

Money, Money, Money

The question of money as a motivator in the workplace isn't new. Countless research books and articles reference money and motivation. Much of the money-motivation focus points to superficial needs of people, or to their need for the immediate gratification money brings. The exploration around money as a motivator must be explored more deeply if one is to truly understand the nature of the money-motivation relationship.

There are a number of personal orientations relating to money and motivation. For example:

1. I'm not making as much money as I'd like (the "starving artist" concept), but I absolutely love my work, the flexibility, or the control I have, or the opportunity for creativity, etc.
2. I need to be in this salary range, make this much money, because I need to be seen as "somebody," as opposed to "nobody," by my friends, family, acquaintances - who view "money" as a merit badge.
3. It's not the money itself but what the money "gets" me - i.e., possessions, stuff, and the like, pointing again to "being somebody" and being recognized based on their "stuff."
4. I need more and more money as I'll never have enough, reflecting the "your expenses always rise to meet your income" syndrome. As I said to an attorney client of mine, "If you feel you can't live on 2 million dollars a year, what makes you think you can live on 3 million?"
5. Unconsciously filling the psycho-emotional "hole" of lack and deficiency which subsumes one or more of the above orientations and is the driver of the obsession with having money and needing more money, and what money "gets" one in order to feel (albeit fleetingly) whole and complete. The illusion that money provides a sense of self, or a sense of one's worth or value.

It's important to look at the intrinsic notion of motivation - that motivation is driven by one's inner values. It's important to explore one's values and from where one's values emanate - from one's True and Real Self and Inner Core or from one's ego-driven needs for control, recognition and security. The latter often results in misguided values, the relentless pursuit of which usually leads to a "lifestyle" (certainly not a life) mired in self-sabotaging thinking and behaving - resulting in frustration, resentment, anger, hate, rage, entitlement, misguided choices, and the feeling of never having or

being enough.

When one comes from one's Core values, self-motivation is at the heart of a life well-lived. Living from one's Core is at the heart of creativity, proper self-management, self-responsibility, and healthy behavior (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social, financial). Money, in this sense, has a different emotional and psychological energy around it, a softer energy, not unlike the energy reflected in one who says, "I love my work and I can't believe I get paid for doing this."

Many folks, in the relentless pursuit of "money" actually lose sight of what it was in the first place that got their juices flowing - having the corner office occludes the initial love of the work, obtaining the title interferes with one's initial love of mentoring and supporting others and finding that the relentless pressure to make and have more money becomes more important than the joy one used to experience when one was focused on one's love of the work itself. Losing one's way along the way. The mid-life crisis — that now often starts at 30.

Money as a driver then veils the clarity of one's choices and one often makes unfortunate and self-sabotaging choices. I experience this kind of illusion in my work with some clients who have made self-defeating choices in their work life, social life and spiritual life because the lens with which they viewed their world and their place in the world had become "green."

W some folks have experienced enough anger, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, terror, and loneliness, that result from their need for more and more, they experience a real motivation to change and adapt to a life truly Values-based, values that emanate from their True Self, where money is important, but not obsessively so.

Motivation from this Inner place is much different - unbounded by internalized pressures to have more, or by rigid inner structures, beliefs or paralyzing self-criticism that one is not "enough" due to lack of money. Here, one's true worth and value are not financially driven. One's purpose in life and the meaning one derives from work is Intrinsically driven.

From this place, one orients to one's world of work or play from the perspective of a whole person, as one whose choices, volitions, motivations and intentions are driven by a freedom that was heretofore restricted and constricted by the "value" of money.

I have crossed paths with folks who feel that money allows them to be autonomous. Actually, the opposite seems more true — that money has

forced many of these folks to live in an emotional and psychological prison whose bars are the self-defeating, self-sabotaging and controlling beliefs and behaviors driving them into a way of living mimicking the lifestyles of folks living in their prisons on either side of them - the illusion of autonomy.

The motivating and intentional Inner energy that reflects: "I am," "I can," "I will," "I have", "I choose," "I love," "I create" and "I enjoy" flows with a sense of purposefulness, ease, grace, equanimity, serenity and grounding that does not have a "price tag." Money is almost a by-product.

So, some questions for self-reflection are:

How would you describe your relationship with money?

Do you feel accountable when it comes to managing your money?

Do you feel self-responsible when it comes to money?

Do you know exactly how much you own and how much you owe?

If you were independently wealthy, would you continue to work?

Do you balance your checkbook properly and regularly?

Do you buy gifts for others even though you can't afford them?

Do you have a tendency to blame others for your financial troubles (boss, parents, banks, credit card companies, government, political parties, etc.)?

Do you constantly worry about money?

Do your expenses rise to meet your income?

Is money your primary (or only) motivation for going to work?

Does your self-worth at work and outside of work depend on your net worth?

Do you cheat or lie in order to save money?

Are you envious of others at work who earn more than you?

Does your financial state interfere with your ability to focus and be completely engaged in your work?

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