

# MOTIVATION PROBLEMS IN THE WORK

Ken Williams, Ph.D.

***“For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”      **Philippians 2:13*****

Motivation: The incentives that initiate, sustain, and direct behavior.

## **Some Principles of Motivation**

1. All behavior is motivated. Even doing nothing.
2. In cross-cultural work, problems are usually not in initiating, but in sustaining and directing behavior. We must make a distinction.
3. There are two kinds of motivation: internal and external. Usually both kinds are involved when problems occur.
4. Motivation may be conscious or unconscious. Often it's both.
5. Short- and long-range trends are critical in diagnosing motivation problems.

## **Some Reasons for Problems**

1. Internal reasons.
  - a. Spiritual difficulties. Often related to other areas.
  - b. Physical problems. May not be diagnosed or recognized.
  - c. Unresolved emotional conflicts.
  - d. Poor self-esteem. Often related to emotional conflicts.
    - Feels incapable of producing.

- Feels unworthy of producing.
  - e. Lack of purpose and/or long-range goals.
  - f. Lack of management or other skills.
  - g. Inappropriate habit patterns.
2. External reasons: the person's reaction to the situation.
    - a. The work isn't challenging or fulfilling.
    - b. The work is too difficult.
    - c. Insufficient positive feedback.
      - From the work.
      - From others.
    - d. Interpersonal conflicts—at work or elsewhere.
    - e. Insufficient direction and/or help.
    - f. Not coping with stress—at work or elsewhere.
    - g. Poor group morale and/or team spirit.

## **Dealing with the Problem**

1. Your relationship with the person is crucial.
  - a. Avoid condemning, judging, criticizing.
  - b. Communicate unconditional love and affirmation.
  - c. Demonstrate concern for the person, not just for the work.
  - d. Talk about your responsibility before God to deal with the problem, for his/her sake and for His work.
2. Use your best interpersonal skills to diagnose the situation.
  - a. Encourage the person to talk about it.
  - b. Use your drawing out skills. Bubbles may lead to underlying causes.
  - c. Avoid premature solutions, advice or judgments.
  - d. Discern between short-term and long-term problems. Look at trends, and what may have happened to affect motivation.
3. Try practical assignments.
  - a. Give simple, measurable tasks first.
  - b. Use these for further diagnosis.
  - c. Stay with the person. Don't give up too quickly.
4. Enlist help from others.
  - a. Technical expertise.
  - b. Counsel—for yourself and/or the person.
  - c. Accountability partner.
  - d. Encouragers.
5. Take action if there is insufficient change.
  - a. Openly discuss options and consequences with the person.
  - b. Give enough time for change, but don't let problems go on without taking action.
  - c. Seek to balance your responsibility to the person and the work. Remember that leaving a person in a situation in which he/she is unmotivated is not helping the person or the work.