The importance of feeling valued

What motivates you to go that extra mile for someone? What keeps you focused on completing a task? What encourages you maintain professional standards at work? What drives you to simply do your best?

I think motivation is fuelled by feeling your contribution is appreciated; that you are valued by others. While bring paid for working is important, it is your colleague’s or customer’s “thank you” and a recommendation to someone else they know that can give you the glow of satisfaction and will contribute to you feeling pretty happy with life. Feeling your contribution is valued boosts self-esteem and self confidence and the knock-on effect is increased motivation to do the job well.

The same positive ring-loop can occur in relationships with close relatives, friends or colleagues. The acknowledgement of a gesture of caring, cooking supper when a partner is tired or listening sympathetically as they off-load their frustrations from the day all can help you feel valued and give you a warm, comfortable feeling of satisfaction. “Yes I enjoyed helping him/her and it was great that my efforts were appreciated, that my input was valued”. People value what they have done for someone else and an acknowledgement lets them know the other person values them too.

However, conversely a lack of appreciation or acknowledgement of effort or good work can lead to a feeling of being extremely undervalued and very demotivated. If there is no recognition that a job (despite problems) has been completed on time and in good order, a person may regret the extra time and effort they have put into their work: “No-one cares a jot that I gave up my Saturday to complete the job”. In relationships too, if helpful gestures or considerations are ignored or taken for granted then it is very easy to feel undervalued and in some cases irrelevant. Like Roxie’s husband Amos in the hit musical “Chicago” you can feel a “cellophane man” (or woman) irrelevant, even non-existent.
Sadly repeated experiences of feeling disregarded or unimportant in relationships or at work can lead to a person undervaluing themselves and their qualities and strengths. Once someone enters this vicious cycle – “of course they ignore me. What value am I to them anyway?” – it is very difficult to pick themselves up again.

The key is to avoid the deep downer developing at all. If you have registered and value your own qualities and strengths you are more likely to keep other people’s response to your actions in perspective and make a balanced judgement about interactions with family members, friends and colleagues at work. You may like to check out your strengths by visiting www.authentichappiness.org to do the online strength survey questionnaire.

It is worth writing down the aspects of yourself that you value, what qualities you bring to a relationship or job of work, and keep this note handy when you are feeling a bit low or have had a disappointing encounter at work. Take out your list and use it as a personal motivation tool to get things moving positively for you again. It is as important to value yourself as it is motivating to be valued by others.

Happy Christmas.

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