

Expressing Appreciation to Your Team Members—Part 2

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“In the past seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?” That is one of twelve questions determined by Gallup organization research that, if answered, “Yes,” would indicate a healthy workplace. Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman published that research in 1999 in their book *First, Break All the Rules: What the World’s Greatest Leaders Do Differently*.

In 2011, Gary Chapman and Paul White told us that HOW we provide that recognition and praise makes a huge difference! Who knew? Are you aware that each person you influence speaks his or her own “appreciation language”? Are you able to speak all five variations of appreciation language?

Watch out! If you do what comes naturally for you, you’ll communicate wonderfully with those who also speak your natural “appreciation language.” But what about those who receive appreciation for who they are and what they do in a very different language? Uh-oh! Do you really want them inadvertently to not receive your support and encouragement?

This is one of those cases where lack of awareness can really hurt you. Thankfully, learning how to express appreciation in multiple languages is not nearly as difficult as learning to speak Chinese!

The book is entitled *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*. I described the five languages in my most recent article (which is on my website blog and “Article Archives”), but you can also explore their distinctions at www.appreciationatwork.com.

Additionally, you can take the “Motivation by Appreciation (MBA) Inventory” which is available online. If you purchase a copy of the book, a special alphanumeric code is available on the inside of the back cover. If you prefer, you can go to www.mbainventory.com and purchase an assessment for \$20.

This inventory is a “self-report” instrument, not a psychological test. Each item is a pair of statements that compares two different ways your boss or teammates might communicate encouragement and support to you. With each pair, you choose the approach you prefer others provide to you.

The output report identifies your dominant and secondary languages of appreciation. You could easily have each of the members of your team also take the inventory, so that you will have no doubt as to how each prefers to receive your expressions of gratitude.

Perhaps the most critical information described in the output report is your least valued language of appreciation. Why is that so important? Because some team members could be totally missing the very message of support and encouragement you sincerely are trying to deliver!

Just becoming aware of your least valued language of appreciation doesn’t guarantee success in communicating in that language. Seek individuals who have that as their dominant language; ask them to describe what causes them to value that approach. Only when you deeply understand will you be able to communicate your appreciation to that individual in a way that is deeply satisfying for him or her.

The book contains far more help than I can provide in this short article. Worth the price of the book alone is the “toolkit” appendix at the end. A series of very short stand-alone articles address issues and questions that come up repeatedly.

As a leader, you would be wise to learn to speak all five “languages of appreciation” fluently, applying them as appropriate for each of your team members!

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