

A Motivator, a Leader

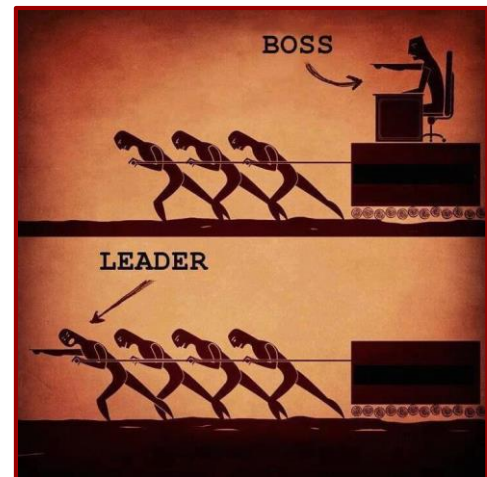
The word *motivation* is often confused with *manipulation*. Here is the important difference:

- **Motivation** occurs when you persuade others to take an action in their own best interests. Things such as people preparing their homework, accepting responsibility for their performance and finishing their education are the results of motivation.
- **Manipulation** is persuading others to take an action that is primarily for your benefit. Things such as selling an inferior product at an inflated price and working people overtime with no extra pay are examples of manipulation.

In his book, *Something to Smile About: Encouragement and Inspiration for Life's Ups and Downs*, the late Zig Ziglar, author and one of the most-sought-after motivational speakers in the country, offered his insights on the subject. He said:

“Manipulation self-destructs the individual doing the manipulating. Word gets out on manipulators, and people grow less and less likely to respond in a positive manner to their manipulation. Productivity declines. Leadership occurs when you persuade a person to take an action that is in your mutual best interests.”

During my portion of the *Life Care Journey* in the discussion of servant leadership, I use the quote from former President Dwight Eisenhower: “The art of leadership is getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.”



When that happens, performance improves, productivity increases, and both parties win.

“Comparing motivation to manipulation is like comparing kindness to deceit,” Ziglar said. “The difference is the intent of the person. Motivation will cause people to act out of free choice and desire, while manipulation often results in forced compliance. One is ethical and long-lasting; the other is unethical and temporary.”

Thomas Carlyle, Scottish philosopher, satirical writer and essayist, wrote: “A great man shows his greatness by the way he treats the little man.”

The value you place on people determines whether you are a motivator or a manipulator of people. Motivation is moving together for mutual advantage. Manipulation is persuading or even subtly coercing people to do something so that you win and they lose. With the motivator, everybody wins; with the manipulator, only the manipulator wins. Such a victory is temporary and the price is prohibitive.

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Leaders and motivators are winners. Manipulators are losers who produce resentment and discord.

The conclusion: Be a motivator and lead your people.

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another (Proverbs 17:17 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter