

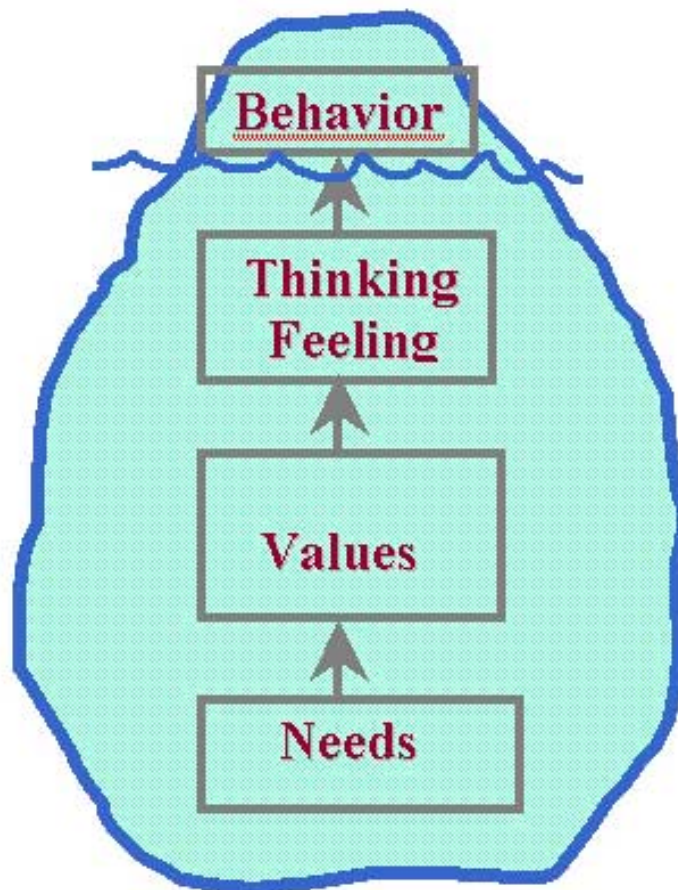
Creating an Environment That Works

Rensis Likert, one of the pioneers in the field of motivation theory, and after which the Likert Scale is named, said this: "The greater the loyalty of a group toward the group, the greater is the motivation among the members to achieve the goals of the group, and the greater the probability that the group will achieve its goals."

After thinking about his statement, it begs the question: Can you truly motivate another human being? My belief is that you CANNOT MOTIVATE ANOTHER PERSON. That may sound rather pessimistic, but that's my story and I'm sticking with it! However, as managers and leaders within our organizations, I have an optimistic belief we can do much to create an environment where people will become self-motivated.

Let's look at the rationale for this belief. In our work with behavioral styles, we have discovered that behavior is almost always needs driven. Think of a newborn child. First the need occurs, then the feeling, then the behavior. The baby has a need for food, which triggers a feeling of intense hunger, which results in the baby crying. Most mothers and fathers can distinguish a cry for food from other sorts of cries.

As we grow older, we add other elements into our needs-driven behavior. In our DiSC model, we often talk about the whole person concept, which is sometimes referred to as the iceberg model. See example #1.



Example #1 - Iceberg Model

Creating an Environment That Works

As you can see above, we have behavior at the top of the model. Right underneath behavior, we have thoughts and feelings, followed by values and beliefs, with needs at the bottom of the iceberg.

Let's take an example of how this applies in our lives. Have you ever had an internal dialogue playing out in your head on a cold, dreary winter day, when you would rather stay in your warm bed, than get up and go in for that early morning meeting? Most of us have!

Our feelings are telling us we want to stay in bed, while our thoughts are we "should" get into the office early today. Typically, our beliefs about being a team player or our work ethic value will aid us in getting out of bed. And certainly, our need to stay employed, and to provide for our family may be at the bottom of this internal dialogue. Thus, our behavior motivates us to leave our cozy bed and get into work.

Contrast that with an employee who's deepest need is to not be alone in this world, who has just had a major falling out with their significant other, and who has a belief system that this person will leave them if they don't do something to "fix" this problem immediately. On top of that, they may harbor the belief they are unlovable, and will never find another partner if this one leaves. They think they "should" go to work, but their feelings of fear and inadequacy win out, and they call in sick. We may label their behavior as irresponsible, especially if it occurs more regularly than with most associates.

And perhaps it is, but to them it makes total sense, and they can't fathom any other decision at this point.

In order for us to be effective, and to create an environment where people are self-motivated, we must understand what lies below the surface of the iceberg. By getting to know our associates, we can better understand what is driving their behavior. This is one of the keys to creating a high performing team.

A model such as Disc can assist us in understanding these needs. For example, someone with a high Dominance style of behavior has a need for results and achievement. A person with a high Influence style has a need for social recognition and competence. Someone with a high Steadiness style has a need for acceptance and stability. And someone with a high Conscientiousness style has a need for accuracy and correctness.

Obviously, as human beings, we are much more complicated than this, but it can be a start in looking below the surface of the iceberg. Many of us have a combination of at least two of these styles, and sometimes three. The behavior we see is only the tip of the iceberg.

If each of these behavioral styles has different needs and goals, how can we begin to create an environment that works for most everyone? Here are five tips to get us moving in the right direction regardless of individual styles.

- **Be clear on expectations up front**
Let people know what is important to you and what you expect from them. Share your own style and needs with your fellow associates and friends.
- **Walk the talk and lead by example**
Step in to support your team at every opportunity. Maintain your own sense of personal integrity at all times.
- **Get to know your people and what makes them tick**
Be a student of understanding differences, and adapt your style to meet their needs. Provide opportunities for people to operate from their strengths.

Creating an Environment That Works

- **Provide honest feedback, and continuous coaching-**
Encourage an environment where team members can learn from one another, including from you, and you from them. Tell the truth.
- **Encourage and reward accountability**
Provide reinforcement when people take initiative. Be the poster child for personal accountability. Admit mistakes and learn from them.

I once attended an advanced facilitation skills class, where the facilitator said something that has stayed with me all these years. She said, "you can't take a group any further than you are". Think about that. If I have issues around control, or trust, or rigidity, it will almost certainly surface in our work as a group or a team.

If I can begin to work on myself first, things will begin to shift. I have to get honest with myself, and my own needs, to determine what is driving my own behavior. I have to slay my own dragons before I can create an environment where others can do the same. I must assess my own level of motivation and my own attitude, before I can support others in this endeavor. By working on my own self-management, I can create an environment where others are self-motivated, and where as a team we are more likely to achieve our goals. And who knows, we just might have some fun along the way as well.

Note about author:

Paula K. Switzer, is the owner of Switzer Resource Group, Inc. in Shawnee, Kansas and a member of KC-ASTD.

Switzer Resource Group, Inc. works with businesses & government organizations, helping them improve their customer service, increase sales, and enhance teamwork through providing skill-based training, hands-on coaching, and the use of other resources as needed.

They do this by creating an environment where managers and individual contributors become active partners in their own and their organization's success.

You can contact Paula at 913.268.6070 or visit their website at www.trainingresources.com.

The articles reprinted here are copyrighted by Switzer Resources Group, Inc., Resale or false representation of the author's work is prohibited by law. If you have questions about the permissibility of usage, please email srg@trainingresources.com to obtain advance permission in writing. Include such information as: Number of copies to be circulated, in what format it will be offered and your intended purpose.