Really Managing Health Care

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comparison of simple, hard aspects of good clinical practice and real management

Notes
Acknowledgements

In the 6 years since I joined City University and founded the Health Management Group, I have been involved in much teaching about how to manage health care, but even more so learning. I am very grateful to my colleagues and course members for all that they have taught me, the feedback they have given me and the ideas that they have stimulated. In particular I would like to thank Derek Cramp for his never-ending capacity to supply further references, new links and interesting discussion. Humphrey Bourne, John Garlick, Iain Kidson, Geoff Meads, Linda Smith and Julia Vaughan Smith have all been more helpful than I have told them. Simon Wiseman and the general practitioners of Camden and Islington have also had a considerable influence on the shape of this book. Mandy Ansell, Nancy Craven, Toni Rowe and Rosie Stephens were among those who read early drafts and provided valuable suggestions. Peter Coe, Bryan Harrison, Peter Reading and Jim Stewart were also very generous with their time. None of them, however, can be held responsible for my interpretation of the facts or concepts they provided; any criticisms must be directed at me.

In many ways, this book arises out of the two elements of our degree programmes that differentiate them from others – our emphasis on understanding the clinical dimension, and on personal development and growth. However, the person who first prompted my realization of just what is going so badly wrong with management in health care was my partner, Colin Smith. As a thoroughly effective managing director in manufacturing industry, his behaviour is very different from that which I observe in senior managers in health care.

In the dim and distant days of the Resource Management Initiative, when there were still four Thames Regions, South-East Thames commissioned an excellent training course from Price Waterhouse Consultants’ Organizational
Development Team, which started me thinking about what my MBA, from the London Business School, had not taught me. Their approach has now become so embedded in my subconscious that I cannot identify particular concepts to credit, but no doubt they will recognize many.

As an employer, City University has allowed me to experience many of the emotions and learn many of the lessons described in Chapter 3, so it is cordially dedicated to them. Without Chris Heginbotham, who commissioned the book and encouraged me throughout, the book would never have been written. Last but by no means least, Laurey King has worked absolute miracles on the word processor.
Introduction

Hardly anyone is managing health care. There are increasing numbers of managers in health care, but that is not the same thing. There is a lot of counting going on. A lot of collecting, analysing and shuffling of numbers and other data items. A lot of people making their presence felt. But influencing outcomes? Maximizing the enthusiasm and commitment of healthcare professionals around shared goals? In other words, really managing?

Why is this? Why is it that the growing numbers of people who believe they are managing are not doing so? Joe Batten, in his book *Tough Minded Leadership*, gives us a clue. He draws a distinction between the ‘simple hard’ and the ‘complicated easy’. The former could be something as simple, and as hard, as acting with integrity. The latter? Analysing the impact of a change in case-mix on budget projections, or redesigning organizational structures.

Today’s healthcare managers are concentrating on the complicated easy at the expense of the simple hard. This is understandable. The increasing specialization of health care has led to a culture in which there is an unspoken assumption that if we could just find the expert with the correct answer, we would be able to solve any problem. While this belief may be well founded for many clinical problems where the constituent elements are cells, in management problems those constituent parts are people and the richness of personality ensures that there is no single correct solution, however complicated. Whenever we interact with other people, we cannot succeed unless we heed the simple hard.

Much of the complicated easy is, of course, necessary. Without it, managers – even real managers – do not have the tools with which to manage. However, without the simple hard the complicated easy does not work. Worse, it can actually impede the individuals and organizations it is supposed
to be rendering more effective, and be perceived as unnecessary bureaucracy and constraint.

This is a book about the simple hard. It introduces a range of management concepts which are conceptually simple. So simple that in practice they often fail to receive the attention they warrant. So simple that it is possible to complete an MBA without having referred to some of them. I hope that it will prove useful, practical, challenging and transforming. Undoubtedly, it will prove (particularly to those whose intellect is only tickled by the complicated easy) irritating, simplistic, misguided and just plain wrong. If you find you are becoming annoyed, please turn to Chapter 6 before parting company.

The first three chapters look at different aspects of ‘really managing people’. Chapters 1 and 2, ‘Working through others’ and ‘Working with others’, should be of interest to all. Chapter 3, ‘Working for others’, will be of most interest to those working for sizeable organizations, as will Chapter 7, ‘Really managing organizations’. Those who have studied management will be able to skip Chapter 5, ‘Really managing money’. Chapters 4 and 6, ‘Really managing change’ and ‘Really managing yourself’, are again aimed at everyone.
As soon as we ask someone else to do something, rather than undertaking it ourselves, we become managers. We rely on someone else to perform that task in the way we would do if we had the time (and the skill, the knowledge and the patience perhaps). Most of us, then, spend much of our time, in many aspects of our lives, managing other people; even though we may not call ourselves or think of ourselves as managers. Our own effectiveness, and our enjoyment of work and home lives, are strongly influenced by whether the people we rely on complete tasks to our satisfaction. Yet many of us are poor at managing others. Although highly skilled in the activities which we ourselves undertake, we fail to observe some simple rules about the management process, which, if implemented, would make us, and the people around us, more productive and more satisfied.

At its simplest, there are three fundamental rules to be followed when working through other people.

**Three basic rules for managing people**

1. Agree with them precisely what it is you expect them to achieve.
2. Ensure that both you and they are confident that they have the skills and resources to achieve it.
3. Give them feedback on whether they are achieving it.

*Rule 1: Agree expectations*

Unless people know what we want of them, they are unlikely to achieve it. Not all of it anyway. Some may complete the technical task asked of
2 Really managing health care

them, but have offended colleagues with their brusqueness along the way. Others may tackle the task so thoroughly and carefully that they miss important deadlines. Yet others may launch themselves with enthusiasm in a direction we know from experience is unlikely to be fruitful.

We need to agree with them just what it is we expect them to achieve and how. In different circumstances the means by which agreement is reached will differ. If you engage a cleaner in your home, you probably tell her what you want her to do. When it comes to your expectations of someone who is highly educated and possesses many complex skills which you do not (as is the case when managing many healthcare professionals HCPs), much more discussion will be necessary. Here you will focus more on outcomes and leave the individual to determine how to reach them.

This seems obvious. But think about your own career. How many times has anyone sat down with you and spelled out exactly what they are expecting of you? Most people I ask, when teaching, say ‘never’ or ‘once’, and that was usually a ‘holiday job’ when a student. We are very bad, in health care, at saying what we expect of people. We rely on the professional tag people wear. We employ a district nurse and expect her to be a district nurse. When our notions of what that means do not coincide with hers, we blame her.

Recently, the use of job descriptions has greatly improved and as a result they have become a useful basis for a discussion of this kind. They are not, however, a substitute for it. Such descriptions cannot convey the ‘how’, only the ‘what’. They form the basis of a legal contract but not a psychological one. Reaching agreement requires both parties to express their views and respond to those of the other. Interpreting expression and emphasis is an important aspect of this exchange and thus talking together, face to face, is really the only way to observe rule 1. What is more, it will be necessary to have conversations at regular intervals to check that both parties are still in agreement. As we are exposed daily to different influences our views change, so will those of the people we are managing and these changes may well need to be reflected in our expectations of them.

Rule 2: Ensure skills and resources

Once others know what we expect of them, we must ensure that both parties are confident that they can achieve it, that they have the knowledge, skills and resources required. This is not as straightforward as asking them. Some people will give an overconfident assertion that they do. Others, negotiating for more resources, may insist that they do not. Some may feel unsure of their abilities, although your judgement is that they will be fine. Both you and they may have underestimated what is required.

To be able to diagnose which, if any, of these situations applies, you will need to spend time with your staff, observing the skills they use, the
reasoning they employ, the way they deploy their resources (including their time). When you are unable to assess their skills yourself (because they are clinical or technical skills outside your own area of expertise), you will need to seek specialist advice. This must, of course, be discussed with the staff member involved. Often when I say this, senior managers object, saying, ‘but I have to trust my staff’; some even say ‘management is about learning to trust your staff’. Both statements are absolutely correct, but they support rather than oppose the concept of managers accurately assessing the capabilities of their staff. Without such an assessment, you do not have trust, you have hope.

The situations described above will need to be handled in different ways if you are to implement rule 2 successfully.

When a member of staff has overestimated his knowledge or skills, then together you should review your expectations of him and consider some relevant training. It is important that you decide whether the person concerned exaggerated his abilities to you knowingly out of insecurity, or unknowingly due to a lack of insight. You will then be able to develop the kind of relationship in which he feels able to admit areas of weakness, or find ways of constructively challenging his view of himself.

In the contrasting situation where a member of staff is not as confident of his own abilities as you are, he will need to draw confidence from you. You must find ways of convincing him, reassuring him of your support, of reducing the risk for him, perhaps by putting that support in writing. Soon other members of staff whom you have similarly encouraged will be able to give credence to your case.

If it becomes clear as a result of careful observation and analysis of relevant data that your staff are ‘shroud waving’, you are in for a different kind of negotiation. The imposition of what you deem an appropriate level of resources will simply not work. Only the most mature of individuals or teams would not try to vindicate their position and fail to achieve your performance targets.

Personal credibility is the key here. Most shroud waving takes place when there is lack of faith in the motives or judgement of the resource allocator. There is no short cut: you will have to demonstrate integrity, a concern for your staff and their needs, and an understanding of the operational details. You will also have to convince them that your aims encompass their own. Of course if you do not have integrity, aims which encompass theirs, genuine concern for them and a knowledge of that detail then . . . perhaps they are right and you are wrong!

In some cases, the skills and resources required only become apparent as the nature of the task is revealed. When this happens and both you and your staff underestimated the requirements, you must sit down together and reach a new agreement on expectations. If you do not match your expectations to the skills and resources held by your team, then you will have only yourself to blame if they fail to perform.
Rule 3: Feedback

Once people know what is expected of them, and have the skills and resources to achieve it, they need to receive regular feedback on whether they are doing so. This will enable them to increase their effort in one or more areas if this is necessary. Once we know they can do something, whether they do it depends on the choices they make about the effort they put in.

The way feedback is given and received will depend on the circumstances. For example, it may be in the form of anonymized data comparing the performance of different members of staff, as is the case with clinical audit. Or, it may require a face-to-face meeting between you and the member of staff in question. It will be helpful to clarify just how such feedback will be communicated when agreeing on expectations.

The importance of feedback cannot be overstated; it is by receiving feedback from others, either expressed or observed, that we improve our skills, develop and grow. We therefore owe it to the people we work with, especially those for whom we are managerially responsible, to give them the feedback that will enable them to progress. Criticism, however, may be so wounding that, far from enabling the recipient to change one of their behaviours and grow, it robs them of the confidence to attempt any change, and indeed can exacerbate the problem. The way in which the feedback is given is what makes the difference. The fact that feedback can have such an adverse impact requires us to prepare carefully before communicating it. The following points should be borne in mind.

1. It is unlikely that everything that the individual (R for recipient) is doing is wrong. Most often you will be happy with many aspects of their work, just unhappy about one or two. In order to change her behaviour, R must feel able to do so; she must be confident that she can do so, and this confidence must be drawn both from herself and from you. A ‘criticism sandwich’ enables this to happen. Start the discussion with praise about something she is doing that you genuinely think is good. Only then introduce the negative feedback as described below. Finish with further praise. This has several advantages, not least that you keep the negative aspects of her work in perspective. Remember the proportions of a sandwich: the filling is usually no thicker than the slices of bread. R should leave the discussion feeling that its purpose was praise or a review of progress, and that by making efforts in the direction agreed any problems will be overcome.

To increase further the likelihood of your feedback being effective, there is a recipe for the sandwich filling, an approach espoused by Joe Batten. He sums it up as ‘ask, listen, expect’. Before you tell R what you think of her performance, ask her what she thinks of it. Keep refining your questions until you get to the crux of the problem, and then ask her what is causing the problem and what she can do about it. Listen (really listen) to what she has to say, helping her to think it...
through if that is what is needed (often it is not), and then make clear that you are expecting her to resolve the problem.

If an individual does not have the insight (or perhaps the confidence in their standing with you) for this to work, then you must provide the sandwich filling yourself.

2 You do not have the right, the ability or any interest in changing R’s personality. You are concerned with her behaviour. So talk about what she does, not what she is: ‘You have arrived late three times this week’, not ‘You are lazy’. Describe things that you have seen, heard or measured.

3 People are complex and individual and you cannot be sure of knowing the reasons why R is behaving the way she is. Restrict your comments to the behaviour and don’t jump to conclusions about the causes: ‘It is taking you much longer than your colleagues to do x’, not ‘You’re far too tired to do your work properly’.

4 Hardly anyone is completely lacking in some behaviours or has others that must be eradicated completely. The problem is that they are more aggressive, less patient, more acquiescent, less assertive, etc., than you want them to be. So say so. Describe their behaviour in terms of more or less.

5 Keep your description neutral. This behaviour is a problem in this situation; in other situations it may be appropriate. Do not place a value on it of (good vs bad, right vs wrong), just describe it.

6 It is difficult to change our behaviour unless we know precisely what it is we have to change. So be specific. Give exact details of the time and place when an example of the behaviour occurred, preferably while it is still fresh in both memories. Only give as much information as R needs however, or can use. Don’t give a catalogue of crimes if it is not helpful.

7 Different people find different methods helpful when it comes to learning how to change their behaviour. You may have found one particular course, technique, book, etc., helpful. Others may not have. Give R information, share ideas with her but do not give her advice. Let R choose; she knows how she learns better than you do.

8 Choose the time and place carefully. Even good feedback given at the wrong time or in a place where R is uncomfortable will not be effective. It is highly unlikely that she will feel comfortable when anyone else is present, so if you are planning a ‘put down’ in front of others, re-examine your motives.

9 Remember that the purpose of giving feedback is to enable R to change a behaviour and become more skilful. It is not to make you feel better. Bear in mind that although R may find it painful, the feedback is for her benefit. Feedback is often badly given because we all hate doing it, and rush through it trying to get it over as quickly as possible. Development of one’s staff is one of the most important responsibilities of a manager and thus feedback is an essential element. Don’t avoid it.
Prepare for it, perhaps even role-play it with a colleague or friend until you become skilled at it.

Do not be deflected from your purpose (the benefit of R) by a defensive or hostile response. Master your irritation (with yourself and with R) or, if you are unable to do this, move on to the second slice of bread (a positive statement) and schedule a further meeting to discuss the ‘filling’. Continuing when you are angry will only exacerbate the problem. With practice, however, you will be able to master your anger to the benefit of all concerned.

A further point about feedback: people receive it even if you do not give it. They infer from your silence, they observe your body language, they overhear comments you make to other people. Sometimes they gain a fair reflection of your views; often just the opposite; more often still they are just confused. Feedback is one of the many areas of management when ‘doing nothing’ is just not possible. By not actively doing or saying anything, you are doing something. How much better it is to make that something really effective.

Clearly, if you are to be in a position to give feedback you must know how someone is performing. Again there is no short-cut here. You must spend time with that person, with their results, with their staff, with their clients, taking a genuine, constructive interest. There is no substitute for what Tom Peters calls ‘management by walking about’ (MBWA). This is another concept that causes indignation among senior health managers. ‘Surely’, they say, ‘I must only communicate with my staff through the organizational hierarchy; otherwise I am undermining the authority of my team’. They would be correct if you were to use your time with frontline staff or patients to impart news of decisions you had not told their line managers about; or if you were to gossip with them about individuals not present; or if, when they told you of a problem they had with their manager, you were not to support that manager in their absence, while also making sure you understood the perspective of the complainants.

In this, as in so much of management, the results of your actions will depend on your intentions and your integrity. If you set out to snoop, to find evidence with which to confront or to blame, then you will undermine yourself and your team. If your intention is to evaluate performance so that you can praise, offer support where needed, and keep in touch with your organization and its clients – and you have the integrity not to get ensnared in the traps that will be set for you – then the results will be entirely positive.

The other retort I hear is, ‘That’s all very well in theory [for you people in universities they mean!], but in the real world I’m far too busy with my work to spend time walking about’. What such people fail to see is that this is their work, the most important aspect of it. (Chapter 7 considers this in more detail.)

In health care, particularly where it borders social care, much of the
frontline workload is undertaken off-site. In all aspects of health care, it involves autonomous practitioners working alone with clients. How does MBWA apply here? There can be no spontaneous decision to ‘drop in and see how things are going’ when we are talking about confidential discussions between a patient and professional, or when dropping in means catching up with a community psychiatric nurse on her rounds. And yet it is essential that performance is monitored here also. Staff in these areas also have the right to feedback that will help them to develop and grow.

Some of the models developed in other arenas may be helpful. Sales people operate entirely off-site and sales managers spend one day a month (or every two months, or every quarter, depending on the company and industry sector) with each individual team member, observing interactions with some clients, and discussing others. This is often seen by the sales rep as an opportunity to shine, and also as an opportunity to bring the skills of the manager to bear with a client they have found difficult. In social work, too, there is a well-used system of supervision in which social workers discuss with their team leader their current caseload. Again this is seen as valuable, often vital, support. Teachers, working alone most of the time, produce detailed lesson plans for their own benefit, but also as a basis for constructive discussion with departmental heads.

Many HCPs reading this will be irritated at the suggestion that this kind of supervision and discussion does not already take place in the field of health care. But think carefully, do you see your head of department, your consultant, your chief executive as a resource to be used by you? If you hold one of these posts, does your team view your role as assisting them to function effectively? Do you have the systems in place to offer them this kind of support? Just how often do you spend time discussing cases in detail with them? For each member of your team, count the number of times you have discussed their caseload in the last 6 months. Do you require your team to do this with their staff? Is your attitude to your staff that of resource and supporter, or that of policeman?

**Applying the three rules in different settings**

The three rules apply whenever we are managing other people. The ways in which we apply them, in particular the time horizon and the level of technical detail, will differ however.

When managing care assistants, it may be appropriate to discuss expectations of specific activities. When planning an outing with a group of clients with learning difficulties, the care assistants’ manager may remind them of the purpose of the activity, discuss with them their responsibilities, and review their ideas and the support they need. On their return, they should be thoroughly debriefed to discover whether the aims were met. This may be necessary each time such an activity takes place. With a member of a Trust Board, some of the time horizons will be much longer – a year or 3 years – and the emphasis will be on approach rather than on details.
The three rules also apply when managing teams and are especially important when individual team members are accountable to different managers. Here the rules must be applied to the team. Therefore, team members must be clear about what is expected of them as a team, and they must be confident that they have the necessary skills and resources. And the team members, as a team, must receive feedback on whether they are being successful. However, teams can be likened to very immature, unpredictable individuals and implementing the three rules may be time-consuming and emotionally draining. Perhaps for this reason the majority of multidisciplinary teams are left unmanaged. Suboptimal outcomes and waste of staff time are the predictable results. There is often confusion over the most basic parameters, such as the role of the team. Some members believe it to be a source of advice for a team leader, often a consultant or GP; others perceive it as a decision-making group with all members having an equal say. When these beliefs co-exist in the same group, conflict is inevitable. Teams will naturally evolve and change in focus, as will the roles of their members; however, this is an argument for a regular review of roles and responsibilities, not for a shirking of that debate.

Because discussion with the group as a whole (in an attempt to reach agreement on roles and expectations or to communicate feedback on performance) is such hard work, it is often avoided by those with responsibility for the team. Instead, individuals perceived to be sympathetic to a particular way of thinking are lobbied and expected to sell this view to the rest of the team. This almost never works and has the result that the team will view the manager as being cowardly, in addition to being wrong.

Three simple rules for managing people. Simple and obvious. But we don’t observe them. We don’t implement them because to do so takes time, emotional energy and courage. In other words, they are simple but hard. We prefer to spend our time doing things that are more complicated but which demand of us only our intellect, such as introducing new systems or structures. We gravitate towards the complicated easy. And yet if we do not observe the simple hard, then we are bound to fail when it comes to the complicated easy.

Unless we implement these three simple rules we are not managing, not really managing. Unless we do so we can take no responsibility for the actions of others because we have little influence over those actions. We restrict our role to that of observer, presider, in certain circumstances that of administrator, business or general manager, not that of real manager.

You may by now have accepted the logic of the three rules, but be deceiving yourself that ‘my staff know what they’re supposed to be doing and how well they’re doing it’. If, however, you are seriously considering ways in which you can introduce them, then you are probably having misgivings about the responses of your various staff members. They may be hostile, defensive, superior or apathetic. Understanding what makes different people respond in the way they do will help you engender much more favourable reactions. In the next section, we look at what makes different people ‘tick’.
One last point about the three rules. Do not feel aggrieved if your line manager is not observing them with you. Not only because this is the norm, but because it gives you the opportunity to shape your role as you would like it. In this case, you can approach him with a set of expectations to which you ask him to agree. Almost invariably he will. You then explore with him your skills and resources and feedback mechanisms. Have you noticed who is now managing who?

Differences that cause difficulties

Call to mind the members of your team. As you do so, note how you feel about them. Consider the maxim ‘the greatest gift you can give to anyone is consistently to expect their best’. Are you able to do that for your team members? Do you feel pleased with them, proud of them, impressed by them? Or do you find that difficult because they disappoint you, irritate you, make you feel angry, frustrated or despairing? In this section, we look at some of the reasons why they succeed in infuriating you.

Because our personalities are so rich and complex, we, naturally, differ from each other in many ways. This often adds to our enjoyment of each other, but equally often these differences can cause difficulties, misunderstandings, misinterpretations and distrust. By looking at some of these differences and at the problems they can cause, we can begin to understand how irritations and conflicts arise and thus become better able to avoid or deal with them.

Different motivation profiles

Much research has been undertaken by psychologists and others into what motivates us to expend our energy. Perhaps the most widely known motivation theorist is Abraham Maslow, who suggested in his book *Motivation and Personality*,\(^5\) that there is a hierarchy of human needs and that only when the needs on the lowest layer of the hierarchy are met do we seek to meet the needs of the next layer. The needs he identified are shown in Figure 1.1.

Recently, workers in the field have identified sets of needs, goals or drivers that are similar but not identical to those proposed by Maslow, and which do not remain static; rather, they differ between individuals and between cultures, as well as over time. These researchers suggest that each of these drivers is important to us all to some degree, but that we differ in their relative importance. In other words, if we are deprived of any one of these drivers, we will be motivated to regain it; however, some are more important than others to each individual. John Hunt identifies eight such goal categories,\(^6\) which overlap with those of Maslow as indicated:

1 *Comfort.* In addition to Maslow’s physiological needs of food, drink, shelter and clothing, this category includes pleasant working conditions
and sufficient money to provide a comfortable lifestyle. People who have a strong comfort driver will be motivated by performance-related financial reward.

2 Structure. These map onto Maslow’s safety and security needs, but relate as much to an individual’s desire for certainty as to their concern about physical or financial security. People with strong structure goals will thrive in bureaucracies and environments where there are numerous clearly defined roles and their own role is precisely delineated.

3 Relationships. Maslow called this category ‘social needs’. It reflects the degree to which individuals seek to form lasting relationships and with whom. For many people, this is one of the most important goals. They seek collaborative rather than competitive working relationships and mourn the loss of close colleagues if their organizations are restructured and teams are disbanded.

4 Recognition and status. Whereas Maslow proposed one category of ‘self-esteem’ needs, Hunt divides them into two: (1) recognition and status and (2) power. As recognition and power often come together (the title and the car go with the decision-making job), they can be confused. People with high recognition needs often gravitate towards academic roles and the professions, so we can expect to find many in health care. Managed sensitively, these people are easy to motivate, since they respond best to sincere praise from individuals they rate.

5 Power. The degree to which someone seeks to influence and control people, events and situations. Most people who make it to the top of organizations are motivated most strongly by power. Again, it is also a strong driver in many of those who choose one of the professions.

6, 7 and 8 Autonomy, creativity and growth. These three together form Maslow’s self-actualization needs, but describe them more precisely. The three do not necessarily occur together, although they may do so.

The relative importance that we place on these goals or drivers can be thought of as forming a ‘motivation profile’. When we try to interact with
someone with a different motivation profile, we must expect not to see things in the same way. For example, my two most significant goals may be recognition and self-actualization, whereas yours may be power and structure. If, in addition, structure is (within limits) unimportant to me and self-actualization is unimportant to you, then we may well see each other in a negative light. You may perceive me as being too ready to take risks, as pursuing ill-considered schemes that are not sufficiently thought through, and in pursuit of my own ambition: ‘selfish’ you might say. I, on the other hand, may see you as averse to risk when you pour scorn on my ideas, and scheming when you exert your influence through other people and do not claim the credit yourself: ‘cowardly’ I might think. The more you try and de-risk my projects by building in contingency planning, requiring from me more and more detail, or the more I try and sell you the grandiose upside and how much it will do for your reputation, the more and more we will irritate each other.

Take a moment now to visualize your most difficult member of staff, the one who simply cannot see sense. As dispassionately as you can, identify the drivers that you think are most important to them. Now look at the ‘demotivating factors’ for those goals in Table 1.1. How many of them are you invoking? You may unwittingly (or not) have been provoking this individual into their worst behaviour. Adopting some of the actions listed under ‘motivating factors’ will probably transform your difficult staff member into a valuable asset.

The important point to remember is that if you are trying to motivate someone else, you must consider what it is that motivates them and not what would motivate you in similar circumstances. It is such a simple mistake to make: We like someone; we assume they are like us; we are disappointed if they do not respond enthusiastically to what we perceive an exciting opportunity; we like them a little less; and soon our relationship is into a downward spiral of disappointment and irritation. If we start by thinking about them, and what enthuses them and what irritates them (without making judgements, just recognizing differences), we can avoid this.

Sometimes we encounter the opposite problem: we are motivated by the same thing and find ourselves locked in competition. This is especially likely if we are both seeking recognition; the more you try and grab all the limelight, the more hostile I become and the less inclined I am to give you any credit. If one of us can be honest about our need for recognition or status, then we may be able to devise ways of working together that will allow us both to gain. So ingrained, however, is the notion that ‘showing off’ is something to be despised, that such honesty will require courage.

It is worth reminding ourselves, in this situation, that there is nothing inherently right or wrong about being driven by any of these goals. It is not ‘better’ to have a strong autonomy goal than a strong relationships one, high creative needs than a strong driver towards structure and security. Being sensitive to the goals of the individuals around us allows us to be more persuasive. It requires, of course, that we invest time in getting to
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Table 1.1  The motivating and demotivating factors associated with different preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Motivating factors</th>
<th>Demotivating factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Pleasant working environment: view, window, fixtures and fittings, temperature</td>
<td>Scruffy, dirty, uncomfortable, dull working environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary sufficient to provide a comfortable lifestyle outside work</td>
<td>Salary insufficient to provide the comfortable lifestyle that is desired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Told exactly what to do and how to do it</td>
<td>Vague instructions relating to outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Predictable career path</td>
<td>Next step uncertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial rewards reliable</td>
<td>Risk to income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment physically secure</td>
<td>Risk of physical harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Opportunities to meet other people, to chat, to get to know other people and work</td>
<td>Working on own, competing with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in a team</td>
<td>Culture where the task is all-important and people's feelings do not matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture where staff care for each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Sincere praise, credit given where it is due, thanks, public recognition, advice</td>
<td>Others taking credit for work, downplaying of role, being 'brought down to size', squashing of ideas or enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sought, name associated with project/paper/etc., the good opinion of others</td>
<td>Annoyance with self over a job not well done. Egg on face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal satisfaction with a job well done. Knowledge that a genuine contribution has been made</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Decisions to make, reports to write, opportunity to give advice, decisions implemented, advice taken and actioned (even if not acknowledged), things 'shaping up nicely' even if own name not associated with changes being made</td>
<td>No opportunity to influence events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
<td>New projects, new ideas, developing new skills, expectations expressed in outcomes</td>
<td>The same old thing, new patterns of work involve the same old skills, being told exactly what to do and how to do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
know them and the ways they respond. Really managing people cannot be done from behind a closed office door, it demands considerable face-to-face contact.

Different team roles

You are discussing an idea at your regular departmental meeting and your staff respond as they always do. Liz comes to a decision very quickly and argues her case forcefully. John also forms his views early on and marshals support to oppose Liz. Sarah tries to make sure that everyone has their say and Charles expresses concern when Liz is so abrupt with Ian that she causes offence. Ian wants to know what the deadline is and who will be writing the report, while Alison is picking holes in everyone’s arguments and forcing them to think more rigorously.

If this is how your team operates, then you are very lucky (or clever, or both). R.M. Belbin has demonstrated that if a team is to work successfully, nine roles need to be undertaken by the members of the team over its working life. As most teams do not contain nine members, individuals may have to play more than one role; indeed, some people are sufficiently flexible to be able to play any one of several roles according to what is required. Most of us, however, have a preference for one or two roles and rarely take on others whatever team we are in. The nine roles are:

- **Coordinator**: coordinators guide the group, define priorities, allocate tasks and roles.
- **Shaper**: shapers are task-oriented, push the team to achieve the task, pulling together the ideas of members and keeping them focused.
- **Implementer**: implementers concentrate on practicalities, making sure that the outcome of the meeting is a series of manageable, feasible processes.
- **Team worker**: team workers look after relationships in the group. Their concern is process rather than task, the welfare of individuals rather than of ideas.
- **Plant**: plants, on the other hand, are ideas people. They originate their own ideas and can be devastatingly critical of counter-arguments, but evangelical once convinced.
- **Resource investigator**: resource investigators are also ideas people but they trade in them rather than generate them. They spot good ideas, hear of relevant information available elsewhere, link ideas together, prompt further thinking by discussing widely.
- **Monitor-evaluator**: monitor-evaluators are much less easily enthused. They carefully and critically analyse all arguments put forward.
- **Completer-finisher**: completer-finishers make sure that the group meets deadlines, completes all the tasks and in the right order. They are, in MBA groups anyway, exceedingly rare!
- **Specialist**: in many circumstances, expert advice is needed and, without access to a specialist able to provide it, a project will founder.
While the adoption of all these roles by members of your departmental team will make it very productive, it does not guarantee that relationships between individual members will be harmonious. A coordinator/shaper individual can find a monitor-evaluator/completer-finisher infuriating and vice versa, and other combinations can be just as explosive. If you are conscious of your own preferred team role, then you will be able to guard against the irritation that could be caused by another, by reminding yourself of the value of these differences – the checks and balances, the synergy. Awareness of the roles of others will help you to help them value those differences too.

If your team lacks one of those roles then consider delegating it. In the same way that you delegate tasks to different members, ask someone to adopt a particular role. They may not find it easy, but it will improve the performance of your team.

Different learning styles

You attend a course that has given you a lot of fascinating information, the skills you need to utilize that information and the enthusiasm to have a go. A colleague on the programme, however, does not see it that way at all. He cannot find anything good to say about it at all, except for the food! You wonder whether he was really ready for a programme pitched at this level. Although you may be right, it is just as likely that it was the style of the programme, rather than its level, that caused your colleague difficulty. We learn in different ways and from different activities. Psychologists Peter Honey and Alan Mumford have identified four distinct learning styles, which they term ‘activist’, ‘reflector’, ‘theorist’ and ‘pragmatist’.

Activists are open-minded enthusiasts who will try anything once. They thrive on new experiences and change, particularly when left to sink or swim, and become bored with repetition and routine. They learn most when involved in games and role-play and when they have a high profile. They also learn from bouncing ideas off other people. Activists learn least on their own, and when they are told exactly what to do and how to do it. They hate lectures, reading and learning about things.

Theorists are analytical, objective, logical and rational. They try to fit any new fact into their wider theory. Theorists learn a lot from teaching others. They need to know exactly what they are doing and why. They respond to well-argued ideas (about anything, relevant or not) and love lectures, papers, books and discussions. Theorists learn least when they cannot explore concepts in depth, when they will question the methodology, or when forced to act without sufficiently convincing reasons. Theorists hate learning with activists.

Reflectors are thoughtful observers who like to consider all the options, all the implications, before committing themselves. They are good listeners who take the views of others into account. Reflectors learn most from observing and considering, from thinking before being required to act, by
reviewing what they have learned from an exercise or situation and from being given time to reach decisions. Reflectors learn least when forced to take a high profile, when they cannot plan, or when they do not have the information to choose a course of action themselves.

**Pragmatists** are experimenters, practical people who try out new ideas and accept any that work. They like solving problems and looking for relevant new ideas. Pragmatists learn most when concepts are relevant to them, when they yield practical results and when they can be implemented immediately. They love relevant simulations and action plans. Pragmatists learn least from ‘ivory tower’ theories and when there are no opportunities for implementation.

It does not take a great deal of imagination to see that what is an exciting learning opportunity to an activist can appear alarming or superficial to a reflector. The explanation that satisfies the theorist may well send the pragmatist to sleep. When planning how to develop your staff, offer them developmental opportunities in keeping with their learning style. Better still, identify with them the learning outcomes and let them choose their own learning programme.

**Different relationship styles**

No discussion of personality could ignore the work of C.G. Jung, the influential Swiss psychologist whose book *Psychological Types* was published in 1921. Jung suggested that differences in personality are due to the way in which people prefer to use their minds. He suggested that when the mind is active, it is engaging in one of two occupations: perceiving (receiving information) or judging (organizing that information and forming conclusions). He further stated that there are two ways in which we can perceive (sensing and intuition) and two in which we can judge (thinking and feeling). He observed that although everyone uses all four of these processes, individuals have a preference for judging or perceiving and for one kind of perceiving and one kind of judging. We apply these processes to both our internal and external worlds, but again we have a preference for one or the other (introversion or extroversion).

Thus there are four scales on which we will have a preference for one end or the other:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceiving</th>
<th>Judging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensing</td>
<td>Intuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>Introversion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These four scales give rise to 16 combinations of preferences and hence personality types. Naturally people who are perceivers may misunderstand, misinterpret or misjudge those who are judgers; sensers, those who prefer to intuit; thinkers, feelers; and extroverts, introverts. So some combinations of personality type will be more relaxed and some more stimulating, and
Really managing health care

Figure 1.2 Relationship styles (Alessandra and Cathcart)\(^{10}\)

Some will be very challenging. Clearly, an understanding of why problems arise can help to defuse them.

A number of tools for identifying these 16 personality types have been devised, of which the most well-known are the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the 16PF. Both of these have been extensively researched by their originators and are available through licensed practitioners. Where relationships appear to be intractably damaging, detailed diagnostic work of this kind can be helpful.

Jung’s work has been drawn on by many workers, and when considering the ways in which people relate to one another, it is often enough to conceptualize personalities more simply, as do Alessandra and Cathcart.\(^ {10}\) They concentrate on two aspects: whether we prefer to relate to people or to tasks, and whether we think in a detailed, slow-paced way or in a more holistic, fast-paced one. By placing our preferences on each of two axes, we fall into one of four boxes, each a different relationship style (see Figure 1.2).

Socializers are enthusiastic, persuasive, motivating and creative. They enjoy being in the spotlight, and are very good at starting projects. They also have a short attention span, they take on too much, they are impatient, and do not like detail. They hate being bored and working alone.

Directors get things done, take control, make decisions, see what needs doing and make sure it happens. They are also impatient and inflexible, they do not listen, they compete rather than collaborate, and hate people who waste their time. Relaters are good listeners, they are supportive of others, build trust and aim to collaborate not compete. They take time to plan interactions with others and hate friction. They are very sensitive to other people’s opinion; they are not assertive and can be bullied.

Thinker/analysts are accurate, independent, organized and take pride in their work. They enjoy detail, are thorough and are pleased to think of themselves as
perfectionists. They will insist on a detailed brief. They are surprised that others do not always see perfectionism as a virtue. They cannot be hurried, are critical of mistakes and hate surprises.

Again it is easy to see how a socializer and a thinker/analyser can rub each other up the wrong way, just as a relater and a director may do. Equally, it should be clear what can be done about it once you are aware of the cause of the tension. If your protagonist is more indirect than you are, then slow down, spell out more of the detail and elaborate on the thinking behind it. Rather than dropping in to see them, make an appointment. If they are less concerned with relationships than you, don’t tell them about your family, your feelings or your health, but concentrate on the task. Similarly, if they are more direct than you, try to enthuse about the potential outcomes and check whether you really need all that detail before you can proceed. If they like talking about their family, ask about them, ask how they feel yesterday’s meeting went, compliment their choice of office furniture. Remember that together you will come up with ideas, solutions, projects and services that are much better (more secure, more innovative) than either of you could have achieved alone.

People pollution

These are only a few of the many ways of looking at personalities. However, the essential point to remember is that there is nothing inherently right or wrong about any of the drivers, behaviours or preferences we have looked at, just differences, and those differences can irritate or they can enrich.

Environmental health officers observe that noise pollution only occurs when two factors are present: (1) noise and (2) hostility to the noise. In other words, we all put up with a lot of decibels when we perceive them to be pleasant. The same is true of people. We get ‘people pollution’ problems when there are differences and when we choose to perceive those differences negatively. Understanding the differences is often the first step to mastering our feelings of irritation. The very fact that such differences exist is likely to cause conflict, but such conflict can be constructive and creative or destructive and damaging. Your role as a manager is to ensure it is the former.

Max de Pree, in *The Art of Leadership*, suggests that the role of leaders is to ‘liberate people to achieve what is required of them in the most humane way possible’. Liberation requires implementation of the three rules outlined at the beginning of this chapter in such a way that you take account of all the differences between you and your individual team members, so that you are able to build honest, trusting relationships based on mutual respect. If that seems unlikely, impossibly difficult or even unattractive, read on.