



Engagement Is the Key to Organizational Success

By Fleur Yumol, April 2016

It is hard out there right now. Really hard. Mostly because it feels like no one is winning. Whether or not you have a job it's a very stressful time, but for different reasons.

If you have lost your job, then the uncertainty and financial consequences create significant fear and anxiety especially if you are the primary provider for your family. If you have kept your job it's likely that you are overwhelmed with the workload, still unsure if you are "safe" and have some residual survival guilt knowing you have friends and family that are not working. Additionally, neither side feels comfortable talking to the other.

The person who is employed "should" feel lucky to have a job and the person who lost their job may not want to "burden" someone who is already working long hours and perhaps carrying the financial demands of their families. Without conversations and communication, we lose touch with each other and over time we lose our sense of connection.

Without connection we are less engaged, which can lead to decreased empathy and compassion and eventually isolation, loneliness and frustration. We eventually begin to feel that we are on our own and that no one is on our side. We focus on what we need to do to survive. This is not a bad thing except that we are not alone. We do have people on our side. We can harness engagement and connection to meet both our personal and professional goals as well as the goals of the organization.

Our initial reaction to pull away, protect and focus on our own survival is normal. In stressful situations we have three natural reactions that help us survive. We fight, we flee or we freeze. This is not about doing anything wrong. We are all experiencing the loss of control over the external situation and in some sense we all have a common enemy. We must remember that the enemy is not each other.

We can go at it alone or we can maintain our connections through empathy, compassion, and continuing to communicate.

Ask questions and problem solve from a more cohesive and collaborative perspective. Be trusting and vulnerable with the people you work with. Assume that when one person is winning then we all win as a whole, because we are working towards the same goals. To build trust we must understand the organizational goals. We need to know what direction we are going and how we will know when we get there. We also need to know that we are an integral part of the process that will get us there.

It matters that you show up, it matters that you ask questions and most of all it matters that we support one another and stay engaged for the greater good. Whatever the outcome, it is important to know that the burden is much less when there are more hands carrying the load. And to that end, we may even flourish.

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