

Motivation and Influence

Understanding What Drives Behaviour

Exploring the inner forces that shape how we work, lead and collaborate.

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Using the
Motivation and Influence
Workbook

Motivation sits at the heart of leadership. It explains why we act, how we respond under pressure and what inspires us to go the extra mile.

This lesson explores three complementary models of motivation:

- McClelland's Three Needs – what fundamentally drives of us.
- Kahler's Five Drivers – what patterns show up under stress.
- Rock's SCARF Model – what motivates people in social and organisational settings.

These models offer practical insight into how you can inspire yourself and others, sustain performance and lead with empathy.

These are my reflections

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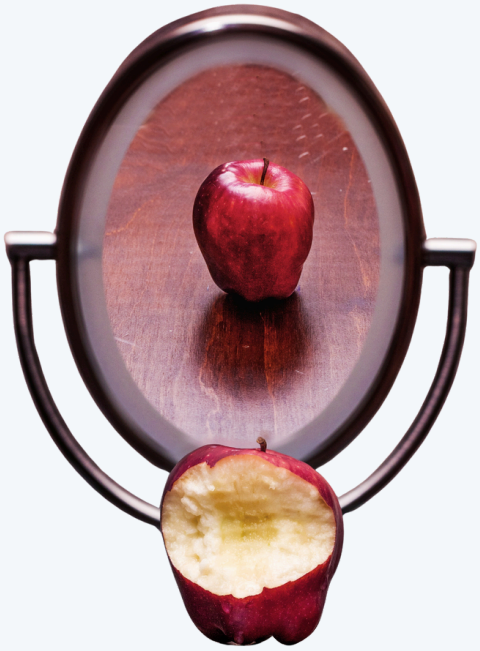
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Why Motivation Matters in Leadership

Effective leadership is about direction and about influence. When you understand what drives people, you can inspire action without coersion.

- Communicate ideas in ways that engage and inspire.
- Recognise what matters most to others.
- Anticipate stress reactions and respond constructively.
- Create environments that feel fair, empowering and safe.

These models don't claim to describe absolute truth, they're like maps describing a landscape.



Each model offers a way of noticing patterns or understanding behaviour.

Used thoughtfully, they help us explore what might be driving choices or behaviour.

They are lenses, not rules or labels.

They help leaders think, communicate and act with greater awareness and flexibility.

> *The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.* Ken Blanchard

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McClelland's Three Needs

Dr David McClelland identified 3 primary motivational needs that shape how people work and lead: power, affiliation, achievement.

Need	Motivated by	Leadership focus	Language to inspire
Power	Influence, impact, being seen as a leader.	Decision-making, visibility, responsibility.	"This will shape the future of ..." or "You're setting direction for ..."
Affiliation	Connection, belonging, teamwork.	Collaboration, Inclusion, shared values.	"This will really help the team..." or "We'll achieve this together..."
Achievement	Results, excellence, measurable progress.	Goals, evidence, milestones	"This will set a new standard..." or "We'll improve X by Y % ..."

Reflections:

- Which of these needs feels strongest for you right now?
- How does it show up in your leadership?
- Think of 3 people you work with and need to influence: Which of these is their primary motivation?



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McClelland's Three Needs: application

As a leader, you can increase your influence if you make a request in a way that aligns with their primary motivation, rather than yours.

Imagine you want colleagues to adopt a new shared data management system. The goal is the same and how you frame the conversation can make a big difference depending on what motivates your listener.

Motivator	Framing Example
Power	"Using this new system will put our group ahead of the curve. We'll be setting the standard others will follow. It gives us much more control over how data is presented and shared."
Affiliation	"This system will make it so much easier for everyone to collaborate and stay connected. We'll all be working from the same place and can support each other more effectively."
Achievement	"With this approach, we'll save 20% of analysis time and can track outputs clearly. It's a significant step up in efficiency and quality."

You could also adapt this for other familiar situations such as motivating people to complete a project, adopt new practices, or engage with new initiatives.

The message changes, but the pattern is the same:

- Power focuses on impact and leadership,
- Affiliation on connection, collaboration and belonging
- Achievement on results and excellence.

Who do you need to influence more effectively?

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Kahler's 5 Drivers

Kahler described five unconscious "drivers" that push us to behave in habitual ways, especially when under pressure:

Driver	Core Message	Helpful side	Risk under stress
Be Perfect	"I must get it right."	High standards	Paralysis, fear of mistakes
Be Strong	"I must cope."	Calm in crisis	Isolation, burnout
Hurry Up	"I must be fast."	Energy, drive	Impatience, errors
Please Others	"I must keep everyone happy."	Empathy	Can't say no
Try Hard	"I must keep trying."	Persistence	Effort without focus on result

These drivers reflect what individuals consider to be important when completing tasks and may reflect how they anticipate their work being assessed or evaluated.

We often judge or evaluate the actions of other people by the filters we (consciously or unconsciously) choose for ourselves: they're not prioritising this, they don't seem to care, they're taking their time...

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Kahler's 5 Drivers Applied

When working under stress, it's likely that what motivates us normally becomes an unconscious driver everything must obey.

The "Hurry Up" Leader vs. the "Be Strong" researcher

Imagine: A group leader wants results quickly and checks in frequently, asking, "Is it done yet?" or "Any updates today?".

Assumption clash: The leader's Hurry Up driver says: "Speed is critical, rapid progress equals success." while the researcher has a Be Strong driver: "I shouldn't ask for help. I must cope alone."

Result: The researcher feels pressure but doesn't ask for help. Delays mount. The leader interprets this as inefficiency or lack of urgency, the researcher feels overwhelmed and possibly criticised.

The "Please Others" Newbie vs. the "Be Strong" Leader

Imagine: A new joiner is invited to take-on extra responsibilities. Wanting to be helpful and well-regarded, they say yes, even though their workload is very high. They quietly struggle, avoid asking for help and miss deadlines. The leader, driven by Be Strong, sees missed deadlines and poor communication, decides the newcomer is unreliable/not committed.

Assumption clash: The newbie's Please Others driver says: "Say yes, be likeable, don't complain.". The leader's Be Strong driver says: "If I can cope with pressure, others should too and still deliver results."

Result: Neither party talks openly about capacity or expectations. Trust erodes. The leader stops assigning responsibilities or recognising status; the newcomer feels both excluded and overwhelmed.

Using Kahler's drivers as a framework:

- Reflect on your default patterns, assumptions or drivers?
- What do you think drives people you work with?

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Rock's SCARF Model

Neuroscientist David Rock's SCARF model describes five social needs that strongly influence motivation at work:

	When Threatened → Demotivation	When Rewarded → Engagement	Leadership tip
Status	Feeling undervalued	Recognition, respect	Acknowledge contribution publicly
Certainty	Unclear plans	Clear expectations	Communicate early, be consistent
Autonomy	Micromanagement	Choice and trust	Invite input and allow flexibility
Relatedness	Disconnection	Inclusion and trust	Build connection and belonging
Fairness	Perceived bias	Transparency	Explain rationale behind decisions

When these elements are present, motivation tends to be high. However, people are highly motivated to avoid situations of social pain or discomfort - when these are not met.

This avoidance behaviour reduces risk-taking and stifle creativity, very significant for work where intelligence and expertise matter.

> *Motivation is not about pushing people harder – it's about creating conditions where they want to contribute their best.*

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Rock's SCARF Model Applied

With a little thoughtful preparation a skilled leader can build these elements into day to day behaviours and genuinely increase the sense of motivation of people in their teams: people want to work for this leader!

Can you recall or imagine three different, specific examples of positive and negative motivators for each domain within the SCARF context?

For example, list 3 ways you can increase/decrease someone's sense of:

- Status?
- Certainty?
- Autonomy?
- Relationship?
- Fairness?

Simple examples include:

- Acknowledging contribution
- Assigning tasks with inherent responsibility
- Delegating
- Being consistent and checking-in
- Including people in in social invitations…

Done intentionally these create good environments for work

Think about a team or collaboration you're part of:

- Which SCARF elements feel strong?
- Which might need more attention?

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In Summary

These models describe different layers of motivation:

- McClelland helps you understand what drives individuals.
- Kahler reveals how stress distorts behaviour.
- SCARF shows how to create motivating environments.

Use these structures to improve your skills at motivating or influencing others intentionally - observe the results and adjust as needed.

Together they help you:

- Engage others authentically.
- Communicate to different motivators.
- Build resilient, motivated teams.
- Lead with empathy, not assumption.

Yes, it might take a little thought or preparation but leading with intention is a skill set to be developed, not simply a lucky gift.



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Reflections

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WANT MORE?



This workbook offers different ways to think about motivating or influencing others

You might find some things are more intuitive or come naturally, others are worth working at.

Like any skill set, we get better with intentional and reflective practice: test, measure, improve.

Where will you start?

I hope this content has been useful.
If you know you need more, do reach out to me. I'd love to hear from you.

You can always explore the other resources on my website.

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Resources

Let me know how you get on!

Margaret

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