

Encouragement Index

How frequently do you typically engage in this behavior? Write the number from the scale below that best describes your response to each statement.

1	Never	6	Fairly often
2	Rarely	7	Often
3	Seldom	8	Usually
4	Once in awhile	9	Very often
5	Sometimes	10	Almost always

- ___ I set a standard that motivates us to do better in the future than we are doing now.
- ___ I express high expectations about what people are capable of accomplishing.
- ___ I pay more attention to the positive things people do than the negative.
- ___ I personally acknowledge people for their contributions.
- ___ I tell stories about the special achievements of the members of the team.
- ___ I make sure that our group celebrates accomplishments together.
- ___ I get personally involved when we recognize the achievements of others.
- ___ I clearly communicate my personal values and professional standards to everyone on the team.
- ___ I let people know I have confidence in their abilities.
- ___ I spend a good deal of time listening to the needs and interests of other people.
- ___ I personalize the recognition I give to another person.
- ___ I find opportunities to let people know the “why” behind whatever we are doing.
- ___ I hold special events to celebrate our successes.
- ___ I show others, by my own actions, how people should be recognized, rewarded, and thanked.
- ___ I make it a point to give people feedback on how they are performing against our agreed-upon standards.
- ___ I express a positive and optimistic outlook even when times are tough.
- ___ I get to know, at a personal level, the people with whom I work.
- ___ I find creative ways to make my recognition of others unique and special.
- ___ I recognize people more in public than in private for their exemplary performance.
- ___ I find ways to make the workplace enjoyable and fun.
- ___ I personally congratulate people for a job well done.

- ___ TOTAL (add together all the ratings above)

186-210

You're doing great! You're probably seeing a lot of your associates producing at high levels. Morale is high. People like working with you because you keep the work environment upbeat and positive, maybe even inspiring. They feel appreciated and are feeling good about the contributions they are making.

Encouraging the heart appears to be a highly developed part of your leadership repertoire. Your presence alone is an asset. If you're not already doing it, look around for someone who could use your mentoring abilities to be as you are at encouraging others. Also, if people aren't already taking the initiative to recognize and celebrate on their own, use your skills to provide structures and tools so they don't have to wait for you to get the ball rolling. Let them know it would be great, if they, too, would encourage and celebrate others' achievements.

Finally, always be on the lookout for new ways to encourage the heart, to avoid becoming too repetitive, predictable, or boring.

126-185

You're doing pretty darn well. Although most of your associates are producing, you may have the feeling that they could be giving more. You know there might be some grumbling, but people are generally happy working with you. You may have the haunting feeling from time to time that there is something more you could be doing to motivate and encourage people, but you don't know exactly what it is.

You clearly recognize that encouraging the heart is important, yet you may feel reluctant to commit completely to this practice daily. To take the next step, ask yourself what's holding you back from encouraging more. For example, some leaders put limits on how much they encourage others because they feel that leaders need to keep a certain emotional distance from the others. You discover as you proceed, though, that you can keep a certain distance even as you are acknowledging individuals and celebrating your team's accomplishments.

Perhaps you're just not the cheerleader type, and you're turned off by the idea of making too much of what people are getting paid to do; you feel that they shouldn't be expecting any special treatment. Even if there is some truth in this, the fact remains that we are social animals and most of us respond well when we're acknowledged for our efforts.

Whatever the reason you're holding back, take an honest look at it and weigh the reason against what you can gain by encouraging the heart. You might just find your uneasiness about this process fades away as you experience greater success and ease with this aspect of leadership.

66-125

People are probably not working to their highest levels, and there's a part of you that is well aware of this fact. You might even get the feeling that the only time everyone is working to capacity is when they think you are watching them. Not to worry, though;

there are plenty of tips you can put into practice, and then you're well on your way to becoming adept at encouraging others.

You may be feeling that there is value in encouraging the heart, but you're missing opportunities to put the practice into motion. Start paying attention to the achievements of the people around you that you feel are worthy of acknowledgment or celebration: a person just doing something thoughtful that makes your job easier. Your recognition can run the gamut from a simple thank-you to an elaborate celebration.

If you feel reluctant to do any of this, see if you can identify what's holding you back. Lighten up! Think about things you can do to make your workplace more fun and inspiring to people who work there---and more fun and inspiring to you, too, we might add. Even a laugh or two can enhance productivity and worker satisfaction.

21-65

Our guess is that your score isn't this low. If it is, we hope you'll get busy putting some recognition and encouragement practices into play immediately. If your score is low, it's a pretty good bet that there is a fair amount of discontent in the ranks, or you're really tough on yourself. The good news is that you are in a position to make immense changes that will not only increase productivity but make your job a heck of a lot easier.

We know from our research that most people produce more in an environment where they get positive feedback, and productivity diminishes where there is little or no feedback or where they only hear from their leaders if something is wrong. Since it's your job as a leader to make sure people are earning their keep, you are probably not earning yours unless you are encouraging the heart.

Make a commitment today to find something in your workplace to celebrate. Say thank you to someone who enables you to be a little more effective! Perhaps you don't appreciate how important encouraging the heart is for maintaining the vitality of your team. Or maybe you're just overlooking opportunities to celebrate and give recognition. See if there is someone else in your organization you can team up with to help encourage others. Find a role model and spend some time with that person as you learn from him/her how he/she encourages the heart.

True leadership has its own intrinsic rewards; they come as you learn to work with others not through intimidation and control but through cooperation and recognition.

from Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others
by James Kouzes & Barry Posner, (Jossey Bass)