

 **AWAKENING YOUR SIGNIFICANCE**

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**The Language of Significance**

Of the things that you can do to awaken a sense of significance at work, using language is powerful. It does not merely describe reality, but also shapes it. Language becomes the filter through which we perceive the world. When we talk about finding significance at work, we are addressing fundamental and essential human questions about true purpose. Corporations need to *stop* using words such as “empowerment,” “commitment,” “teamwork” and “quality,” and *start* using words such as “soul,” “spirit,” “courage,” “personal values” and “higher purpose.”

How can leaders tap into employees’ deeper level of engagement? Using language that incorporates community, meaning, service, contribution, joy, passion and soul is powerful and meaningful to most individuals.

**Awakening Your Significance at Work**

There are things you can do to awaken a sense of meaning at work. If you are an executive or leader looking for ways to rekindle engagement and enthusiasm, here are some questions for awakening meaning in yourself and others.

*Ask three questions daily*

- 1. What ignites my passion in today’s work?** This first question serves to reclaim attention from the pull of the urgent, and redirect it to what is truly important and significant.
- 2. How can I bring true value to this moment?** The second question serves to disengage from emotional entanglements to view issues with a fresh inner perspective. This leads to constructive action.
- 3. What signature strength do I want to highlight, and what story do I want others to tell about me after this assignment?** This third question serves to bring more value and meaning to a project. Whenever an assignment begins to weigh heavily and becomes a work pressure, this question can redirect and reenergize. Meeting outer responsibilities while fulfilling inner goals becomes one process.

*If I do this, then:*

- I will be one step closer to...
- I will free up time for...
- It will enable us to move toward...



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### Significance at an Organizational Level

In the same way that these questions can provide personal energy to everyday work life, an organization might ask itself these questions:

1. What brings meaning and community to our company?
2. How can this meeting or project be an expression of our highest aims?
3. What would be of service right now?
4. How can this conversation be more open, clear or authentic?
5. What is our larger responsibility as a team or organization?

It is clear that there is a definite thirst for deeper ways of working. Eric Klein and John Izzo have used one question extensively in their book, *Awakening Corporate Soul*. They asked people to describe what elements were present when they had experienced meaningful moments in their work, moments when they felt energized and committed, when performance and satisfaction were at their peak “at 150-percent levels.” Four paths to fulfilling your potential were identified by this question, which the authors describe as “paths toward finding 150-percent levels.” I refer to this potential as your Personal Best Zone!

1. The **path of self**, whereby the person finds a personal passion in his or her work, is in touch with core values, and actively brings this into the daily work
2. The **path of contribution**, whereby the person becomes engaged in the worthy goals of his or her daily efforts
3. The **path of craft**, whereby the person develops an intense enjoyment in the moment-to-moment action of his or her work
4. The **path of community**, whereby the person finds that connection to others goes deeper than the job description, and he or she connects to bring out the best of each other