

## 7.1: Chapter Introduction

### Introductory Exercises

1. Identify three things that you feel motivate you more than any others to work together with other people. Tell a classmate about a situation in which you benefited from those three things. Be as specific as you can about how each thing affected your attitude and behavior.
2. Think of a time interval during which your level of motivation to contribute to the work of a group increased or decreased dramatically. What caused the change? When you lost motivation, who or what might have prevented you from doing so?
3. What's the most challenging goal that a group you were part of ever set for itself? Did you achieve it? List several factors that contributed to your reaching it or failing to do so.
4. Think of one of the most successful groups you've been a member of. What steps did the group take regularly, if any, to check the level of its effectiveness?

*Gettin' good players is easy. Gettin' 'em to play together is the hard part.* - Casey Stengel

*Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.* - Henry Ford

A football coach was attempting to motivate his players through a difficult season. They were discouraged. Finally, the coach gathered the team together roughly and bellowed, "Did Michael Jordan ever quit?" The team yelled back, "No!" The coach then shouted, "What about the Wright brothers? Did they ever give up?" "No way!" the team yelled. "How about John Elway?" They all responded, "No!" "What about Mother Teresa?" "No! No!" they screamed. "Did Elmer Smith ever quit?" There was a long silence. Finally, one player was bold enough to ask, "Gosh, Coach, who's Elmer Smith? We never heard of him." The coach snapped back, "Of course you never heard of him—he quit!"

### Introduction

In this chapter, we'll address four major questions. They are "Why do people take action at any given time, instead of remaining inert and inactive?", "Why do people choose to act in the particular ways they do?", "How can we get individuals, by themselves, to act in certain ways?", and "Once people are acting properly as individuals, how can we get them to work together for the good of a group?"

These questions are short and simple, but their answers are not. Just think of some times in your own experience when you wished you had some way to get another person, or a group you were part of, to "get off the dime" and move in a direction you felt was the right way to go! The frustration you felt has echoed through the ages; the task of motivating people has challenged human beings since at least the dawn of history. Without motivation, we flounder or stagnate.

In the pages ahead, we'll review a number of theories of motivation, ranging from complex to relatively straightforward ones, and consider factors that influence how susceptible people are to being motivated. Next, we'll list and examine two kinds of strategies: first, those which can produce motivation in people, and second, those which can lead people, once motivated, to collaborate with one another.

No matter how people act, and whether they take any action at all, the process of determining and stating whether something happened or didn't happen will always be crucial to understanding the past and preparing for the future. You can probably recall situations in your life when a person or a group seemed to be wandering about in circles, repeating statements and behaviors rather than building on them to move forward. Perhaps it was because, even though there was action going on, no one was examining what the action was leading to. To end our chapter, therefore, we'll consider the vital role that feedback and assessment play in generating and maintaining group motivation.

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