TRANSFORM YOUR WAR INTO A CRUSADE

MORALE STRATEGIES

The secret to motivating people and maintaining their morale is to get them to think less about themselves and more about the group. Involve them in a cause, a crusade against a hated enemy. Make them see their survival as tied to the success of the army as a whole. In a group in which people have truly bonded, moods and emotions are so contagious that it becomes easy to infect your troops with enthusiasm. Lead from the front: let your soldiers see you in the trenches, making sacrifices for the cause. That will fill them with the desire to emulate and please you. Make both rewards and punishments rare but meaningful. Remember: a motivated army can work wonders, making up for any lack of material resources.

THE ART OF MAN MANAGEMENT

We humans are selfish by nature. Our first thoughts in any situation revolve around our own interests: How will this affect *me*? How will it help *me*? At the same time, by necessity, we try to disguise our selfishness, making our motives look altruistic or disinterested. Our inveterate selfishness and our ability to disguise it are problems for you as a leader. You may think that the people working for you are genuinely enthusiastic and concerned--that is what they say, that is what their actions suggest. Then slowly you see signs that this person or that is using his or her position in the group to advance purely personal interests. One day you wake up to find yourself leading an army of selfish, conniving individuals.

> *You can do nothing with an army that is an amalgam of a hundred people here, a hundred people there, and so on. What can be achieved with four thousand men, united and standing shoulder to shoulder, you cannot do with forty or even four hundred thousand men who are divided and pulled this way and that by internal conflicts....*
>
> *RULES OF WAR AND BRAVERY*, MUBARAKSHAH, PERSIA, THIRTEENTH CENTURY

That is when you start thinking about morale--about finding a way to motivate your troops and forge them into a group. Perhaps you try artfully to praise people, to offer them the possibility of reward--only to find you have spoiled them, strengthening their selfishness. Perhaps you try punishments and discipline--only to make them resentful and defensive. Perhaps you try to fire them up with speeches and group activities--but people are cynical nowadays; they will see right through you.

The problem is not what you are doing but the fact that it comes late. You have begun to think about morale only after it has become an issue, not before. That is your mistake. Learn from history's great motivators and military leaders: the way to get soldiers to work together and maintain morale is to make them feel part of a group that is fighting for a worthy cause. That distracts them from their own interests and satisfies their human need to feel part of something bigger than they are. The more they think of the group, the less they think of themselves. They soon begin to link their own success to the group's; their own interests and the larger interests coincide. In this kind of army, people know that selfish behavior will disgrace them in the eyes of their companions. They become attuned to a kind of group conscience.

Morale is contagious: put people in a cohesive, animated group and they naturally catch that spirit. If they rebel or revert to selfish behavior, they are easily isolated. You must establish this dynamic the minute you become the group's leader; it can only come from the top--that is, from you.

The ability to create the right group dynamic, to maintain the collective spirit, is known in military language as "man management." History's great generals--Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Napoleon--were all masters of the art, which for military men is more than simply important: in battle it can be the deciding issue, a matter of life and death. In war, Napoleon once said, "The moral is to the physical as three to one." He meant that his troops' fighting spirit was crucial in the outcome of the battle: with motivated soldiers he could beat an army three times the size of his own.

To create the best group dynamic and prevent destructive morale problems, follow these eight crucial steps culled from the writings and experiences of the masters of the art. It is important to follow as many of the steps as possible; none is less important than any other.

Step 1: Unite your troops around a cause. Make them fight for an idea. Now more than ever, people have a hunger to believe in something. They feel an

emptiness, which, left alone, they might try to fill with drugs or spiritual fads, but you can take advantage of it by channeling it into a cause you can convince them is worth fighting for. Bring people together around a cause and you create a motivated force.

> *What stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted! Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just, And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel, Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.*
>
> *KING HENRY V*, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, 1564-1616

> *There are always moments when the commander's place is not back with his staff but up with the troops. It is sheer nonsense to say that maintenance of the men's morale is the job of the battalion commander alone. The higher the rank, the greater the effect of the example. The men tend to feel no kind of contact with a commander who, they know, is sitting somewhere in headquarters. What they want is what might be termed a physical contact with him. In moments of panic, fatigue, or disorganization, or when something out of the ordinary has to be demanded from them, the personal example of the commander works wonders, especially if has had the wit to create some sort of legend around himself.*
>
> FIELD MARSHAL ERWIN ROMMEL, 1891-1944

The cause can be anything you wish, but you should represent it as progressive: it fits the times, it is on the side of the future, so it is destined to succeed. If necessary, you can give it a veneer of spirituality. It is best to have some kind of enemy to hate--an enemy can help a group to define itself in opposition. Ignore this step and you are left with an army of mercenaries. You will deserve the fate that usually awaits such armies.

Step 2: Keep their bellies full. People cannot stay motivated if their material needs go unmet. If they feel exploited in any way, their natural selfishness will come to the surface and they will begin to peel off from the group. Use a cause--something abstract or spiritual--to bring them together, but meet their material needs. You do not have to spoil them by overpaying them; a paternalistic feeling that they are being taken care of, that you are thinking of their comfort, is more important. Attending to their physical needs will make it easier to ask more of them when the time comes.

Step 3: Lead from the front. The enthusiasm with which people join a cause inevitably wanes. One thing that speeds up its loss, and that produces discontent, is the feeling that the leaders do not practice what they preach. Right from the beginning, your troops must see you leading from the front, sharing their dangers and sacrifices--taking the cause as seriously as they do. Instead of trying to push them from behind, make them run to keep up with you.

Step 4: Concentrate their *ch'i.* There is a Chinese belief in an energy called ch'i, which dwells in all living things. All groups have their own level of ch'i, physical and psychological. A leader must understand this energy and know how to manipulate it.

Idleness has a terrible effect on ch'i. When soldiers are not working, their spirits lower. Doubts creep in, and selfish interests take over. Similarly, being on the defensive, always waiting and reacting to what the enemy dishes out, will also lower ch'i. So keep your soldiers busy, acting for a purpose, moving in a direction. Do not make them wait for the next attack; propelling them forward will excite them and make them hungry for battle. Aggressive action concentrates ch'i, and concentrated ch'i is full of latent force.

> *During the Spring and Autumn era, the state of Qi was invaded by the states of Jin and Yan. At first the invaders overcame the military forces of Qi. One of the eminent nobles of the court of Qi recommended the martialist Tian Rangju to the lord of Qi. To this man, later called Sima Rangju, is attributed the famous military handbook "Sima's Art of War."...The lord of Qi then summoned Rangju to discuss military matters with him. The lord was very pleased with what Rangju had to say, and he made him a general, appointing him to lead an army to resist the aggression of the forces of Yan and Jin. Rangju said, "I am lowly in social status, yet the lord has promoted me from the ranks and placed me above even the grandees. The soldiers are not yet loyal to me, and the common people are not familiar with me; as a man of little account, my authority is slight. I request one of your favorite ministers, someone honored by the state, to be overseer of the army." The lord acceded to this request and appointed a nobleman to be the overseer. Rangju took his leave, arranging to meet the nobleman at the military headquarters at noon the following day. Then Rangju hastened back to set up a sundial and a water-clock to await the new overseer. Now this new overseer was a proud*

and haughty aristocrat, and he imagined that as overseer he was leading his own army. Because of his pride and arrogance, he did not see any need to hurry, in spite of his promise with Rangju the martial master. His relatives and close associates gave him a farewell party, and he stayed to drink with them. At noon the next day, the new overseer had not arrived at headquarters. Rangju took down the sundial and emptied the water-clock. He assembled the troops and informed them of the agreement with the new overseer. That evening the nobleman finally arrived. Rangju said to him, "Why are you late?" He said, "My relatives, who are grandees, gave me a farewell party, so I stayed for that." Rangju said, "On the day a military leader receives his orders, he forgets about his home; when a promise is made in the face of battle, one forgets his family; when the war drums sound, one forgets his own body. Now hostile states have invaded our territory; the state is in an uproar; the soldiers are exposed at the borders; the lord cannot rest or enjoy his food; the lives of the common people all depend on you--how can you talk about farewell parties?" Rangju then summoned the officer in charge of military discipline and asked him, "According to military law, what happens to someone who arrives later than an appointed time?" The officer replied, "He is supposed to be decapitated." Terrified, the aristocrat had a messenger rush back to report this to the lord and beseech him for help. But the haughty nobleman was executed before the messenger even returned, and his execution was announced to the army. The soldiers all shook with fear. Eventually the lord sent an emissary with a letter pardoning the nobleman, who was, after all, the new overseer of the army. The emissary galloped right into camp on horseback with the lord's message. Rangju said, "When a general is in the field, there are orders he doesn't take from the ruler." He also said to the disciplinary officer, "It is a rule that there shall be no galloping through camp, yet now the emissary has done just that. What should be done with him?" The officer said, "He should be executed." The emissary was petrified, but Rangju said, "It is not proper to kill an emissary of the lord," and had two of the emissary's attendants executed in his stead. This too was announced to the army. Rangju sent the emissary back to report to the lord, and then he set out with the army. When the soldiers made camp, Rangju personally oversaw the digging of wells, construction of stoves, preparation of food and drink, and care of the sick. He shared all of the supplies of the leadership with the soldiers, personally eating the same rations as they. He was especially kind to the weary and weakened. After three days, Rangju called the troops to order. Even those who were ill wanted to go along, eager to go into battle for Rangju. When the armies of Jin and

Yan heard about this, they withdrew from the state of Qi. Now Rangju led his troops to chase them down and strike them. Eventually he recovered lost territory and returned with the army victorious.

MASTERING THE ART OF WAR: ZHUGE LIANG'S AND LIU JI'S COMMENTARIES ON THE CLASSIC BY SUN-TZU, TRANSLATED BY THOMAS CLEARY, 1989

Step 5: Play to their emotions. The best way to motivate people is not through reason but through emotion. Humans, however, are naturally defensive, and if you begin with an appeal to their emotions--some histrionic harangue--they will see you as manipulative and will recoil. An emotional appeal needs a setup: lower their defenses, and make them bond as a group, by putting on a show, entertaining them, telling a story. Now they have less control over their emotions and you can approach them more directly, moving them easily from laughter to anger or hatred. Masters of man management have a sense of drama: they know when and how to hit their soldiers in the gut.

Step 6: Mix harshness and kindness. The key to man management is a balance of punishment and reward. Too many rewards will spoil your soldiers and make them take you for granted; too much punishment will destroy their morale. You need to hit the right balance. Make your kindness rare and even an occasional warm comment or generous act will be powerfully meaningful. Anger and punishment should be equally rare; instead your harshness should take the form of setting very high standards that few can reach. Make your soldiers compete to please you. Make them struggle to see less harshness and more kindness.

Step 7: Build the group myth. The armies with the highest morale are armies that have been tested in battle. Soldiers who have fought alongside one another through many campaigns forge a kind of group myth based on their past victories. Living up to the tradition and reputation of the group becomes a matter of pride; anyone who lets it down feels ashamed. To generate this myth, you must lead your troops into as many campaigns as you can. It is wise to start out with easy battles that they can win, building up their confidence. Success alone will help bring the group together. Create symbols and slogans that fit the myth. Your soldiers will want to belong.

Step 8: Be ruthless with grumblers. Allow grumblers and the chronically disaffected any leeway at all and they will spread disquiet and even panic throughout the group. As fast as you can, you must isolate them and get rid of them. All groups contain a core of people who are more motivated and disciplined than the rest--your best soldiers. Recognize them, cultivate their goodwill, and set them up as examples. These people will serve as natural ballasts against those who are disaffected and panicky.

You know, I am sure, that not numbers or strength brings victory in war; but whichever army goes into battle stronger in soul, their enemies generally cannot withstand them.

--Xenophon (430?-355? B.C.)

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

1. In the early 1630s, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), a provincial gentleman farmer in Cambridgeshire, England, fell victim to a depression and to constant thoughts of death. Deep in crisis, he converted to the Puritan religion, and suddenly his life took a new turn: he felt he had experienced a direct communion with God. Now he believed in providence, the idea that everything happens for a reason and according to God's will. Whereas before he had been despondent and indecisive, now he was filled with purpose: he thought himself among God's elect.

Eventually Cromwell became a member of Parliament and a vocal defender of the common people in their grievances against the aristocracy. Yet he felt marked by providence for something larger than politics: he had visions of a great crusade. In 1642, Parliament, in a bitter struggle with Charles I, voted to cut off the king's funds until he agreed to limits on royal power. When Charles refused, civil war broke out between the Cavaliers (supporters of the king, who wore their hair long) and the Roundheads (the rebels, so called since they cropped their hair short). Parliament's most fervent supporters were Puritans like Cromwell, who saw the war against the king as his chance--more than his chance, his calling.

Although Cromwell had no military background, he hurriedly formed a troop of sixty horsemen from his native Cambridgeshire. His aim was to incorporate them in a larger regiment, gain military experience by fighting under

another commander, and slowly prove his worth. He was confident of ultimate victory, for he saw his side as unbeatable: after all, God was on their side, and all his men were believers in the cause of creating a more pious England.

Despite his lack of experience, Cromwell was something of a military visionary: he imagined a new kind of warfare spearheaded by a faster, more mobile cavalry, and in the war's first few months he proved a brave and effective leader. He was given more troops to command but soon realized that he had grossly overestimated the fighting spirit of those on his side: time and again he led cavalry charges that pierced enemy lines, only to watch in disgust as his soldiers broke order to plunder the enemy camp. Sometimes he tried to hold part of his force in reserve to act as reinforcements later in the battle, but the only command they listened to was to advance, and in retreat they were hopelessly disordered. Representing themselves as crusaders, Cromwell's men were revealed by battle as mercenaries, fighting for pay and adventure. They were useless.

In 1643, when Cromwell was made a colonel at the head of his own regiment, he decided to break with the past. From now on, he would recruit only soldiers of a certain kind: men who, like himself, had experienced religious visions and revelations. He sounded out the aspirants, tested them for the depth of their faith. Departing from a long tradition, he appointed commoners, not aristocrats, as officers; as he wrote to a friend, "I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else." Cromwell made his recruits sing psalms and pray together. In a stern check on bad discipline, he taught them to see all their actions as part of God's plan. And he looked after them in an unusual way for the times, making sure they were well fed, well clothed, and promptly paid.

When Cromwell's army went into battle, it was now a force to reckon with. The men rode in tight formation, loudly singing psalms. As they neared the king's forces, they would break into a "pretty round trot," not the headlong and disorderly charge of other troops. Even in contact with the enemy, they kept their order, and they retreated with as much discipline as when they advanced. Since they believed that God was with them, they had no fear of death: they could march straight up a hill into enemy fire without breaking step. Having gained control over his cavalry, Cromwell could maneuver them with infinite flexibility. His troops won battle after battle.

In 1645, Cromwell was named lieutenant general of the cavalry in the New Model Army. That year, at the Battle of Naseby, his disciplined regiment was crucial in the Roundheads' victory. A few days later, his cavalry finished off the

Royalist forces at Langport, effectively putting an end to the first stage of the Civil War.

Interpretation

That Cromwell is generally considered one of history's great military leaders is all the more remarkable given that he learned soldiery on the job. During the second stage of the Civil War, he became head of the Roundhead armies, and later, after defeating King Charles and having him executed, he became Lord Protector of England. Although he was ahead of his times with his visions of mobile warfare, Cromwell was not a brilliant strategist or field tactician; his success lay in the morale and discipline of his cavalry, and the secret to those was the quality of the men he recruited--true believers in his cause. Such men were naturally open to his influence and accepting of his discipline. With each new victory, they grew more committed to him and more cohesive. He could ask the most of them.

Above all else, then, pay attention to your staff, to those you recruit to your cause. Many will pretend to share your beliefs, but your first battle will show that all they wanted was a job. Soldiers like these are mercenaries and will get you nowhere. True believers are what you want; expertise and impressive resumes matter less than character and the capacity for sacrifice. Recruits of character will give you a staff already open to your influence, making morale and discipline infinitely easier to attain. This core personnel will spread the gospel for you, keeping the rest of the army in line. As far as possible in this secular world, make battle a religious experience, an ecstatic involvement in something transcending the present.

2. In 1931 the twenty-three-year-old Lyndon Baines Johnson was offered the kind of job he had been dreaming of: secretary to Richard Kleberg, newly elected congressman from Texas's Fourteenth Congressional District. Johnson was a high-school debating teacher at the time, but he had worked on several political campaigns and was clearly a young man of ambition. His students at Sam Houston High--in Houston, Texas--assumed that he would quickly forget about them, but, to the surprise of two of his best debaters, L. E. Jones and Gene Latimer, he not only kept in touch, he wrote to them regularly from Washington. Six months later came a bigger surprise still: Johnson invited Jones and Latimer to Washington to work as his assistants. With the Depression at its height, jobs were scarce--particularly jobs with this kind of potential. The two teenagers

grabbed the opportunity. Little did they know what they were in for.

The pay was ridiculously low, and it soon became clear that Johnson intended to work the two men to their human limit. They put in eighteen-or twenty-hour days, mostly answering constituents' mail. "The chief has a knack, or, better said, a genius for getting the most out of those around him," Latimer later wrote. "He'd say, 'Gene, it seems L.E.'s a little faster than you today.' And I'd work faster. 'L.E., he's catching up with you.' And pretty soon, we'd both be pounding [the typewriter] for hours without stopping, just as fast as we could."

Jones didn't usually take orders too well, but he found himself working harder and harder for Johnson. His boss seemed destined for something great: that Johnson would scale the heights of power was written all over his face--and he would bring the ambitious Jones along with him. Johnson could also turn everything into a cause, making even the most trivial issue a crusade for Kleberg's constituents, and Jones felt part of that crusade--part of history.

The most important reason for both Jones's and Latimer's willingness to work so hard, though, was that Johnson worked still harder. When Jones trudged into the office at five in the morning, the lights would already be on, and Johnson would be hard at work. He was also the last to leave. He never asked his employees to do anything he wouldn't do himself. His energy was intense, boundless, and contagious. How could you let such a man down by working less hard than he did?

THE WOLVES AND THE DOGS AT WAR

One day, enmity broke out between the dogs and the wolves. The dogs elected a Greek to be their general. But he was in no hurry to engage in battle, despite the violent intimidation of the wolves. "Understand," he said to them, "why I deliberately put off engagement. It is because one must always take counsel before acting. The wolves, on the one hand, are all of the same race, all of the same color. But our soldiers have very varied habits, and each one is proud of his own country. Even their colors are not uniform: some are black, some russet, and others white or ash-grey. How can I lead into battle those who are not in harmony and who are all dissimilar?' In all armies it is unity of will and purpose which assures victory over the enemy.

FABLES, AESOP, SIXTH CENTURY B.C.

Not only was Johnson relentlessly demanding, but his criticisms were often cruel. Occasionally, though, he would do Jones and Latimer some unexpected

favor or praise them for something they hadn't realized he had noticed. At moments like this, the two young men quickly forgot the many bitter moments in their work. For Johnson, they felt, they would go to the ends of the earth.

And indeed Johnson rose through the ranks, first winning influence within Kleberg's office, then gaining the attention of President Franklin D. Roosevelt himself. In 1935, Roosevelt named Johnson Texas state director for the recently built National Youth Administration. Now Johnson began to build a larger team around the core of his two devoted assistants; he also built loyalties in a scattering of others for whom he found jobs in Washington. The dynamic he had created with Jones and Latimer now repeated itself on a larger scale: assistants competed for his attention, tried to please him, to meet his standards, to be worthy of him and of his causes.

In 1937, when Congressman James Buchanan suddenly died, the seat for Texas's Tenth District unexpectedly fell empty. Despite the incredible odds against him--he was still relatively unknown and way too young--Johnson decided to run and called in his chips: his carefully cultivated acolytes poured into Texas, becoming chauffeurs, canvassers, speechwriters, barbecue cooks, crowd entertainers, nurses--whatever the campaign needed. In the six short weeks of the race, Johnson's foot soldiers covered the length and breadth of the Tenth District. And in front of them at every step was Johnson himself, campaigning as if his life depended on it. One by one, he and his team won over voters in every corner of the district, and finally, in one of the greatest upsets in any American political race, Johnson won the election. His later career, first as a senator, then as U.S. president, obscured the foundation of his first great success: the army of devoted and tireless followers that he had carefully built up over the previous five years.

Interpretation

Lyndon Johnson was an intensely ambitious young man. He had neither money nor connections but had something more valuable: an understanding of human psychology. To command influence in the world, you need a power base, and here human beings--a devoted army of followers--are more valuable than money. They will do things for you that money cannot buy.

That army is tricky to build. People are contradictory and defensive: push them too hard and they resent you; treat them well and they take you for granted. Johnson avoided those traps by making his staff want his approval. To do that he led from the front. He worked harder than any of his staff, and his men saw him do it; failing to match him would have made them feel guilty and selfish. A leader who works that hard stirs competitive instincts in his men, who do all they

can to prove themselves worthier than their teammates. By showing how much of his own time and effort he was willing to sacrifice, Johnson earned their respect. Once he had that respect, criticism, even when harsh, became an effective motivator, making his followers feel they were disappointing him. At the same time, some kind act out of the blue would break down any ability to resist him.

> *Hannibal was the greatest general of antiquity by reason of his admirable comprehension of the morale of combat, of the morale of the soldier, whether his own or the enemy's. He shows his greatness in this respect in all the different incidents of war, of campaign, of action. His men were not better than the Roman soldiers. They were not as well-armed, one-half less in number. Yet he was always the conqueror. He understood the value of morale. He had the absolute confidence of his people. In addition, he had the art, in commanding an army, of always securing the advantage of morale.*
>
> COLONEL CHARLES ARDANT DU PICQ, 1821-70

Understand: morale is contagious, and you, as leader, set the tone. Ask for sacrifices you won't make yourself (doing everything through assistants) and your troops grow lethargic and resentful; act too nice, show too much concern for their well-being, and you drain the tension from their souls and create spoiled children who whine at the slightest pressure or request for more work. Personal example is the best way to set the proper tone and build morale. When your people see your devotion to the cause, they ingest your spirit of energy and self-sacrifice. A few timely criticisms here and there and they will only try harder to please you, to live up to your high standards. Instead of having to push and pull your army, you will find them chasing after you.

3. In May of 218 B.C., the great general Hannibal, of Carthage in modern Tunisia, embarked on a bold plan: he would lead an army through Spain, Gaul, and across the Alps into northern Italy. His goal was to defeat Rome's legions on their own soil, finally putting an end to Rome's expansionist policies.

The Alps were a tremendous obstacle to military advance--in fact, the march of an army across the high mountains was unprecedented. Yet in December of that year, after much hardship, Hannibal reached northern Italy, catching the Romans completely off guard and the region undefended. There was a price to pay, however: of Hannibal's original 102,000 soldiers, a mere 26,000 survived,

and they were exhausted, hungry, and demoralized. Worse, there was no time to rest: a Roman army was on its way and had already crossed the Po River, only a few miles from the Carthaginian camp.

On the eve of his army's first battle with the fearsome Roman legions, Hannibal somehow had to bring his worn-out men alive. He decided to put on a show: gathering his army together, he brought in a group of prisoners and told them that if they fought one another to the death in a gladiatorial contest, the victors would win freedom and a place in the Carthaginian army. The prisoners agreed, and Hannibal's soldiers were treated to hours of bloody entertainment, a great distraction from their troubles.

When the fighting was over, Hannibal addressed his men. The contest had been so enjoyable, he said, because the prisoners had fought so intensely. That was partly because the weakest man grows fierce when losing means death, but there was another reason as well: they had the chance to join the Carthaginian army, to go from being abject prisoners to free soldiers fighting for a great cause, the defeat of the hated Romans. You soldiers, said Hannibal, are in exactly the same position. You face a much stronger enemy. You are many miles from home, on hostile territory, and you have nowhere to go--in a way you are prisoners, too. It is either freedom or slavery, victory or death. But fight as these men fought today and you will prevail.

> *Four brave men who do not know each other will not dare to attack a lion. Four less brave, but knowing each other well, sure of their reliability and consequently of mutual aid, will attack resolutely. There is the science of the organization of armies in a nutshell.*
>
> COLONEL CHARLES ARDANT DU PICQ, 1821-70

The contest and speech got hold of Hannibal's soldiers, and the next day they fought with deadly ferocity and defeated the Romans. A series of victories against much larger Roman legions followed.

Nearly two years later, the two sides met at Cannae. Before the battle, with the armies arrayed within sight of each other, the Carthaginians could see that they were hopelessly outnumbered, and fear passed through the ranks. Everyone went quiet. A Carthaginian officer called Gisgo rode out in front of the men, taking in the Roman lines; stopping before Hannibal, he remarked, with a quaver in his voice, on the disparity in numbers. "There is one thing, Gisgo, that you have not noticed," Hannibal replied: "In all that great number of men opposite, there is not a single one whose name is Gisgo."

The Greeks met the Trojans without a tremor. Agamemnon ranged among them, commanding: "Be men, my friends. Fight with valor And with a sense of shame before your comrades. You're less likely to be killed with a sense of shame. Running away never won glory or a fight."

THE ILIAD, HOMER, CIRCA NINTH CENTURY B.C.

Gisgo burst out laughing, so did those within hearing, and the joke passed through the ranks, breaking the tension. No, the Romans had no Gisgo. Only the Carthaginians had Gisgo, and only the Carthaginians had Hannibal. A leader who could joke at a moment like this had to feel supremely confident--and if the leader were Hannibal, that feeling was probably justified.

Just as the troops had been swept with anxiety, now they were infected with self-assurance. At Cannae that day, in one of the most devastating victories in history, the Carthaginians crushed the Roman army.

Interpretation

Hannibal was a master motivator of a rare kind. Where others would harangue their soldiers with speeches, he knew that to depend on words was to be in a sorry state: words only hit the surface of a soldier, and a leader must grab his men's hearts, make their blood boil, get into their minds, alter their moods. Hannibal reached his soldiers' emotions indirectly, by relaxing them, calming them, taking them outside their problems and getting them to bond. Only then did he hit them with a speech that brought home their precarious reality and swayed their emotions.

At Cannae a one-line joke had the same effect: instead of trying to persuade the troops of his confidence, Hannibal showed it to them. Even as they laughed at the joke about Gisgo, they bonded over it and understood its inner meaning. No need for a speech. Hannibal knew that subtle changes in his men's mood could spell the difference between victory and defeat.

Like Hannibal, you must aim indirectly at people's emotions: get them to laugh or cry over something that seems unrelated to you or to the issue at hand. Emotions are contagious--they bring people together and make them bond. Then you can play them like a piano, moving them from one emotion to the other. Oratory and eloquent pleas only irritate and insult us; we see right through them. Motivation is subtler than that. By advancing indirectly, setting up your emotional appeal, you will get inside instead of just scratching the surface.

4. In the 1930s and '40s, the Green Bay Packers were one of the most successful teams in professional football, but by the late '50s they were the worst. What went wrong? The team had many talented players, like the former All-American Paul Hornung. The owners cared about it deeply and kept hiring new coaches, new players--but nothing could slow the fall. The players tried; they hated losing. And, really, they weren't that bad--they came close to winning many of the games they lost. So what could they do about it?

> *He suddenly lost concern for himself, and forgot to look at a menacing fate. He became not a man but a member. He felt that something of which he was a part--a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country--was in a crisis. He was welded into a common personality which was dominated by a single desire. For some moments he could not flee, no more than a little finger can commit a revolution from a hand.... There was a consciousness always of the presence of his comrades about him. He felt the subtle battle brotherhood more potent even than the cause for which they were fighting. It was a mysterious fraternity born of the smoke and danger of death.*
>
> *THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE,* STEPHEN CRANE, 1871-1900

The Packers hit bottom in 1958. For the 1959 season, they tried the usual trick, bringing in a new coach and general manager: Vince Lombardi. The players mostly didn't know much about the man, except that he had been an assistant coach for the New York Giants.

As the players convened to meet the new coach, they expected the typical speech: this is the year to turn things around; I'm going to get tough with you; no more business as usual. Lombardi did not disappoint them: in a quiet, forceful tone, he explained a new set of rules and code of conduct. But a few players noticed something different about Lombardi: he oozed confidence--no shouts, no demands. His tone and manner suggested that the Packers were already a winning team; they just had to live up to it. Was he an idiot or some kind of visionary?

Then came the practices, and once again the difference was not so much how they were conducted as the spirit behind them--they *felt* different. They were shorter but more physically demanding, almost to the point of torture. And they were intense, with the same simple plays endlessly repeated. Unlike other coaches, Lombardi explained what he was doing: installing a simpler system, based not on novelty and surprise but on efficient execution. The players had to

concentrate intensely--the slightest mistake and they were doing extra laps or making the whole team do extra laps. And Lombardi changed the drills constantly: the players were never bored and could never relax their mental focus.

Earlier coaches had always treated a few players differently: the stars. They had a bit of an attitude, and they took off early and stayed up late. The other men had come to accept this as part of the pecking order, but deep down they resented it. Lombardi, though, had no favorites; for him there were no stars. "Coach Lombardi is very fair," said defensive tackle Henry Jordan. "He treats us all the same--like dogs." The players liked that. They enjoyed seeing Hornung yelled at and disciplined just as much as the others.

Lombardi's criticisms were relentless and got under his players' skins. He seemed to know their weak points, their insecurities. How did he know, for instance, that Jordan hated to be criticized in front of the others? Lombardi exploited his fear of public lashings to make him try harder. "We were always trying to show [Lombardi] he was wrong," commented one player. "That was his psych."

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more; Or close the wall up with our English dead. In peace there's nothing so becomes a man As modest stillness and humility: But when the blast of war blows in our ears, Then imitate the action of the tiger; Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood, Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage; Then lend the eye a terrible aspect; Let it pry through the portage of the head Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it As fearfully as doth a galled rock O'erhang and jutty his confounded base, Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean. Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide, Hold hard to the breath and bend up every spirit To his full height. On, on, you noblest English, Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof! Fathers that, like so many Alexanders, Have in these parts from morn till even fought And sheathed their swords for lack of argument: Dishonour not your mothers; now attest That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you. Be copy now to men of grosser blood, And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen, Whose limbs were made in England, show us here The mettle of your pasture; let us swear That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt not; For there is none of you so mean and base, That hath not noble lustre in your eyes. I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips, Straining upon the start. The game's afoot: Follow your spirit, and upon this charge Cry "God for Harry, England, and Saint George!"

The practices grew more intense still; the players had never worked this hard in their lives. Yet they found themselves showing up earlier and staying later. By the season's first game, Lombardi had prepared them for every contingency. Sick of training, they were grateful to be playing in a real game at last--and, to their surprise, all that work made the game a lot easier. They were more prepared than the other team and less tired in the fourth quarter. They won their first three games. With this sudden success, their morale and confidence soared.

The Packers finished the year with a 7-5 record, a remarkable turnaround from 1958's 1-10-1. After one season under Lombardi, they had become the most tight-knit team in professional sports. No one wanted to leave the Packers. In 1960 they reached the championship game, and in 1961 they won it, with many more to follow. Over the years various of Lombardi's Packers would try to explain how he had transformed them, but none of them could really say how he had pulled it off.

Interpretation

When Vince Lombardi took over the Packers, he recognized the problem right away: the team was infected with adolescent defeatism. Teenagers will often strike a pose that is simultaneously rebellious and lackadaisical. It's a way of staying in place: trying harder brings more risk of failure, which they cannot handle, so they lower their expectations, finding nobility in slacking off and mediocrity. Losing hurts less when they embrace it.

Groups can get infected with this spirit without realizing it. All they need is a few setbacks, a few adolescent-minded individuals, and slowly expectations lower and defeatism sets in. The leader who tries to change the group's spirit directly--yelling, demanding, disciplining--actually plays into the teenage dynamic and reinforces the desire to rebel.

Lombardi was a motivational genius who saw everything in psychological terms. To him the National Football League teams were virtually equal in talent. The differences lay in attitude and morale: reversing the Packers' defeatism would translate into wins, which would lift their morale, which in turn would bring more wins. Lombardi knew he had to approach his players indirectly--had to trick them into changing. He began with a show of confidence, talking as if he assumed they were winners who had fallen on bad times. That got under their skins, far more than they realized. Then, in his practices, Lombardi didn't make demands--a defensive, whiny approach that betrays insecurity. Instead he changed the practices' spirit, making them quiet, intense, focused, workmanlike.

He knew that willpower is tied to what you believe possible; expand that belief and you try harder. Lombardi created a better team--which won its first game--by making its players see possibilities. Defeat was no longer comfortable.

Understand: a group has a collective personality that hardens over time, and sometimes that personality is dysfunctional or adolescent. Changing it is difficult; people prefer what they know, even if it doesn't work. If you lead this kind of group, do not play into its negative dynamic. Announcing intentions and making demands will leave people defensive and feeling like children. Like Lombardi, play the wily parent. Ask more of them. Expect them to work like adults. Quietly alter the spirit with which things are done. Emphasize efficiency: anybody can be efficient (it isn't a question of talent), efficiency breeds success, and success raises morale. Once the spirit and personality of the group start to shift, everything else will fall into place.

5. In April 1796 the twenty-six-year-old Napoleon Bonaparte was named commander of the French forces fighting the Austrians in Italy. For many officers his appointment was something of a joke: they saw their new leader as too short, too young, too inexperienced, and even too badly groomed to play the part of "general." His soldiers, too, were underpaid, underfed, and increasingly disillusioned with the cause they were fighting for, the French Revolution. In the first few weeks of the campaign, Napoleon did what he could to make them fight harder, but they were largely resistant to him.

On May 10, Napoleon and his weary forces came to the Bridge of Lodi, over the river Adda. Despite his uphill struggle with his troops, he had the Austrians in retreat, but the bridge was a natural place to take a stand, and they had manned it with soldiers on either side and with well-placed artillery. Taking the bridge would be costly--but suddenly the French soldiers saw Napoleon riding up in front of them, in a position of extreme personal risk, directing the attack. He delivered a stirring speech, then launched his grenadiers at the Austrian lines to cries of "*Vive la Republique!"* Caught up in the spirit, his senior officers led the charge.

The French took the bridge, and now, after this relatively minor operation, Napoleon's troops suddenly saw him as a different man. In fond recognition of his courage, they gave him a nickname: "Le Petit Caporal." The story of Napoleon facing the enemy at the Bridge of Lodi passed through the ranks. As the campaign wore on, and Napoleon won victory after victory, a bond developed between the soldiers and their general that went beyond mere

affection.

Between battles Napoleon would sometimes wander among the soldiers' campfires, mingling with them. He himself had risen through the ranks--he had once been an ordinary gunner--and he could talk to the men as no other general could. He knew their names, their histories, even in what battles they'd been wounded. With some men he would pinch an earlobe between his finger and thumb and give it a friendly tweak.

> *Mercenary and auxiliary arms are useless and dangerous; and if one keeps his state founded on mercenary arms, one will never be firm or secure; for they are disunited, ambitious, without discipline, unfaithful; bold among friends, among enemies cowardly; no fear of God, no faith with men; ruin is postponed only as long as attack is postponed; and in peace you are despoiled by them, in war by the enemy. The cause of this is that they have no love nor cause to keep them in the field other than a small stipend, which is not sufficient to make them want to die for you.*
>
> *THE PRINCE*, NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI, 1513

Napoleon's soldiers did not see him often, but when they did, it was as if an electrical charge passed through them. It was not just his personal presence; he knew exactly when to show up--before a big battle or when morale had slipped for some reason. At these moments he would tell them they were making history together. If a squad were about to lead a charge or seemed in trouble, he would ride over and yell, "Thirty-eighth: I know you! Take me that village--at the charge!" His soldiers felt they weren't just obeying orders, they were living out a great drama.

Napoleon rarely showed anger, but when he did, his men felt worse than just guilty or upset. Late in the first Italian campaign, Austrian troops had forced some of his troops into a humiliating retreat for which there was no excuse. Napoleon visited their camp personally. "Soldiers, I am not satisfied with you," he told them, his large gray eyes seemingly on fire. "You have shown neither bravery, discipline, nor perseverance.... You have allowed yourselves to be driven from positions where a handful of men could have stopped an army. Soldiers of the Thirty-ninth and Eighty-fifth, you are not French soldiers. General, chief of staff, let it be inscribed on their colors: 'They no longer form part of the Army of Italy!'" The soldiers were astounded. Some cried; others begged for another chance. They repented their weakness and turned completely around: the Thirty-ninth and Eighty-fifth would go on to distinguish themselves for strengths they had never shown previously.

Some years later, during a difficult campaign against the Austrians in Bavaria, the French won a hard-fought victory. The next morning Napoleon reviewed the Thirteenth Regiment of Light Infantry, which had played a key role in the battle, and asked the colonel to name its bravest man. The colonel thought for a moment: "Sir, it is the drum major." Napoleon immediately asked to see the young bandsman, who appeared, quaking in his boots. Then Napoleon announced loudly for everyone to hear, "They say that you are the bravest man in this regiment. I appoint you a knight of the Legion of Honor, baron of the Empire, and award you a pension of four thousand francs." The soldiers gasped. Napoleon was famous for his well-timed promotions and for promoting soldiers on merit, making even the lowliest private feel that if he proved himself, he could someday be a marshal. But a drum major becoming a baron overnight? That was entirely beyond their experience. Word of it spread rapidly through the troops and had an electrifying effect--particularly on the newest conscripts, the ones who were most homesick and depressed.

Throughout his long, very bloody campaigns and even his heart-wrenching defeats--the bitter winter in Russia, the eventual exile to Elba, the final act at Waterloo--Napoleon's men would go to the ends of the earth for Le Petit Caporal and for no one else.

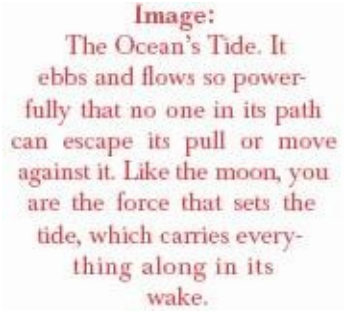
Interpretation

Napoleon was the greatest man manager in history: he took millions of unruly, undisciplined, unsoldierly young men, recently liberated by the French Revolution, and molded them into one of the most successful fighting forces ever known. Their high morale was all the more remarkable for the ordeals he put them through. Napoleon used every trick in the book to build his army. He united them around a cause, spreading first the ideas of the French Revolution, later the glory of France as a growing empire. He treated them well but never spoiled them. He appealed not to their greed but to their thirst for glory and recognition. He led from the front, proving his bravery again and again. He kept his men moving--there was always a new campaign for glory. Having bonded with them, he skillfully played on their emotions. More than soldiers fighting in an army, his men felt themselves part of a myth, united under the emperor's legendary eagle standards.

> *If you wish to be loved by your soldiers, husband their blood and do not lead them to slaughter.*
>
> FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1712-86

Of all Napoleon's techniques, none was more effective than his use of punishments and rewards, all staged for the greatest dramatic impact. His personal rebukes were rare, but when he was angry, when he punished, the effect was devastating: the target felt disowned, outcast. As if exiled from the warmth of his family, he would struggle to win back the general's favor and then never to give him a reason to be angry again. Promotions, rewards, and public praise were equally rare, and when they came, they were always for merit, never for some political calculation. Caught between the poles of wanting never to displease Napoleon and yearning for his recognition, his men were pulled into his sway, following him devotedly but never quite catching up.

Learn from the master: the way to manage people is to keep them in suspense. First create a bond between your soldiers and yourself. They respect you, admire you, even fear you a little. To make the bond stronger, hold yourself back, create a little space around yourself; you are warm yet with a touch of distance. Once the bond is forged, appear less often. Make both your punishments and your praises rare and unexpected, whether for mistakes or for successes that may seem minor at the time but have symbolic meaning. Understand: once people know what pleases you and what angers you, they turn into trained poodles, working to charm you with apparent good behavior. Keep them in suspense: make them think of you constantly and want to please you but never know just how to do it. Once they are in the trap, you will have a magnetic pull over them. Motivation will become automatic.



Authority: The Way means inducing the people to have the same aim as the leadership, so that they will share death and share life, without fear of danger.

--Sun-tzu (fourth century B.C.)

REVERSAL

If morale is contagious, so is its opposite: fear and discontent can spread through your troops like wildfire. The only way to deal with them is to cut them off before they turn into panic and rebellion.

In 58 B.C., when Rome was fighting the Gallic War, Julius Caesar was preparing for battle against the Germanic leader Ariovistus. Rumors about the ferocity and size of the German forces were flying, and his army was panicky and mutinous. Caesar acted fast: first he had the rumormongers arrested. Next he addressed his soldiers personally, reminding them of their brave ancestors who had fought and defeated the Germans. He would not lead their weaker descendants into battle; since the Tenth Legion alone seemed immune to the growing panic, he would take them alone. As Caesar prepared to march with the valiant Tenth Legion, the rest of the army, ashamed, begged him to forgive them and let them fight. With a show of reluctance, he did so, and these once frightened men fought fiercely.

In such cases you must act like Caesar, turning back the tide of panic. Waste no time, and deal with the whole group. People who spread panic or mutiny experience a kind of madness in which they gradually lose contact with reality. Appeal to their pride and dignity, make them feel ashamed of their moment of weakness and madness. Remind them of what they have accomplished in the past, and show them how they are falling short of the ideal. This social shaming will wake them up and reverse the dynamic.