

The Gift of Significance

I recently came across a quotation from Lee Bolman's 1995 book *Leading With Soul* which I annotated as follows: "The gift of significance lets people find meaning in work, faith in themselves, and hope for the future." I went on to Tweet that phrase. And then I began to think about it.

This is the one of the most empowering concepts that I can imagine. First, it involves a human interaction between a giver and a recipient. The giver's motives may vary, but the results are the same. *You give me a feeling of significance and my self-esteem rises.* If my feelings of self-worth are already high, then I'll do more of what led to the praise. But that's not the interesting story here.

Imagine the impact on someone who perpetually feels unworthy, on the job or as a person. The potential for positive change is stunning! When the giver has finally convinced the receiver that - *yes, you are important and valuable and appreciated* – the receiver's energy level rises, confidence and productivity soar, and, most importantly, you the giver have irrevocably changed a person's life for the better.

As a leader, beginning with this approach will yield better outcomes than other attempts to motivate. Remember, **you cannot really motivate a person**; you can manage someone, and you can create an atmosphere that will influence behavior. But motivation comes from within. What you **can** do is give people the gift of significance, and all that includes.

Play a mind movie of yourself giving the gift of significance, and keep editing and playing that mind movie until your Aha Moment comes.