

I just finished a great book - "Primal Management - Unraveling the Secrets of Human Nature to Drive High Performance" by Paul Herr.

Herr starts with a statement "Business..has pretended that emotions and feelings are irrational and unimportant. This is simply wrong". The rest of the book goes on to successfully prove this point.

He uses the scary statistic that only 31% of the employees are motivated in America. If that statistic is true, there is huge upside opportunity in our businesses.

He talks about 5 "appetites" that all people have.

1) Cooperation - People want to work together in groups. Groups are more powerful. Successful leaders can grow teams that work harmoniously towards a common goal. People want to belong to a group.

2) Competency - People want to be competent. They also want recognition for this. There is a self esteem loop that occurs. Be competent, get recognition, be more competent etc. Successful companies and leaders can enhance this loop.

3) Skill deployment - people want to be allowed to use their skills. One of the challenges of the leader is to help people use and strengthen their unique abilities. Because everyone is unique, people are not just replaceable cogs. If anyone leaves, the company loses that persons' uniqueness.

4) Innovation - People are naturally curious and will come up with good ideas. Good leaders help nurture and encourage these.

5) Self-Protection - People are motivated to feel secure. One huge downside of the current turbulent times is this security is being threatened. Good leaders seek to create stability.

Herr makes the point that all decisions are first made with the emotions. We then go on to rationally justify our actions.

Herr sets a high bar for leaders. Walk the walk. Truly care for the people who work with you. Exceptional caring leads to loyalty and dedication.

Herr emphasizes the we-based leadership style as opposed to the me-based one. Good leaders trust their people, respect them, are polite to them and recognize that the only way to thrive in business is through their people. I am of the belief that the larger the company, the more the leader simply sets the tone or culture but in order to succeed, the people need to make the decisions. So decision making is not necessarily the job of a good leader.

I am a big believer that it is a combination of the numbers and the human side to make a successful company so the book resonates with me. I find that much of the business literature tends to focus more on the numbers and less on the people.

This is a great book for any leader to read. Should be required reading for all CEOs.