Why You Should Not Motivate People?

Lessons for Leaders from Daniel Pink's "Drive"
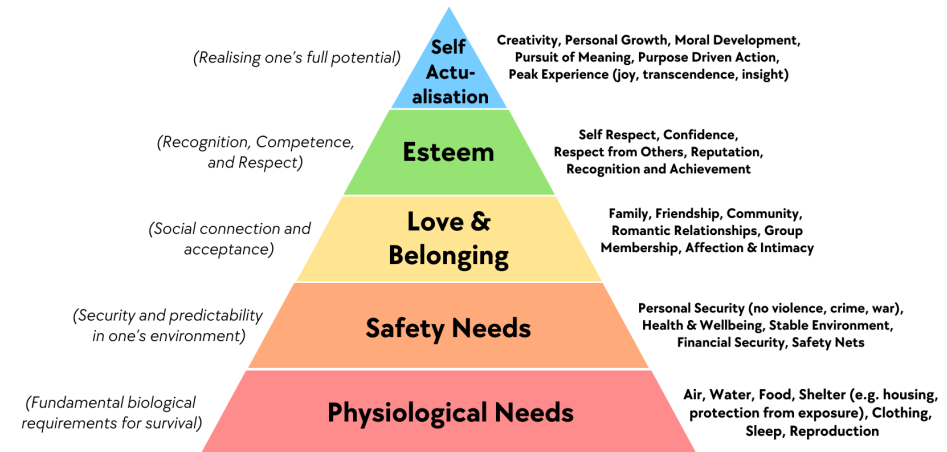
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What comes to mind when you read this title?

- Motivation as "adding something"?

- Carrots & sticks?

- Pep talks?

The old model – The "Carrot & Stick" approach

- Rewards (bonuses, perks)

- Punishments (pressure, micromanagement)

- Works for simple, mechanical tasks...
  👉 *But fails for creative, problem-solving work.*

Think of a time you felt deeply motivated at work

- Was it because of a bonus?

- Or because of space, challenge, and meaning?

The science - What really drives us?

- Autonomy 🧭 – Control over how we work

- Mastery 🎯 – Getting better at what matters

- Purpose 🌍 – Being part of something meaningful

Autonomy

? Ask yourself:

- Do I let my team decide *how* to achieve outcomes?

- Do I trust them, or control every step?

- Do I measure presence, or results?

Mastery

? Ask yourself:

- Do I give space for learning and growth?

- Do I encourage experiments, or punish mistakes?

- Do I celebrate progress, not just output?

Purpose

? Ask yourself:

- Do people know why their work matters?

- Do I talk numbers... or impact?

- Do I connect tasks to customers and mission?

Leaders' Role

Not to "motivate," but to create conditions for motivation

- Remove blockers

- Create space

- Connect to purpose

Practical Shifts

Ways to nurture motivation:

- Give teams choice in approach

- Build in learning opportunities

- Share real customer stories

- Recognize progress & impact

Quick Exercise

👉 Pick one pillar (Autonomy, Mastery, Purpose).

- What's one small change you could make next week?

- Share with a partner or us.

Why you should NOT motivate people:

- People are already motivated.

- Our job: stop killing it.

? *What will you stop doing?*
? *What will you start doing?*

Thank You!

> *People don't need a fire lit under them.*
>
> *They need space so their inner fire can breathe.*