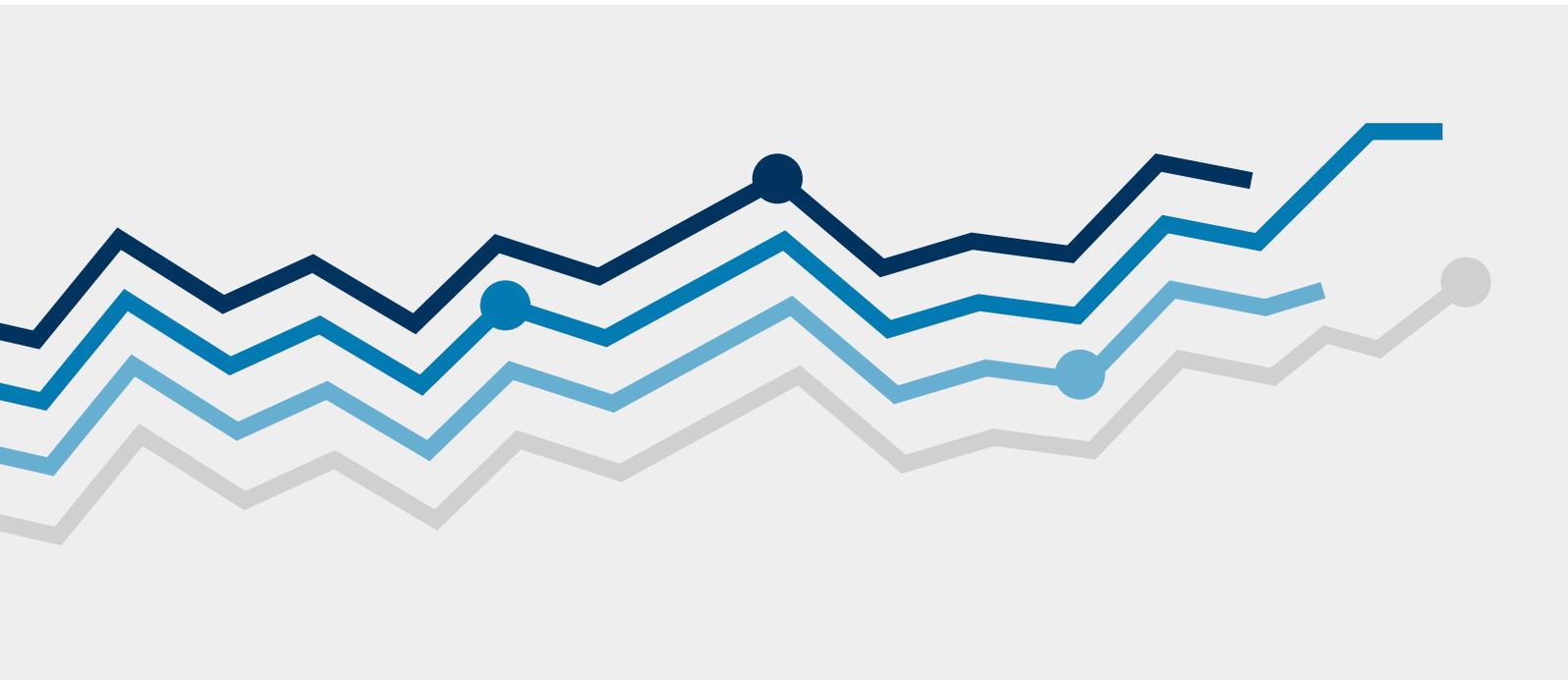
This will help you walk new ideas into someone's head so they take root.
So make sure they're good ideas..



CHAPTER 3:



Talking about change so it happens



I hope by now you have signed up for WeThrive, pasted in the emails and pressed the button to get the staff surveys underway **(that really is all it takes to get started, and it's completely free for up to five staff)**.

You have the reports and you can see at a glance who is where and what the opportunities are – so it's time to start talking.

There is a natural sequence to a learning conversation that goes well. It introduces the idea at the right time in the right way, allows for exploration and answering of questions, then seals the deal in a way that leads to action. There are also countless ways to get it wrong.

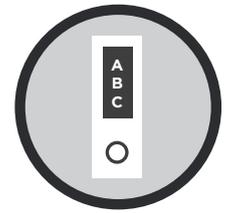


So here's a six-step guide to walking a new idea into someone's head using the RIGAAR format:

1. Start by building rapport with the other person to get them at ease. If you want you can try matching posture, movements and tone of voice – but practice first and do it subtly or it may backfire and people may feel you are trying to manipulate them. Whatever the purpose of your meeting, don't mention it until the ice is broken, shoulders have relaxed and breathing has returned to normal. Until then, talk about subjects which will generate good feeling. This is where you talk about something that works (see previous chapter)
2. When, and only when, you have broken the ice and conversation is running well, you can talk about what could be better. You need the best possible information about how they see the issue(s), and you need to have it in terms that make sense to them. Then you'll be working from their picture, not yours, in other words, and real communication can take place. This also means asking open questions and unpacking any fuzzy or abstract replies.
3. Now it's possible to build the future and set some goals. These need to be framed Positively ('do this, rather than 'don't do that'), be Achievable in practice by the person you are talking to, and be Needs-related so they will generate motivation (*see **Setting them up to succeed***). If like me you are male and have trouble remembering more than one thing at a time, you'll welcome an acronym at this point: think PAN.
4. Now you need to make it happen – start by accessing the resources that they'll need to get going. How can they achieve the new goals, in other words – what have they done before that was similar and worked well? Who have they seen learning and growing as a result of a similar intervention at work? Wake up these memories and they will feel more confident and optimistic about the new objectives. Also reassure them that all the necessary knowledge, skills and practical resources will be available.
5. Now get practical and agree the strategy for the change. How, exactly, in practice, will they use their skills and resources to achieve these new goals? What training and support will they need, how will the changes be brought in, when, where, and so on. Get as full a list as you can so there is little or no uncertainty left to cause fear.
6. Now it's time to rehearse these changes. Ask 'what do you think it'll be like, being able to...' – and any other questions that will get them imagining a future that works better. If they can build a real picture of it and feel the benefit, there's much more chance of change starting – and sticking.



CHAPTER 4:



The language of understanding

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While you're doing all the things we've discussed so far, there are a few more wrinkles to bear in mind. It might help to rehearse doing all these techniques separately, then put them together, rather than try to do it all at once.

It really is important to watch your language, just as they said back in school - because plain old everyday words contain unseen traps.

Unless you really know that someone is talking nonsense, you tend to assume you know what they mean. But actually the meaning in two people's heads is never exactly the same, and it is often significantly different even when people are sure they have agreed.

In the work context this is a major cause of all kinds of errors, demoralising people without their knowing why. And it is completely unseen, because everyone thinks they're talking the same language.

So please bear these principles in mind - in fact, practise using them before you even start holding the development conversations:



Four absolute rules when using words:

- When you talk to someone about work, the aim is to arrive at the same understanding, so you have the same picture in your head as they have and there will be no unmet expectations or nasty surprises. Don't just tell them what to do – check back, asking them to describe their picture of the work so you can see whether it is the same as yours. Ask supplementary questions to be absolutely sure there is no gap between your understanding and theirs.
- At the same time watch out – some words never have a common meaning, and are bound to cause problems. All abstract nouns – words that refer to ideas, not real things – are in this category and must be unpacked, talking over what exactly they mean in real terms, before the result of using them can be predicted. It is never enough to assume that someone else has the same mental picture of what 'values' means, for example – try getting two people to write down what they think it means and compare the results. Now do this for every abstract word in all your company operating documents, and think about the potential for confusion...
- Look beyond the individual's own job description – everyone needs to know why they are doing their tasks, how it meets the needs of the company, their colleagues and the end user or customer, so that the work has meaning and purpose.
- Almost everyone works best when they feel they are part of a group, something bigger than themselves, and that feeling of group membership comes about when people share intentions, experience and ideas. So when sharing ideas make sure that everyone in the group has the same picture – it will reduce errors and improve group cohesion.

If it's not obvious why you might want to do this, just pull up any government circular on education or health and ask yourself how many of the words in there have an absolutely certain, concrete meaning.

People have to interpret this stuff and deliver practical services – no wonder there are occasional errors...



CHAPTER 5:

I blame the scapegoats



Why did you do that?

How often do you see someone trying to change the past - saying to a junior “Why did you do that?” or “What did you think was going to happen?” You can see why people might want to say these things, especially when they have been inconvenienced, but the thing that went wrong has already happened, and much as we wish it hadn't, it will not change.

What does have to change is the way the person concerned behaves in the future. This means they will have to learn something new - but the necessary learning will not happen if they are upset. The more emotional people are, the less intelligent they become - so learning a more successful kind of behaviour depends on their feeling reasonably calm, even when something has gone wrong.

A no-blame culture is one of the best ways to reduce upset and defensiveness, and improve the chance of people learning when things go wrong. Many workplaces think they have a no-blame culture - the one sure way to create one is to change, from the ground up, the way 'right' and 'wrong' are understood.



Three things to avoid:

- Avoid 'right', 'wrong', 'good' and 'bad'. Of course. Why these words? Because these emotionally loaded words attack the individual they are aimed at rather than their behaviour, generating resentment and reducing intelligence. If you want to change behaviour, stick to 'what works' and 'what needs to work better', and keep the person out of it – at the beginning at least.
- Avoid saying 'you' in a negative context: "you caused ...". Saying 'you' like this is a verbal finger-wag, sending blame towards the recipient and generating unhelpful emotion that will cloud their thought, create resentment and prevent learning.
- Avoid asking 'why didn't...' as it will make people feel stupid and reduce their confidence, a key resource they will need when building their improved behaviour for the future.

Three things to practise regularly:

- Find some good in the situation where you can – if possible talk about something that worked to start the conversation. This generates some positive feelings, raises confidence and lets people know that this is going to be a serious attempt to improve the future, not a blame-fest about the past.
- Be very careful about how you bring personalities into the situation. Ask 'what did not work so well', leaving 'you' out of it at the start. Then ask 'what could we do to get it working better' if you genuinely intend to do this as a team effort, or 'what could be done to make it work better' if they are in fact going to be on their own.
- Don't blame, but do give credit: let them suggest better ways of working whenever possible, and give credit when they have suggested something that could work. Make sure it sticks by getting them to rehearse the idea in their head, and then be sure to witness the new behaviour at work and thank them for the improvement.

Of course there will always be times when nothing worked, or where there is no way to prevent emotion shutting down thought because it has already happened. For some ideas about how to help in these cases see overleaf (as we used to say when books were made from trees).



CHAPTER 6:

That didn't work, then...



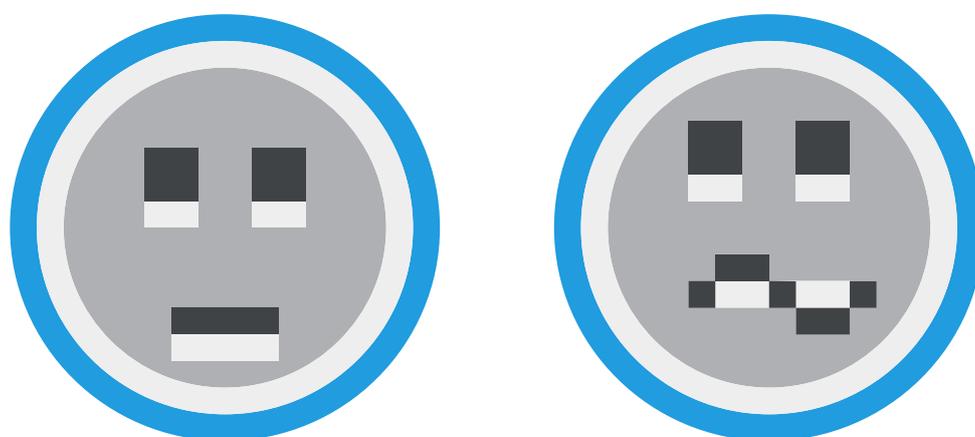
Ok. So you got there too late to head the problem off at the pass – someone's already cross and the situation is unpleasant. Maybe you'd like to talk about it but there's no way that's going to be useful – as Dave Grossman says in *On Killing*, you might as well try and argue with your dog.

So what to do? Here are some steps, with the principles they rest on. Sometimes it's best to let things wait a while, so unless you are a trained negotiator with extensive life insurance, use them with caution.

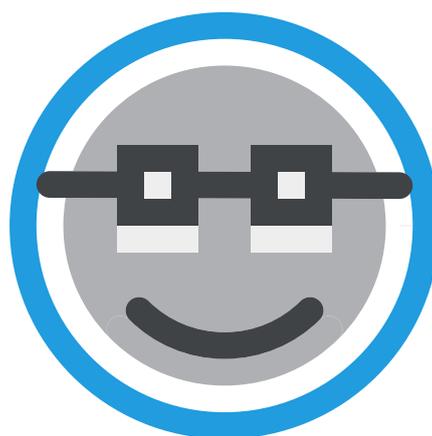
- 1. Beware** – emotion is contagious. Keep a grip on how you are thinking and feeling, and be prepared to get out of the situation if you feel you are getting wound up by it. No-one will be served by you getting too involved emotionally, and you don't want to end up with two idiots in the room.
- 2. Read the emotion.** Remember, when people are cross their thinking closes down into a much simpler mode, similar in all probability to the earlier primates we are related to such as the chimpanzees. So, while the causes of the difficulty might be down to a long and complex historic situation, the present emotion will be fairly simple and probably a shade of anger.



- 3. Build rapport.** As in chapter 3, talking about change so it happens, the first step is not to start talking about the problem, but to make a connection with another human being. Angry people are tense, active and loud – speaking calmly, quietly and rationally is the best way of saying “I’m not interested in you” to the upset person. Of course, you don’t want to escalate the situation either, so I recommend going part-way to where the other person is – be active and interested but not competitive or threatening, and talk about something else until you feel they are making eye contact and a normal rhythm of conversation has begun.
- 4. “Hear”** the cause of the upset. When you are talking about your own problems to someone close to you, how do you know that they have heard you? Usually you can tell from their eyes, the shape of their mouth, the way they hold their head, or the tone of their voice. It’s not a result of their saying “Ok, I know what you mean” but a number of other, non-verbal signals. So think – if you were angry and upset about something, how would you expect people who care about you to look? That’s what is needed to show you can “hear”.
- 5. Reflect what you hear,** so they know you are in communication with them. Bear in mind what emotion is present and how they must be feeling. So if someone says “I can’t believe you have put me on weekends again” and you know they were hoping to go fishing, you might start by saying “I know this is really frustrating...” rather than “It’s in your contract...” because hearing their emotion is the first step in getting it to reduce. Remember, you are agreeing with the emotion, not the underlying complaint.



- 6. Start to reframe.** Reframing moves the conversation from ‘we are here and I’m angry’ to ‘this is frustrating and I’m looking forward to something better’. So when the emotion has been heard and the other person is starting to look a little less battle-ready, you can start to orientate the conversation towards the future: “It’s frustrating for all of us that we don’t have a full-time weekend crew, and it’ll all work so much more smoothly when we have the new staff in place”. Note the order of events here: 1) reflect the underlying emotion; 2) link it to the the future with “and” if possible rather than “but”; 3) paint a picture of how the difficulty is to be resolved. Of course, you do then have to follow up and do what you’ve said you will, but that could be more productive than having angry staff..
- 7. Close.** The combination of hearing the emotion and reframing will calm the situation down, but now the emotion is reduced you have an opportunity to cement some ideas. Summarise the situation as you see it, checking back periodically to ensure there is agreement. Do this without setting anyone off again - see *I blame the scapegoats*: “So there was a problem with the rota” (Not: “You had a problem with the rota”) “and there were some tense moments with Fred”. (Not: “And you flew off the handle”). “And now the situation is that (fill in the positive reframe you have constructed)” Then, next time you see the person concerned (make it soon), go back and re-cover the same ground so they know you have heard and remember the difficulty and that you want to do something about it.



CHAPTER 7:

Next steps



We hope you can already see why some of the difficulties are arising at your workplace, and what you can do with some of the people, practices and resources to get things on a better track.

However you decide to go about this, remember one thing: the underlying mechanisms and needs of the human being are non-negotiable – you can argue with them but you can't win.

Companies tend to want everything at once – raised output and efficiency, staff wellbeing, better job satisfaction and staff retention. Sometimes those seem to be incompatible but they're not – in the long run. You can get extra performance out of someone for a while with carrots and sticks, but if you want a sustainable situation where people learn and develop, produce more and stay with the company instead of taking their knowledge elsewhere, you have to meet the underlying needs.



You might want to find out how well your existing arrangements do that – and WeThrive is here to help. Go to www.wethrive.net and set up a trial account – you can survey five staff absolutely free, and we’re sure that when you have the results – and have used the ideas in this ebook to work through them with the people concerned – you’ll want to find out about the rest.

On the resources page of our site; www.wethrive.net/free-performance-review-template/ there is a free performance review template that you can use with your people to implement the findings from WeThrive – you can use the same format for other development processes or interviews as well.

Please let us know how you get on...



CHAPTER 8:

Insomnia?



Some ideas for further reading...

- **Drive – the surprising truth about what motivates us**

Money is not the ultimate motivator – in fact the reverse – it can make pleasurable tasks seem dull and lifeless. Daniel Pink explains why.

- **Flow, the psychology of happiness**

Fascinating book by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a leader in the field of positive psychology: why are some activities inherently self-motivating – could you achieve that at work?

- **Emotional Intelligence**

Ok, an oldie, but read this rather than Venus and Mars – Daniel Goleman’s book contains some things you need to know.

- **The observing self**

These days it’s Mindful this and Mindful that – Mindfulness is everywhere. Go back to the source with Arthur Deikman rather than wading through the later stuff.

- **Dealing with Difficult People**

There are a thousand books on this topic – Roberta Cava’s is readable and has some good plans for managing problem personalities.

- **The Essential Difference**

Professor Simon Baron-Cohen writes well on the differences between male, female and autistic thinking styles.

- **The Worst is Over**

Actually this is written for ambulance personnel but you should read it: Judith Acosta’s book runs through the principles of communicating to people in trouble in a vivid way – one day you might need exactly the kind of language it contains, but you can adapt it to the workplace meanwhile.



MAKE A CHANGE TODAY!

Highlight the gaps & opportunities in
your team today AND find out what
to do about it - FREE for 10 staff!

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