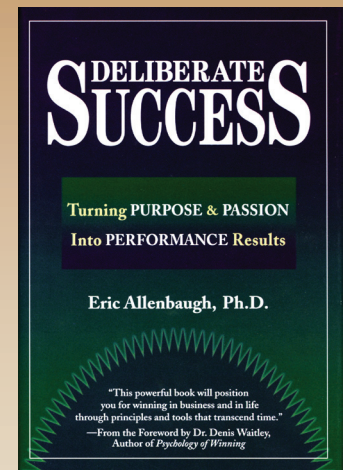

CAREER COACHING:

Turning Purpose & Passion Into Performance Results®

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CAREER COACHING:

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When leaders or "coaches" tap into the career purpose and passion of others, they ignite a spirit within that translates into great performance. Alignment of individual career interests with organizational needs facilitates the kind of match that brings out the best in people. Talents, interests, and career goals change, however, and require periodic assessment to sustain the passion of others in serving both your interests and theirs.

THE 4 CAREER GUIDANCE QUESTIONS

While most people agree that aligning corporate needs with individual talent is essential during an initial job interview, equal attention needs to be focused on on-going career alignment as well. Since career interests change, periodic exploration of **The 4 Career Guidance Questions** with your key associates will assist in sustaining their long-term passion and commitment. Periodically explore with your key associates:

1. What makes work meaningful to you? (Motivators)
 - What turns you on about work?
 - What turns you off about work?

2. If you had no limits, what would you be or do? (Dreams)
3. What would cause you to: (Values)
 - Join a particular company?
 - Leave a particular company?
4. How might we redesign your job to better achieve your interests and the company interests? (Accountability)

Let's explore these in greater depth:

1. **What makes work meaningful to you?**
 - What turns you on about work?
 - What turns you off about work?

This question focuses on what motivates and demotivates individuals while providing valuable insights about job fit and job assignments. When you discover the career passion of a person and link that to specific job assignments, your challenge will be holding them back from working too hard! When a person does what they love, they never have to "work" again.

Having conducted coaching seminars for thousands of leaders, I frequently explore if any of those present have ever been asked by a boss:

"What makes work meaningful to you, and how can I assist you in experiencing greater career fulfillment while serving the needs of the company at an even higher level?" This empowering question ignites the human spirit and releases purposeful creativity in delivering noteworthy results. The small percentage of individuals fortunate enough to have been asked this question report an elevated commitment to both their manager and their organization while experiencing feeling valued.

By exploring individual career interests with your team, you may discover that what turns one person off about their job actually motivates another associate. Redirecting these work assignments may enable each to experience greater job fulfillment while simultaneously benefiting the organization. When you discover the career interests of an associate and link those to current job assignments, you will likely release and empower your employees to perform at their best in delivering great results.

2. If you had no limits, what would you be or do?

This question addresses the big picture dreams of an individual and can provide useful insights about the experience they are seeking. Armed with this information, current assignments might be modified to incorporate at least a portion of their interests in current assignments. By consciously seeking to create on the job at least some of what they are seeking to experience in their dreams, professional fulfillment increases while simultaneously benefiting the organization.

Consider the following application of this principle:

In response to the "if you had no limits" question, a Critical Care Nurse Manager in a large hospital said: "I would like to be an artist!" At first glance, her dream seemed entirely inconsistent with her present duties. In exploring the experience she sought, however, two specific ideas emerged that tapped into her interests while simultaneously serving the hospital.

The family waiting room adjacent to the Critical Care Unit was cold and institutional in appearance. By combining her nursing knowledge and artistic interests, she transformed the family waiting room into a warm, healing environment. Second, she created an informative critical care family brochure, complete with her artwork. Both projects enabled her to use her artistic interests while serving the hospital needs. To her amazement, she learned to express her artistic interests within her existing job. The result? She generated greater job fulfillment while making an even greater contribution to the hospital — a win for both!

Discovering and pursuing your dream releases and empowers you to be your best, use your talents effectively, and experience greater career fulfillment. One individual, for example, identified backpacking as his career choice. How can one earn money backpacking? In pursuing this dream, he created a great job field-testing backpacking equipment for a large sporting goods manufacturing company. An entrepreneurial woman in my community loves to shop. How can one make money shopping? She developed an executive shopping service. She has her "black belt" in shopping and saves her busy clients time and energy while generating income shopping for them.

Letting go of your limits and creatively pursuing your interests can generate a win-win outcome. If you had no limits, what would you do?

*"To understand the heart and mind of a person,
look not at what he has already achieved,
but at what he aspires to."*

Kahlil Gibran

3. What would cause you to:

- Join a particular company?
- Leave a company?

This key question reveals the core values that drive an associate's career decisions and reveals strategies that can be applied in empowering that individual. People join a company for such diverse reasons as career advancement, nature of work, opportunity to use their talents, status, compensation, location, and scheduling flexibility. Others prioritize compensation and benefits, reputation, short or long-term financial interests, job security, and organizational mission. By listening to their responses, you can gain great insights about how to align their interests with company needs.

The second part of this question provides understanding about what would cause an employee to leave. Listen for such concerns as limited career opportunities, lack of challenging work, having an insensitive boss, poor working conditions, or a work culture poorly matched with the associate's values. Knowing their career interests and task preferences provides an opportunity to assure a great job fit, make meaningful job assignments, and enhance job fulfillment.

4. To experience an even more fulfilling career, how might we redesign your job to better achieve your interests and the company interests?

This last question builds accountability into the empowerment process while clarifying mutual expectations. Both the manager and the employee share responsibility to explore and discover what empowerment strategies work best for the individual while simultaneously serving the organization. Having an open, safe discussion will reveal tangible action items that can be implemented by both the manager and associate in bringing about mutually beneficial results.

Effective empowerment begins with discovering what motivates people and matching those unique interests to the needs of the organization. Developing and releasing individual interests in service to both the associate and the organization expands the return on investment (ROI) of human capital while building commitment, supporting creativity, and enhancing productivity. Once you have the right people in the right job, you are now positioned to release human potential through effective coaching.

CAREER COACHING: An "Affirmative Inquiry" Approach

"Affirmative Inquiry," or AI," is a success oriented process of exploring life-giving questions designed to creatively draw out positive ideas from associates to facilitate productive and effective change. While generally applied to facilitating organizational change, AI also has direct application to career coaching to convert peak performance moments into performance norms.

Inspired by the book titled Appreciative Coaching: A Positive Process for Change, the following questions can be useful in coaching individuals to identify and build upon their strengths in service to the organization:

- Describe three of your greatest career accomplishments to date.
- What made these accomplishments notable for you?
- What have you incorporated into your current actions from these notable accomplishments?
- How can you use what you have learned from your past accomplishments to assist in dealing with future challenges?
- Who are or have been your most significant role models and what qualities of these role models do you particularly admire and appreciate?
- Who are the most supportive people in your life and what do they provide for you?
- What are the five most significant sources of positive energy in your life?
- What are the times when you are at your best?
- Identify five adjectives that describe you when you are at your best.
- What do your key associates most appreciate about your style and performance?
- What prevents you from being at your best?
- What are you learning and accepting about yourself at this time?
- What are two or three things that you would like to do more of to keep on the top of your game in your career?
- What several things would you like to change that would result in even greater career joy and fulfillment?
- What is the world calling for you to be and how would you like to make a difference?
- What are the most enlivening and exciting career possibilities for you?

As a coach, your job is to develop the talent of your associates by providing them with clarity of direction, encouraging them to use their "gifts" effectively, building their confidence, and enhancing their competence. Effective coaching requires that you also commit to personal and professional development. Role modeling self-development as you develop others raises the bar for achieving even greater results.

***"If you want to be successful, it's just this simple:
Know what you are doing, love what you are
doing, and believe in what you are doing.
It's just that simple."***

Will Rogers

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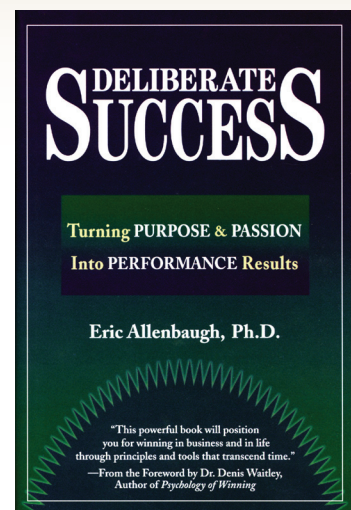
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