

## LESSON 5: MOTIVATION



*alleviate*  
*biological needs*  
*complement*  
*ego gratification*  
*esteem*  
*human needs*  
*incentive*  
*initiative*  
*intangible*  
*neutral*  
*norms*  
*prejudice (-ial)*  
*progression*  
*status*

### PURPOSE

Leaders spend a great deal of time and effort studying the technical aspects of their jobs. However, in order to lead effectively, they must also know what makes people “tick.” By studying human behavior, leaders learn why people act and react in certain ways. Plus, leaders who care about their subordinates and are attentive to their needs are more able to influence them in accomplishing unit goals. This lesson identifies those basic needs and it explains how they can be satisfied.

### INTRODUCTION

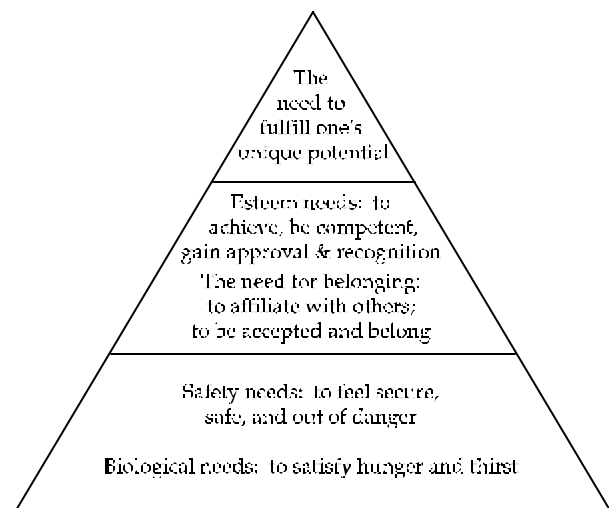
Studying human behavior helps leaders to acquire the knowledge they need to better understand themselves and those they lead.

It is important that leaders learn why human beings act and react in certain ways and to identify various types of behavior. They also

must learn how to influence the behavior of subordinates so that their personal goals **complement** or reinforce the goals of management.

### MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

According to psychologist Abraham H. Maslow, human beings are influenced by a **progression** of needs. In Maslow’s theory, **human needs** develop from lower to higher needs (see the illustration of a pyramid). Maslow believed that although relatively few people reach the top level, those needs lie dormant in all of us. To be creative in the way we conduct our lives and use our talents, we must first satisfy the basic needs. The satisfaction of these basic needs motivates people to reach higher levels. It is important to remember that one person’s needs are the same as those of another — they simply vary in the degree of importance.



Thus, people generally behave in a way that first satisfies their needs for physical comfort and safety, then they satisfy their needs for social acceptance and **ego gratification**.

## LEADERSHIP DEMANDS THE STUDY OF HUMAN NATURE AND BEHAVIOR

In order for leaders to motivate, they must satisfy both the personal needs of their subordinates as well as their work-related goals. Therefore, to lead effectively, leaders must demonstrate that they value and support their subordinates. Simple acts of kindness or an indication that they care about their subordinates can often change a poor attitude to a better one.

The leadership principle, “*know your subordinates and look out for their welfare (or well-being)*” goes hand-in-hand with this discussion of motivation and human needs.

Leaders must know and understand the members of their unit. It is not enough just to know a team member’s name. As a leader, you need to understand them as individuals — their interests, values, and attitudes. In short, you must know why they act the way they do. Commit time and effort to listen to and learn about them. Try to observe, become personally acquainted with, and recognize them as individuals with different backgrounds and different personalities. To be successful in this principle, you must have a knowledge of individual and group behavior — without this knowledge, you cannot understand the “why” of your followers’ actions.

The behavior of team members is often driven by their desire to satisfy certain physical and safety needs. Whether or not they put their best effort in the performance of their duty and achieving the unit’s goal depends on the satisfaction of those needs. By showing that you care, you can earn their trust and respect. If they trust you, they will willingly work to help you accomplish the mission.

Leaders need the support of followers in order to accomplish their goals. If leaders understand subordinates’ needs and either satisfy them or help to satisfy them, leaders can influence behavior to some degree.

Human nature is the common set of qualities shared by all human beings. Some of these qualities are beliefs, values, and character traits. Other aspects of human nature are the potential for good and bad behavior, stress factors, and human needs. In this chapter, we will concentrate on the human needs.

## HUMAN NEEDS

For years, scholars have studied human behavior and have offered hundreds of explanations of human nature and instinct and how they affect actions. There are certain factors, elements, or needs that cause people to behave in certain ways and do certain things. The most basic of these factors is human needs.

Human needs are those necessary for a person’s existence and for mental and emotional stability. The human needs required for existence are physical or **biological needs**; in addition to food and water, they include the need for safety and security.

*Safety needs* are one of the most basic of the biological needs and include the desire for security and for law and order. People need to feel secure. A leader quickly loses respect if he does not show genuine concern for the safety needs of subordinates. A leader’s lack of concern for this need is quickly evident to perceptive people and affects their motivation to follow the leader into dangerous situations.

The psychological needs provide for mental and emotional stability: belonging or social acceptance, **esteem**, and self-fulfillment. Maslow suggested that psychological needs:

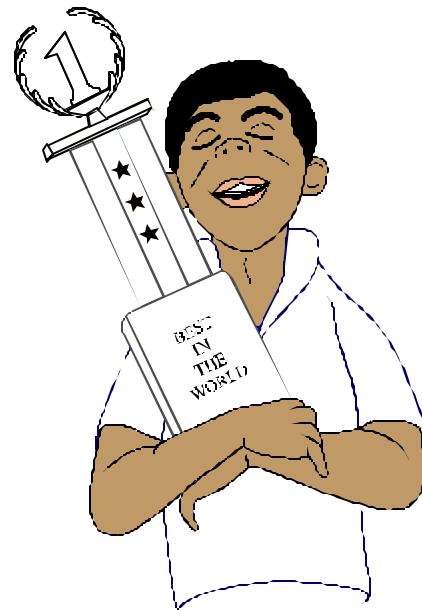
- ⇒ Function in much the same way as biological needs do.
- ⇒ Can only be filled by an outside source.
- ⇒ Are based on and developed through human beings' relationships with each other and society in general.

The following is a brief description of the three psychological needs.

- The *needs for belonging* and for *social acceptance* rest on the person's desire to be an accepted member of the group and to have good personal relationships with all members. Social needs are important motivators, but they are less obvious than physical needs. In addition to wanting to belong to a group and to be respected by others in that group, social acceptance includes the need for self-respect, **status**, comradeship, love, and affection.
- According to Maslow, *esteem needs* are just as important for human life as food and water. A lack of esteem can make people anxious and tense. To ease these tensions, people might engage in random or desperate activities.

The esteem needs are those that stem from the person's desire for achievement, recognition, respect, and appreciation. The leader can directly recognize subordinates for their performance and show appreciation by intangible rewards such as a simple "well done" or a pat on the back. Tangible rewards might be time off, recommendations for awards, and promotions, and favorable evaluations.

Most people want distinction. They want logical rules and regulations, hard but meaningful work, and a sense of belonging to the group. By respecting subordinates, recognizing them as individuals, and treating them as important contributing members of the team, leaders help satisfy the need for esteem.



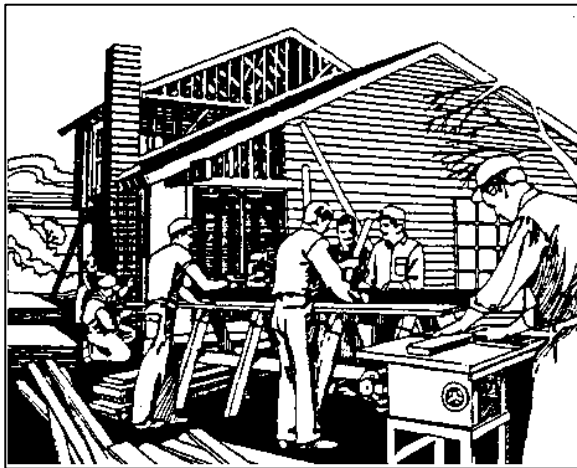
- *Self-fulfillment needs* occupy the top of the hierarchy. These may include the pursuit of knowledge and beauty, or whatever else is required for the fulfillment of one's potential. Many corporate vice presidents desire to be presidents and many movie extras desire to be major stars, but these desires are realized in only a few cases. Although only a few people ever reach their ultimate dreams, everyone can attain their intermediate goals and achieve lifelong satisfaction. Complete self-fulfillment is possible, but it takes hard work and determination.

Maslow added to the motivation theory the idea that some of these needs take precedence over others and the suggestion that achieving one level of satisfaction releases new needs and motivations.

## GROUP NEEDS

In addition to individual human needs, there are group **norms** that are established to meet the needs of the group. Group norms are a collection of the needs of the individuals in the group. These needs may require group members to change or adjust their needs to fit the group's norm.

Groups have common goals and established leadership. In groups, personal relationships between the members cause them to conform to certain standards set by the group. When such groups want to achieve a goal, they will work hard and do their best in order to maintain acceptance by the other members of the group. In other words, they do not want to let their team members down or lose their respect. They all want to do their part.



This camaraderie is due to the need for social acceptance and status within the group — a force that is stronger in leaders because they need the respect of their subordinates for their own self-esteem. The group will have confidence and faith in their leaders as long as they meet the group's needs and expectations. However, if leaders do not live up to those needs or expectations, group members will seek individual satisfaction instead of group satisfaction.

## LEADERS' CONCERN FOR GROUP NEEDS

Leaders must provide purpose and goals for the group. By selecting the best course of action to reach a goal, they provide purpose. By explaining the reasoning behind decisions and demonstrating their own enthusiasm for the task, they provide direction and assistance in accomplishing the goal. This direction should also include information on the required standards of performance.



Leaders must realize that, although they are recognized as leaders because of their position, they will not be accepted until they earn the respect and confidence of the group by satisfying its needs. Therefore, successful leaders must be more concerned with the well-being of their people than they are with themselves. They must go out of their way to give time, energy, and counsel to help their subordinates live up to their potential. By constantly showing this level of concern to their subordinates, these leaders receive a high degree of respect and loyalty from their subordinates along with their desire to accomplish team goals.

*Unselfish leaders avoid providing for their own comfort and personal advancement at the*

*expense of others. Leaders should place the comfort, pleasure, and recreation of subordinates before that of their own. It is difficult to respect leaders who seek their own comfort over that of their subordinates or who hoard credit for achievement made possible by subordinates. True leaders place themselves last in priority and share the dangers and hardships with their subordinates.*

## MOTIVATING BY SATISFYING NEEDS

Needs form the basis for actions. They motivate people to behave in certain ways and to do certain things. Consequently, motivation is a total process that is determined by the interaction of human needs, the situation, and the combination of personal and group needs. The leader's part within this interaction is to:

- ⇒ Thoroughly understand human needs and stay directed toward satisfying them. Keep a broad point of view on human nature and motivation. Do not hold to a narrow view that people are motivated only by fear, or believe the opposite — that people are all good and will always be motivated to do the right thing. Instead, a complex array of forces can motivate people, and leaders must be open to every situation.
- ⇒ Satisfy individual and group needs by establishing goals or tasks for individuals and groups to reach, leading to goal/task accomplishment.
- ⇒ Understand how to motivate in order to obtain the behavior and conduct (confidence, competence, professionalism, etc.) needed from subordinates.
- ⇒ Establish and maintain loyalty and teamwork within the unit.
- ⇒ Create a caring climate within the unit — one that promotes trust and respect as well as an understanding and acceptance of the “why” of subordinates’ actions.

⇒ Create self-motivation in subordinates — this is the most powerful and lasting form of motivation. Most people can become self-motivated if taught leadership attributes.

## 14 PRINCIPLES OF MOTIVATION

Although there is no simple formula for motivation, we can provide a basic view of what motivates people. Keep in mind that this view is a simplification for you to use as a guide. It assumes that needs motivate people and that a person's motivation to reach a goal depends on whether the person perceives that the goal will satisfy any of those needs. Realizing that different people react to varying needs will allow you to arrive at appropriate decisions and actions in a particular situation.

People are motivated by many forces — values, self-interest, kindness, worthy causes, and other forces. Some of these forces are internal — such as fears and beliefs; and some are external — such as danger, the environment, a chance for promotion, or pressures from a senior, subordinates, or one's family. Forces combine to determine what a person is motivated to do in a given situation.

Remember, since needs form the basis for actions and leaders must motivate by understanding these needs, leaders must understand how needs drive individuals, people, or groups to action. The following is a discussion of 14 practical principles (guidelines) that flow from this basic view of motivation. (*Note: Do not confuse these principles with the 11 leadership principles.*)

*Principle 1*

***Make the needs of subordinates coincide with unit tasks and missions.***

Subordinates will have a natural desire to work to satisfy their own needs. When leaders link these interests and needs with those of the group, they have a powerful way to motivate.

*Principle 2*

***Reward individual and team behavior that supports unit tasks and missions.***

The opportunity to win a reward is a sound motivator. A ribbon, a medal, a certificate, or a letter are only small tangible objects, but they mean a great deal to someone psychologically. These rewards have motivating power because they are a way of satisfying social and higher needs. Awards symbolize a proud achievement. Once the higher needs are awakened by such rewards, the motivation to keep working for more recognition normally increases.

Rewards can also include a simple “well done” or a “pat on the back,” a promotion, or a favorable evaluation.

*Principle 3*

***Counsel subordinates who behave in a way that is counter to unit tasks, missions, and standards.***

The previous two examples were the “carrot” or the reward approach. This principle is the opposite; it is the “stick.” Use this principle only when it is necessary to motivate people who do not respond to positive

motivation. However, before resorting to this approach, be certain that the task, mission, or standard was clearly communicated prior to the infraction.

Every leader in the chain of command must be involved in the discipline of the organization. This shows subordinates that even their immediate supervisor has the power of “the stick.” Each case requiring counseling or disciplinary action also provides an opportunity to teach subordinate leaders how to counsel and take disciplinary action. Remember, conduct reprimands, counseling sessions, and other corrective actions as privately and as quickly as possible after an infraction. Do not humiliate or embarrass someone in front of others.

*Principle 4*

***Set the example in all things.***

If leaders show their subordinates how to act, they are teaching them at the same time. If leaders follow regulations and unit operating procedures, they are demonstrating the expected policies to be followed. By doing these actions, leaders are also proving their own degree of self-discipline.

A word of caution is in order here. No one is superhuman, and subordinates do not expect that. While they want leaders to set the example in all things and to share hardships with them, they do not want their leaders to take unnecessary risks. If they see leaders taking unnecessary risks, they may lose confidence in their judgment, affecting the morale, cohesion, and discipline of the unit.

*Principle 5*

***Develop morale and esprit within the unit.***

Morale is the mental, emotional, and spiritual state of an individual. It is how a person feels — happy, hopeful, confident, appreciated, worthless, sad, unrecognized, or depressed. Morale has a tremendous impact on motivation. High morale strengthens courage, energy, and the will to get things done. Since everything a leader does affects morale in one way or another, a leader must always be aware of how his or her actions and decisions affect it. Give subordinates something to hope for, because hope builds morale.

Esprit means team spirit — it is the spirit, soul, and state of mind of the unit. It is a product of cohesion; the overall consciousness of the unit that the subordinate identifies with and feels a part of.

*Principle 6*

***Give subordinates tough problems, and challenge them to wrestle with them.***

Coach subordinates on their problem-solving, decision-making, planning, and implementing skills. This principle:

- ◇ Encourages (by teaching and coaching) the development of junior leaders.
- ◇ Motivates people who must carry out the plan.
- ◇ Makes communication clearer — giving everyone a better understanding of the mission and what they must do as individuals and as a team to achieve it.
- ◇ Creates an open, trusting communication bond between the members of the chain of command.

*Principle 7*

***Have subordinates participate in the planning of upcoming events.***

Participating in the planning of future events can be a highly motivating experience. By contributing ideas to a plan, subordinates then have a personal interest in seeing the plan succeed. Plus, it improves communication, which improves teamwork. Improved communication also gives everyone a clearer picture of the objective so that they can use their **initiative** to achieve it. Clear understanding of the mission and the plan prevents ill-founded rumors and fears based on a lack of knowledge.

Also, by involving subordinates in planning, leaders show that they recognize subordinates' abilities and appreciate them. Recognition and appreciation from respected leaders are powerful motivating forces.

*Principle 8*

***Alleviate causes of the personal concerns of subordinates so that they can concentrate on their jobs.***

Everyone has a unique combination of experience, values, character traits, knowledge, and skills, causing a person to have a unique way of dealing with life. Things that seem of no importance to leaders may be of critical importance to subordinates.

Some people may have family problems that leaders must empathize with before they can help them. Others may not know how to: handle money, have meaningful relationships, stay out of trouble, balance the demands of school or work with the

needs of the family, or grow professionally and personally.

Leaders should strive to help their subordinates as much as they can by keeping them informed of situations and decisions, encouraging feedback, and through counseling — when necessary. For those people who are having real or perceived challenges, these difficulties will cause them to worry, consume their energy, and prevent them from being productive. In order to help **alleviate** these causes of personal concerns, leaders should teach subordinates how to handle their lives in a healthy, constructive way.

#### *Principle 9*

***Ensure that subordinates are properly cared for and have the tools they need to succeed.***

Simply put, this principle means caring for subordinates. Leaders at all levels of the chain of command must do all they can to help subordinates meet their physical, safety, social, esteem, and self-fulfillment needs. Teach them all you know. You want them to have the right values, character traits, knowledge, and skills because these are the tools that will allow them to grow, and to live happy, productive lives.

#### *Principle 10*

***Keep subordinates informed about missions and standards.***

Keep clear, open communications with subordinates so that they can accomplish their mission as a team and use initiative in the absence of orders.

#### *Principle 11*

***Use positive peer pressure to work for you, the leader, and the unit.***

Peer pressure can be a powerful motivating force, but leaders must be careful how they apply it. If not used properly, it can backfire with serious consequences. On the other hand, positive peer pressure that is based on professional norms and values is healthy.

#### *Principle 12*

***Avoid using statistics as a major method of evaluating units and motivating subordinates.***

Statistics in themselves are not necessarily bad or good. Leaders should use them sparingly and carefully because they are only the “mask” of a unit and they may present a false image. They are surface indicators or symptoms that leaders need to check into further. Perhaps, they indicate a serious problem, perhaps not. Leaders simply do not know until they look into the true causes of the symptoms.

Improper use of statistics has a devastating effect on trust, morale, and motivation. Valid evaluation systems and effective leaders require much more than statistics. They require ways to get beneath the “image” to the real substance — the true strengths and weaknesses that influence effectiveness and the real leadership causes of those strengths and weaknesses. Good leaders make the time to get out and to see the real substance of a unit.



*Principle 13*

***Make the jobs of subordinates as challenging, exciting, and meaningful as possible.***

Make each subordinate feel special. Experience and study have proven that people need meaningful work. They need to believe that what they are doing, even if it is tiring and unpleasant, is necessary and important. When people feel that their jobs are important and that they have responsibility, they feel needed and motivated. This principle:

Encourages the delegation of authority. This “power down” approach helps leaders get the best out of their subordinates. Leaders give responsibility to subordinates who have the skill and will to handle it, and they strive to make subordinates feel that they are as responsible as them for achieving unit standards and goals.

*Principle 14*

***Do not tolerate any form of prejudicial talk or behavior.***

Racial, sexual, or other **prejudicial** talk and behavior are contrary to the principles on which America was founded. If a person feels that he or she is the object of **prejudice**, that person’s motivation can be seriously damaged. Prejudice can also destroy teamwork, cohesion, and discipline within a unit.

Although these 14 principles of motivation are different from the 11 leadership principles, there are similarities. Did you recognize any?

**BUILDING MOTIVATION**

People will have little motivation to do something if they believe they cannot succeed. Likewise, if they are not convinced that good performance is the best way to satisfy their needs, their motivation will be low and they will have little or no interest in doing their best. However, when subordinates are convinced that their chances for success are good enough to warrant the effort, this belief will help them to achieve their own goals (or needs) as well as those of the group. Therefore, leaders must know their subordinates’ capabilities, establish challenging goals within those capabilities, and employ them in accordance with those capabilities (one of the leadership principles). Leaders can also build confidence by offering support, encouragement, and assistance.

Creating assurance that good performance will be rewarded is based on three factors:

- The leader has a consistent record of checking and evaluating performance.
- The leader has an equally consistent record of using rewards in respect to improving performance.
- The leader knows that some team players feel that completion of the task itself is sufficient reward.

**TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE REWARDS**

People work for the opportunity to receive tangible (a plaque) or **intangible** (a “pat on the back”) rewards, and the need to believe that their work is necessary and important. However, if supervisors never compliment them on a job well done, it is easy for subordinates to feel that they never

do good work or that their leaders are not interested in their work. Either of these beliefs can destroy motivation.

On the other hand, if leaders recognize and confirm each person's importance and value to the organization, motivation will be strong. Highly motivated teams with high morale usually have leaders who take a personal interest in them and are understanding.

People resent a lack of respect and will respond with that same disrespect by doing only what is necessary to get by. Leaders must build bonds of mutual respect, trust, confidence, and understanding that are fundamental to a disciplined, cohesive team.

“Too many managers treat employees like children — and then are surprised when they behave like children. Successful business leaders share a bone-deep belief in the intelligence, creativity, and ability of the people they employ.”

Tom Peters, Author  
“In Search of Excellence”

### POSITIVE FEEDBACK

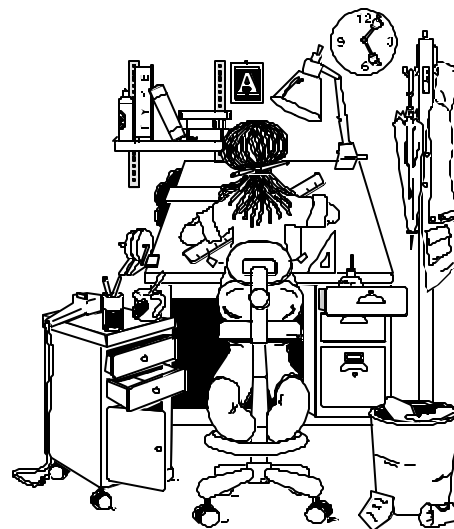
Some leaders tend to focus on mistakes, they forget to comment on jobs that are done well, or they do not praise people who are giving their best effort. Researchers have found that positive feedback is much more productive than negative feedback in motivating and producing changes in behavior. If leaders can find a way to compliment followers rather than to criticize their work, subordinates will have a much greater **incentive** to work for that leader.

It is a leader's job to provide positive feedback — the “pat on the back” — that gives satisfaction. When leaders fail to provide recognition for a task, the result may be the same as punishing their subordinates — they

will not repeat the behavior. For example, take the case of Alicia, a young artist who is just starting a new job at an advertising agency.

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Alicia was just hired as an artist on the staff of an ad agency, and she was eager to make a good impression. She came to work early, took short lunch and coffee breaks, and often worked late. Her boss noticed and thought, “Now, that's a good worker.” But, he did not tell her.



After a while, Alicia's fellow workers began ribbing her about her long hours. “Come on, take a break,” they urged. “We're going to take a long lunch today; come along. You're making us look bad by working so hard.”

Alicia's effort was getting two different responses. Her boss noticed and approved, but he said nothing. Positive thoughts do not count unless they are expressed. So, her impression from the boss was a **neutral** response — she thought he did not care about her work.

Meanwhile, she was getting a negative response from her coworkers. She wanted to fit in, but they thought she was making them look bad. Since the negative response outweighed the neutral response, Alicia began coming in late, taking long lunches, and leaving early.

Her boss noticed the change and called her aside. “I’ve noticed that lately you’ve been goofing off. I expect a full day’s work from you. If you keep coming back late from lunch or leaving early, we may decide to let you go.”

Now, Alicia is caught in a no-win situation. If she works hard, her coworkers are displeased; if she does not, her boss is displeased. This is a situation where poor leadership ruined things for everyone. Alicia’s boss failed to communicate positive feedback, and his resulting neutral response turned her enthusiasm into disillusionment.

However, the story could have ended this way if the boss had used proper leadership techniques:

The head of the art department noticed that the new artist was putting in long hours. This impressed the boss, who told her: “Alicia, I’m glad to see you putting so much effort into learning your new job. We both know that most of the other artists don’t work as hard as you do, but I just wanted you to know that your hard work is noticed and appreciated. I’m sure you’ll have a bright future with this company.”

Alicia’s coworkers still gave her a hard time about working so much, but she just tried to be pleasant without letting her work slide. She remembered the boss’s words and kept reminding herself that her career meant more to her than becoming “one of the gang.”

In the second scenario, Alicia’s boss provided the positive response that she needed to overcome the negative response of her

coworkers. Simply telling her that her work was appreciated made the difference between productivity and resentment. In the process, the boss rewarded hard work and dedication.

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## CONCLUSION

This lesson explained one of the most important aspects that you, as a leader, must *know* in order to *do* your job properly — the understanding of human nature and how that understanding impacts on what you must *know* about yourself, your job, your subordinates, and your unit. This knowledge will give you a stronger foundation for what you must *be* and what you must *do*. Then, what you do as a leader — the application of these skills — flows from this “being” and “knowing” foundation.

Invisible threads weave together many of the techniques and attributes of leadership. Throughout this lesson, we tried to illustrate how understanding needs is intertwined with a leader’s values, ethics, and character and with various leadership traits and principles. Your knowledge and proper application of human nature is essential — it is the bedrock of a your character as a leader.

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