

3 Keys for
Business Leaders
Educators
Coaches
and
Parents

***Bringing
Out the Best
in Others!***

Thomas K. Connellan, Ph.D.

*Author of The Wall Street Journal bestseller
Inside the Magic Kingdom*

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Bringing Out the Best in Others!

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Bringing Out the Best in Others!

*Three Keys for Business Leaders,
Educators, Coaches and Parents*



Thomas K. Connellan, Ph.D.

BARD PRESS
Austin

Bringing Out the Best in Others!

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Bard Press
5275 McCormick Mtn. Dr.
Austin, Texas 78734
512-266-2112
www.bardpress.com

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Ordering Information

To order additional copies, contact your local bookstore or call 800-945-3132.

Quantity discounts are available.

ISBN 1-885167-58-X (hardcover)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Connellan, Thomas K., 1942-

Bringing out the best in others! : 3 keys for business leaders, educators, coaches and parents / Thomas K. Connellan.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 1-885167-58-X (cloth : alk paper)

1. Employee motivation. 2. Expectation (Psychology) 3. Responsibility.
4. Feedback (Psychology) I. Title.

HF5549.5.M63 C658 2002

158.2--dc21

2002038574

Credits

Developmental Editor: Jeff Morris

Proofreading: Bobbie Jo Sims, Deborah Costenbader

Cover design: Hesperheide Design

Text design/illustration/production: Jeff Morris

First printing: January 2003

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1

The Issues

Why Do Good People Fall Short?

October 14, 8:30 A.M. In a small conference room, four men and two women were seated around a conference table. Tony Russo, the man at the head of the table, smiled at the others and spoke.

“Here’s the drill,” he said. “Each of you is here to tackle a problem you’re having with someone you know who is underperforming. Today we’ll get a handle on these problems and look at some proven techniques that will help you solve them. Along the way, I’ll give you a framework for laying out your action plan to improve performance.

“Over the next ninety days, you’ll put these techniques to work. Then we’ll meet back here and swap stories to see how well you did. I’ve conducted hundreds of these programs, so I’m sure most of you — perhaps all of you — will have success stories to tell us. And some of you will find other ways you can use these tools

besides addressing the specific problems you came here to solve. For now, though, we'll focus on what you came here for.

"Each of you has sent me a brief description of yourself and of the issue you're facing at work, at home, or in some other situation. I've also had a chat with each of you, in person or on the phone. So I know a little bit about you already. And I've provided each of you with a list of our ground rules — confidentiality, privacy, cell phones, and so forth — so I'll assume you're up to speed on those matters.

“Now, to get the ball rolling, I'd like you to tell me, and everyone else here, something about what you're up against. Describe your performance situation to the group. This can be a problem getting an employee or employees to perform well, achieving cooperation from fellow committee members, problems with your kids — any situation in which people don't do as you expect or want them to.

"Start by introducing yourself to the group, then describe where you work, what you do, who is involved, and so forth. Condense it into about a minute, and we'll go once around the room. Later we'll talk about our situations in more detail.

"Who's willing to go first? Good, let's start with you, Mary. Tell us what you do and the issue you want to resolve. You're a sales manager, right?"

Mary nodded. “Yes, I’m Mary Steena, and I’m the national sales manager for Caribou Creek. We distribute specialty food items through a variety of channels. I’m here because I’m having problems with a couple of my sales reps.

“Actually, I should qualify that. The problems I’m having with two of my salespeople — I’ll just call them Marvin and Pat — are not unique. Every sales manager has trouble getting peak performance from all sales reps all the time. A certain amount of that is part of the psychology of sales. When it’s hot, it’s hot, and when it’s not, it’s not. People are more motivated when things are going well, and less motivated when items aren’t selling.

“But Marvin is a special case, and that’s why this bothers me so much. When he’s on his game, there’s nobody better at selling. But too much of the time he simply doesn’t apply himself. Not only does it affect his own sales, but it affects overall sales, because the rest of the sales staff know how good a salesman he is, and they look up to him.

“I take him aside for a heart-to-heart talk, and he goes back out and beats his quota for a week or two. Then he lets things slide again. Another talk, and he’s setting records again, but it never lasts.

“Pat is another story. He used to be good, almost as good as Marvin, but over the past year or two his performance has gone steadily downhill. Pat’s got the skills and experience to be a top-notch sales rep, but he’s just not performing. I talk with him and his performance improves, but not as much as it should. Then he slips —

kind of like Marvin, but a little lower than he was before. We talk again, and he improves again, then he slips again. So it's the same up-and-down as with Marvin, but with the slips frequently at a slightly lower level than before.

“I went to our VP of sales and marketing and told him I didn't know what else I could do to stop Pat's downhill slide, and that Marvin's ups and downs were affecting the whole sales staff. He sent me here.”

“Thank you, Mary. Well stated. Now let me ask you something. What's your perception of where the problem lies? Is there something going on with Marvin and Pat that you don't know about or can't fix? Or do you think the problem comes from somewhere outside them — something to do with their interaction with the company?”

“I don't know, Tony. They never complain to me about anything, and when I talk with them about their performance, they don't blame anybody else — just the market, or the competition, or the pricing. If they're having trouble at home, I'm not aware of it.”

“Okay,” said Tony. “I know we can't answer this question up front, and the answer, whatever it might be, may only lead to part of the solution. I brought it up because it's important to ask questions even when we can't answer them. This is only one of the questions we need to keep in mind. And sometimes, part of the solution is to refer someone to Human Resources. Or with kids, it may be a clinical situation — they may need professional help.”

“But I’ll tell you this. We’ve had a lot of sales managers in this program, at least 200 over the past five years, and our results have been excellent — as you’ll see.

“**L**et’s hear next from the guy whose business is asking lots of questions — the teacher. Mike, why are you here?”

Mike, who was leaning back in his chair, sat forward quickly. “No fair, I didn’t have my hand up.” This got a laugh.

“Think of this as a pop quiz, Mike,” replied Tony, bringing more laughs. “I think you explained in your letter that you were concerned about some of your brightest students.”

“Yes, that’s true. But I guess I’d have to say I’m concerned about all my students. Even though I teach fifth grade, I try to keep track of them down the line, and I see too many going out into the world not having discovered their full potential, not having the tools and skills and resources to realize it. As an educator, I think that’s a terrible waste of a valuable resource. Oh, and my name’s Mike Gwinn, and I teach here in Chatham.

“Mary told us about Marvin. Well, I sometimes feel like I have a whole classroom full of Marvins. A few of my kids are geniuses, a few are marginal achievers who try as hard as they can to keep up — but most are just average kids who don’t seem to care much about the world outside their immediate circle of friends. They don’t have any idea what they’re capable of, what their

untapped talents could mean to them and to the world.

“I went into teaching because I felt it was a good way to help make the world better. Even though I’ve become discouraged at how intractable this problem seems to be, I guess I’m still idealistic enough to want to make

a difference. If I can come out of this program with just one good idea, I’ll consider it time well spent.”

Tony said, “Yes, Mike, I think you’ll gain more than one good idea during the time you spend here. And

“
If I can come out of this program with just one good idea, I’ll consider it time well spent.
 ”

before this exercise ends, we’ll all know what ideas you picked up and how useful they were in your situation because, as we work our way through, we’re going to apply what we learn. I’ll give you some tools to try out, along with some guidelines for applying them. Then, after you’ve had a chance to apply them, we’ll meet once more to hear how well they’ve worked.

“It’s unusual to have a teacher in a group of businesspeople, as you might have guessed, but it’s not our first time. We’ve worked with educators before, and in most cases we’ve been able to raise test scores 5 to 10 percent on average. Not bad, eh?”

“**N**ow that we’ve heard Mike’s concerns, let’s take a look at a similar issue from the other side. I believe

Lloyd Magnusson is here strictly as a parent, and he's concerned that his daughter is not doing well in school. Is that right, Lloyd?"

Lloyd nodded. "Lori is a big worry for my wife and me. She does well on achievement tests, and she used to be among the top students in grade school. But now she seems to have lost interest in learning. She gets mostly C's and D's, with an occasional A or B. We can't seem to get her out of her slump. Sometimes we can't even get her to talk to us. When we do manage to get through to her, her grades usually go up, but before long they're down again."

"How old is she?"

"She's fourteen."

"I wonder," said Tony. "Have you thought this might be normal teenage rebellion? Or do you think it's something more?"

"I don't think that's quite it, although there's some of that going on. When she shuts herself off from us, it's more like she's disappointed in herself for not doing better. Sometimes she really applies herself, and she does seem pleased when she gets good results, like a B on a test or an essay. But then she loses interest, doesn't study, flunks a test, and gets even more discouraged. And her room gets even messier, which is another issue we're having with her."

"Well, Lloyd, I can't guarantee you can solve this problem overnight, but I can say this: your situation is not unique. We've dealt with this before and achieved some pretty good results. It's tough to see your own kid stumble,

but you should know we've seen a lot worse and turned the situation around. So don't be discouraged.

"Yes, Janet?"

"Tony, I just want Lloyd to know that teenage girls are a mystery deeper than the ocean, and just about as scary. I know, because I was once a teenage girl and I've raised two of my own. And I did it the hard way, by instinct and guesswork — which in some cases means simply waiting it out. But from what I've heard about it, Lloyd, I think this program will help you understand and deal with it a lot faster than I was able to. And probably better."

"Thanks, Janet," said Tony. "And you're right. You'd be surprised at how many business managers have come up to me after one of these sessions and said, 'Tony, this is really good stuff, but I wish I'd known it when I was raising my kids!'"

But that's not what you're here for today, is it?"

"No, it's not," agreed Janet. "I'm Janet Patterson, and I'm here because I'm concerned about my grown-ups. I'm a nursing supervisor at Saint Joseph's Hospital. We're a community hospital, and I'm all too familiar with the pressures my people are under — life-and-death situations, bureaucratic foul-ups, too little money, too many patients, understaffing, the works. It can be stressful for all of us. And nurses who are under stress sometimes become poor team players. They stop helping and

cooperating with one another. They don't pass along helpful information to the next shift. Their attitude becomes, 'My shift's over, it's been a bad day, I'm outta here.'

"These are good people. They're capable of doing wonderful things for their patients, even with the odds stacked against them. But when teamwork lags, that stacks the odds even more. I wish I knew how to get through to them — how to get them to put forth that little bit of extra effort that saves ten times as much work for someone else.

"I can get some of them to be good team players almost all of the time, and I can get all of them to be good team players some of the time. What I want is for all of them to be the best team players they can be, all of the time."

"Thank you, Janet. I think we'll soon discover ways to help you bring out the best in your nurses. You used the word 'teamwork,' and that's significant, because we've been very successful at improving teamwork in many different situations. And teamwork has a synergistic effect: small improvements in teamwork can create big improvements in overall results.

“**N**ow, Carlos, that leaves you. Will you tell us your story?”

“Certainly,” said Carlos. “I’m Carlos Navarro, and I’m the president of Arbor Paper Products here in Chatham. We produce pressure-sensitive products like

mailing labels, product labels, and the stock postage stamps are made from. Chances are pretty good you use a lot of the products we manufacture.

“Our plant produces good results, but it’s still not living up to its potential. Production volume is good, and product quality is good, but the plant has just never operated at its design potential.

“Even though our people believe they’re giving it all they’ve got, I know there’s another 2 to 3 percent productivity available to us, but it seems just out of reach. How do we tap that last bit of potential?

“These are good people. I can’t push them any harder. I have to find ways of pulling them along. A colleague of mine told me this was the place to learn how to pull out that last 2 or 3 percent.”

“**O**kay, thanks, Carlos. This program has been very successful in raising manufacturing productivity across a broad spectrum of industries. I can almost guarantee you’ll achieve your efficiency goals. But I have to warn you — the bigger the company, the bigger the task.

“Folks, before we go on, does anybody have any questions? Comments?”

“Yes, Tony,” said Mary. “At first I was a bit confused about why we seemed to be such a diverse group. I’ve known Carlos for some time, so his presence didn’t surprise me. And I was talking with Janet before you came in and knew that she was a supervisor, like me. But when

I learned that Mike was a teacher and heard Lloyd mention something about his child, I wondered for a moment if this was going to be time well spent. I was concerned about what I perceived as ‘nonbusiness’ issues, like grades or parenting.

“But now I believe I understand what we have in common. Business is not the point. Although we are dealing with children and adults, with students as well as employees, what we share is performance issues — right? Getting someone to perform better or at least differently. It’s all about human behavior. Each of us needs to get someone to behave differently — whether it’s sales, quality, productivity, teamwork, grades, or something else.”



It’s all about human behavior.



“That’s a good insight, Mary. And it’s the key to understanding the roadblocks you’re all up against. There are more similarities than differences in your situations. For instance, take your sales reps, Marvin and Pat, and Lloyd’s daughter, Lori. Each seems to improve after a heart-to-heart talk, but the improvement never lasts. That’s a commonality, and both of you will walk away from here with a set of tools to resolve that up-down-up-down issue. You’ll probably apply them differently, but the core skill will be the same.

“Same thing for everyone here. The tools that help Carlos get more out of his employees can help Mike get more out of his students. What works for Janet in dealing with teamwork at the hospital may be just the thing to

help Carlos improve teamwork in his factory. Or, for that matter, in the youth soccer team he coaches.

“This is not an oversimplification of your issues, nor do I mean to imply that Marvin is a child, or that nurses work under the same conditions as salespeople. As you’ll see, the tools we’re talking about are universal.



The tools we’re talking about are universal. They work because they focus on changing behavior.



They work because they focus on changing behavior. If you apply them, they’ll bring out the best in anyone — whether in business, school, community service, or the home. Some of your organizations may have mentoring programs, or perhaps

you or someone you know is mentoring a student. The process and tools apply in these situations, too.

“One more thing. As we move along, I’m going to ask each of you to get more specific about exactly what changes you’d like to see. We’ll come to that later, but for now, just start thinking about it.

“In a few minutes I’ll tell you what we’ve learned about the conditions that create high-performing individuals — what makes them tick. We’ll discuss and analyze these conditions and how they can be created for the individuals you’re concerned about.

“By the time we finish today, you’ll have gained enough knowledge to go out and bring forth high performance from people you never thought capable of it. Consistently high performance, over the long term.”

Discovery

What Creates Consistently High Performance?

Tony placed a small stack of papers on the table. He looked out at the five people seated around the table. “Let’s see a show of hands. How many of you are ‘only children?’”

Mary raised her hand.

“Now, all of you who are firstborns, raise your hands.” Three more: Mike, Janet, and Lloyd. Mary hesitated, then lowered her hand. “You too, Mary. An only child counts as a firstborn. Carlos, what about you?”

“I was second youngest of six,” said Carlos. “One older brother, four sisters.”

“Interesting,” said Tony. “Four out of five. In all the programs I’ve held on this topic, the average has been about 60 percent firstborns.”

“You’re wondering why I asked that, aren’t you? It wasn’t because I’m nosy. Although, as others will tell you, I am certainly a curious fellow.” They chuckled.

“It’s because of something I became aware of about ten years ago, when I first started looking at this whole issue of high performance. Whenever I talked with a manager, supervisor, team leader, or executive, I would ask questions about their top performers.

“A sales manager would say to me, ‘What I need is four more reps like George.’ Not having a clue about this George, I would ask for more details. ‘Well, he’s a top performer in every way,’ the sales manager would say. ‘He does his homework on what the customer needs. He goes into each call well prepared. He gets in the extra call at the end of the day. And it pays off — he’s always number one or number two in everything we measure. Sales volume, gross margin dollars, new accounts, account retention, customer satisfaction — you name it, he’s there.’”

“Can you give me George’s phone number?” asked Mary. The others laughed. “I’ve got a spot for him. And his twelve brothers and sisters.”

Tony smiled. “Nice try, Mary. Sorry, George is happily employed — or was, ten years ago. But you raise two interesting points. One is about the brothers and sisters. That’s important, and I’ll tell you why in a minute. The other point is that you probably already have several potential ‘Georges’ on your payroll. Marvin could be a ‘George.’ Maybe Pat, too. I’m going to show you how to tap into their full potential, and why you’re going to see a bump in sales when you do. Ten percent, 20 percent, maybe even 30 percent. We’ve even gotten 40 to 50 percent improvement in a number of cases — and in a couple of instances involving just one individual

and one product, we actually hit 200 percent. But 10 to 20 percent is the norm.”

Tony could see, in their faces, the effect this information was having on the group. They were silently working the numbers, translating the “bump” into dollars, or perhaps grades — all except Lloyd, who asked, “What if we’re not talking about sales or revenues? How do you translate that in terms of child rearing?”

“Good question, Lloyd. Of course we’re talking about something much broader than just a company’s bottom line. We’re talking about the behaviors that bring such results. You’ll see the same behavior improvements in Lori, Lloyd, although I doubt it will put your family in a higher tax bracket.” Lloyd smiled.

“Now, in your case, Mike,” continued Tony, “you’ll see improvements you can measure in terms of your students’ grades, attendance records, and so forth.” Mike nodded. “And Janet will use other measures of improvement — staff going out of their way to help others, better working relationships with admitting or pharmacy — and if the studies I’ve read are right, that will lead to reduced treatment costs and potentially even shorter hospital stays.

“But whether you can measure them with actual numbers or not — and in most cases you can — you’ll all see notable improvements after you’ve learned and applied the principles we’re going to discuss here.

“To get back to my story: The sales manager was describing all the ways his top sales rep was great, but this didn’t tell me *why* George was a cut above the others, *why* he was such a self-starter. It was the same with other people I talked to — department heads, engineering team leaders, principals, community leaders. Each would sing the praises of one or two outstanding performers.

“But I wasn’t learning much about what caused the higher levels of performance. I was looking for a pattern, a system. I hoped to find something I could replicate and teach to others, but high achievers just seemed to happen.

“So I began to dig deeper. I asked questions about the high achievers’ backgrounds. There were lots of possibilities — education, money, experience, the usual suspects. But these things didn’t correlate with achievement as strongly as I had expected. Trying to find some factor that could reliably predict success was like searching for a diamond in a gravel pit.

“Then I discovered something odd. I read a report that said 64 percent of the people listed in *Who’s Who* happened to be the oldest children in their families.

“One study doesn’t mean much of anything in statistics, but it made me wonder: Could it actually be that simple? Could being a firstborn make such a difference?

“I began to check out the statistics on firstborns. And what I found amazed me. So if you’re taking notes, here are a few facts to write down and think about.

“Fact number one: Two-thirds of all entrepreneurs are firstborns.

“Fact number two: Of the first twenty-three astronauts, twenty-one were firstborns.

“Fact number three: A ten-year study of 1,500 superior Wisconsin ninth-graders showed that 49 percent of them were firstborns.”

“That’s a nice set of facts,” said Carlos. “But what’s the relevance? We’re here to brush up on our leadership skills, not to learn how to recruit firstborns, right?”

“Of course,” replied Tony. “The same thought occurred to me. But you’re just a little ahead of the story. Stay with me a minute and you’ll see the point.

“More facts: Female world leaders between 1960 and 1999 — 45 percent were firstborn.

“Firstborns are twice as likely to become CEOs as laterborns.

“Fifty-five percent of all supreme court justices have been firstborns.

“Over half of United States presidents have been firstborns.

“Here’s an interesting finding. One study showed that more than half the people elected president of the American Psychological Association were firstborns. Incidentally, it’s the same with people who were elected to the National Academy of Sciences. And according to a study done in 1874, firstborns were overrepresented among fellows of the Royal Society, England’s distinguished scientific academy.”

“
Over half of United States presidents have been firstborns.
 ”

“When you say ‘overrepresented,’ what percentage would you expect?” asked Mike. “Maybe there are just more firstborns than people realize.”

“Good question, Mike. In the general population, firstborns make up about 35 percent — including, as I said, ‘only’ children. This gives us a basis for comparison. For example, in one air force study, about 80 percent of high-achieving military pilots were firstborn. That’s more than twice the percentage you’d expect if being firstborn made no difference.

“Here’s more: 55 percent of highly creative scientists at one major chemical company — ‘creative’ meaning having a Ph.D. and getting more than one patent a year — were firstborns.”

Carlos leaned forward in his chair. “Just out of curiosity, do you ever find any firstborns among the lowest performers?”

“As a matter of fact, yes. For example, in the last study I mentioned, the chemical company, 14 percent of the ‘low creative’ scientists — that is, Ph.D.s with zero patents per year — were firstborns. In other words, being firstborn is not a guarantor of success — just a strong indicator.

“Now, this brings us to the issue Carlos brought up a minute ago: the leadership issue.

“This is a leadership program, not an employment practices seminar. We’re not here to learn how to round up firstborns and pen them in our corral. That’s labor

intensive, not worth the effort you'd have to spend to do it, and it's no guarantee of success. And — although I'm no lawyer — it's probably illegal.

“But Carlos's question leads to another, more interesting set of questions: What is it about firstborns that makes them top performers? Can we identify the environmental factors that tend to lead to higher levels of performance among firstborns? And can we use these factors to make a top performer — or at least a significantly better performer — out of any associate or employee? Or any committee member? Or any team or task force member? Or any student? Or any child?

“Starting with the people we have, how do we bring out the best in them? How do we tap their full potential? Not everyone can be great, but most can be better than they are. By leadership alone, can we get others to perform at higher levels simply by tapping into their full potential?

“You'll notice that I'm limiting this discussion to environmental factors, not genetic ones.”

“Yes,” said Carlos with a grin. “As fifth out of six, I was ready to challenge if you brought up genetics.”

Tony and the others laughed. “Good. You'll be happy to know that the only mention I'm going to make is this: There is no scientific evidence, or even basis, for the idea that the order of birth affects genetic makeup.



**Not everyone can be great,
but most can be better than
they are.**



“**B**ut let me cut to the chase. I went looking for environmental factors. Specifically, what was different about the way firstborns were raised? About the way they were treated by the people around them, their parents, their schools? There are lots of possibilities, of course. Things like being raised by younger parents, which as we all know has its downside as well as its advantages.

“I read the psychology journals. I talked with child psychologists. I interviewed parents. I watched families in action. I learned a lot, and I identified dozens, maybe hundreds of things that could potentially influence success in life.

“But when it came to the differences between firstborns and the rest of the children in a family, there were three factors that stood above the rest. Firstborns get more positive expectations, more responsibility, and more feedback.

“These are worth writing down and thinking about. In fact, we’ll be talking about them for the rest of the day.

“First factor.” Tony turned and scrawled a large number “1” on the chalkboard behind him, followed by a single word:

1. EXPECTATIONS

“Expectations. People have more positive expectations for firstborns. They’re going to be president of the

senior class, the all-star quarterback, head cheerleader, captain of the tennis team. Whatever they're involved in, they're expected to excel.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

“Second factor: Firstborns are given more responsibility, and at an earlier age. They're asked to look after and help take care of their younger brothers and sisters. When they all go to the movies together, or to the mall, or out to the street to meet the ice cream truck, the oldest is given the money, the cell phone, the directions on how to get there, what to buy, what not to do.

3. FEEDBACK

“Third factor: Firstborns get more feedback. They get more attention from parents, relatives, family friends. They have more pictures taken. Parents spend more time encouraging them to walk and talk.

“To me, this was very exciting information. It meant that we could actually identify three distinct conditions that tend to make firstborns better-than-average achievers. And having identified them, we could examine them, and study them, and learn from them. Then, perhaps, we could replicate them in other situations —

business offices, retail stores, classrooms, civic organizations, even sports.

“You see, the important thing to keep in mind is that these factors are not intrinsic to firstborns. They are plainly environmental. And here’s the most wonderful, amazing thing about them: it’s the *presence* of the three factors that makes the difference. It’s not about

being firstborn — it’s about the presence of the three factors. Sure, they happen to be present more often with firstborns than with those born later. But when we’ve put these three factors into practice with later-born children, they have worked

“**Expectations, responsibility, feedback — it’s the *presence* of these factors that makes the difference.**

”

there as well. When we used the factors on a sales team, they worked there. When we applied them to manufacturing, they worked again. In short, everywhere we’ve tried them, they’ve worked.

“I discovered this when I dug deeper beneath the surface of what makes top performers. The more research I did, the more top performers I found who didn’t necessarily match the ‘first child’ pattern.

“For example, I talked with a number of high-performing and low-performing sales reps in wholesale distribution companies. Mary, I know this will interest you. In one study, I found quite the reverse of what I expected — there were more firstborns among the low performers than among the high performers.

“I thought, What the heck is going on here?

“But I kept talking with people. I began to focus more on the leaders, and I discovered something very interesting. The leaders of the high performers were actually creating the three factors in the job setting. That is, they were supplying the environment that usually gives the firstborn an advantage.

“In another of my sales rep studies, I focused specifically on how good the sales managers were at introducing the three factors into the workplace, and I designed a test to measure the results. And sure enough, the managers of the high performers scored 22 percent higher in their ability to create the three factors than the managers of the low performers.

“I interviewed company presidents who achieved that position before age forty. I didn’t find as many firstborns as I expected, but I discovered something just as significant. Two-thirds of them could identify a supervisor or manager or mentor from earlier in their career who created the factors in the job climate.

“The effects of expectations, responsibility, and feedback are age independent. They are something you can put into the work environment to improve the performance of adults. Janet, you can build them into your interactions with your nursing team, the administration, the pathology lab, and other departments to improve communication, attention to detail, cooperation — in other words, teamwork. Mary, you can apply them to your problems with Marvin and Pat to make them full-time top performers — and, not incidentally,

raise the performance level of the whole sales staff. Carlos, you'll find it will help you raise throughput, product quality, and most other measures of productivity.

"And, of course, Mike and Lloyd can use them on their kids, who are still in their formative years." The two men nodded hesitantly.

Tony sat without speaking for a few moments. He studied the faces around the table. Janet was still hurriedly scribbling notes. Mary was tapping her teeth with the eraser end of her pencil. Carlos sat back with his fingers interlaced, lost in his own thoughts.

"Okay, right now you've probably got a lot going on in your heads. You may be thinking, 'Interesting, but how do I put it to work?' Or 'I think I'm doing some of this now.' Or maybe 'Hmm — I'm doing pretty good on two of the factors, but not so good on the third.' What I usually find is that people are already using some of these factors but haven't put them together in a coordinated way. It's almost certain that you've used them in situations where you've succeeded.

"Let me ask you a question. What have you done for yourself lately? Think of some personal goal you've set for yourself, one that you've followed through on and accomplished. Like learning a new computer program or losing weight or mastering Thai cooking."

Lloyd's eyes lit up in recognition.

"Yes, Lloyd?"

“A few years ago I decided I needed to lose a lot of weight and get in shape. So I set up a training schedule for myself. You know, daily and weekly goals for running, weight training, calorie intake, and so forth. I charted my progress, kept at it for many months, and finally reached my weight and strength goals.”

“So you began the program in the expectation that you would achieve your goals, didn’t you?”

“Yes, of course,” said Lloyd. “Otherwise, I suppose, I wouldn’t have bothered to start.”

“You gave yourself the first essential condition: positive expectations. The fact that you expected to accomplish your goals made reaching them almost inevitable, didn’t it? I like to repeat what Henry Ford said: ‘Whether you think you can or whether you think you can’t, you’re right.’ As a leader, your job is to help them think they can.”

“That’s a good quote,” said Mike. “I think I’ll frame that and hang it in my classroom.”

“Think about the second factor,” Tony went on. “Responsibility. How did you take responsibility for achieving your goal?”

Lloyd thought for a moment. “By posting my goals on my kitchen wall. I couldn’t miss seeing them every day, and to keep my conscience from bothering me, I stuck to the schedule. Is that what you mean?”



‘Whether you think you can or whether you think you can’t, you’re right.’ — Henry Ford



“Exactly,” said Tony. “You took the responsibility for your own actions. You set up meaningful but realistic targets, using short-range and long-range goals you felt you could achieve. You didn’t leave yourself any room to make excuses, such as deciding your goals were too ambitious or that you didn’t have enough time to spend on them. You planned responsibly, and you followed through on the plan responsibly.

“The third factor, feedback, is one you also built into your plan. You posted your goals for yourself, then you recorded your progress, day by day and week by week. In doing so, you encouraged yourself to keep working toward subsequent goals.”

“Yes, you’re right. I started walking and running six miles a week and got up to running four miles, four times a week — which I still do regularly. Took me six months to get there.”

“Good for you. Congratulations! So in meeting your goals and recording your progress at regular intervals, you achieved a feeling of accomplishment, which made it easier to stay on the program and reach the next milestone. That’s feedback. And it’s the third of the three factors that you’ve created for yourself.

“**N**ow, this is what you’re going to learn to do for your folks at work, your students, your children. In this program, you will learn the principles in much more detail. You will devise ways to apply these principles to

your individual situations. You will set goals to accomplish in order to address your issues. And you will measure the progress in a feedback loop of your own devising.

“You will learn how to introduce all three factors into your leadership practices, your relationships with the people you lead. You will find that these people will respond positively to the presence of these factors just the way others have responded — by boosting their performance.

“You will achieve results you didn’t think possible. Your low achievers will become high achievers. Your apathetic people will become engaged and more productive.

“The difference is that all of you, I can say with some assurance, are already self-starters. You’re accustomed to creating these conditions for yourself, and that’s why you’re successful at reaching most of the goals you set for yourself. You enjoy the process of setting goals and achieving them.

“Each of you has described the person or persons whose performance you’re concerned about. Now you will learn how to give them

the same joy of accomplishment. That’s why you’re here.

“Over the next several hours, you’re going to hear three messages about bringing out the best in others — believe in ’em, hold ’em accountable, and give ’em supportive feedback. You’ll learn how the three factors work,



Believe in ’em, hold ’em accountable, and give ’em supportive feedback.



the tools you can use to apply them, and the structures for putting them into practice. That's what we'll hold *you* accountable for.



You will succeed. You'll even surprise yourselves.



how well it worked, and we'll discuss your actions and the results. In other words — feedback.

“And I have the highest expectations of all of you.” He smiled. He could feel the excitement building in the room.

“You will succeed. You'll even surprise yourselves.”

“Then I'm going to turn you loose for ninety days. At the end of that time, we'll meet again. You'll tell me, and your fellow participants, what you've done and