



LEADERSHIP insights

ISSUE 1 JANUARY 2010

By Jo Anne Preston
RWHC Workforce
& Organizational
Development Manager

What **MAKES YOU** come alive?

"Don't ask what the world needs; ask what makes you come alive, because what the world needs is people who have come alive." – Howard Thurman

I heard a family practice physician quote this in a presentation recently as he talked about why he loved his rural practice. It made me ask myself, "When I am at work, when do I feel most alive?" I know exactly when this happens for me...

Do you? Think of times at work you feel energized, well suited to your work, enthusiastic, inspired, accomplished, like "this work is a good fit for my talents".

Make a list - real or mental-of the things you are involved in at work that inspire you to feel alive. How could you incorporate more of the things on this list into the rest of your work?

What about your employees?

See if you could make a "list" of the ways your employees might answer the question. If you don't know, ASK. Use it as a connecting or growing coaching opportunity.

Some ideas for how to ask:

"I'm interested in learning about the parts of your job that make you feel the most enthusiastic-you know, the days you go home and say it was a really good day at work. When you have those days, what is it about the job that makes you feel that way?"

Use their responses to springboard ways to build on their natural talents with new upcoming projects, and best utilize their energy and talent.

If they have a hard time answering the question, you may follow up with:

"Can you imagine what a workday might be filled with that might make you feel energized? For some people it might be lots of (or little) patient interaction, or working with details and making them all come out right, working in teams/working alone, or perhaps coming up with new ways of doing things, or for yet others it may be just getting a lot of tasks crossed of your list-any of those ring a bell with you?"

This dialogue can do so much to help you learn about an individual's talents, make the employee feel valued, and potentially energize them around some new ideas for their work.

Marcus Buckingham, author of First Break All the Rules and The One Thing You Need to Know about Great Managing Great Leading and Sustained Individual Success suggests that a coaching instinct is an innate desire to lead people to their best success-whatever it may be. Do you have a coaching instinct? Do you get some of your enthusiasm from being able to help someone turn their natural talents into great performance? Everyone wins when this happens.

This coaching instinct may-or may not-come naturally to you, but coaching skills and processes can be learned. You keep good people when you help bring out their natural talents toward a useful goal.

Matching work to the right people is a leadership talent to hone not only for your employees' success but your own!

Here's a SMART Goal:

By the end of January, 2010, have a 20 minute coaching conversation with at least one employee about what energizes them at work.

Jo Anne Preston
Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative
880 Independence Lane
Sauk City, WI 53583
Phone: 608-644-3261
Fax: 608-643-4936
JPreston@rwhc.com

