The Organisational Map and 4 Change Stoppers
By James Sale

1 Dependency Culture

Three years ago I did a blog in which I explained why change was so difficult to effect organisationally, giving four reasons, and citing the great Philip Crosby when he said, "Good ideas and solid concepts have a great deal of difficulty in being understood by those who earn their living by doing it some other way". But the four ideas I briefly covered in that blog, then, gripped my mind and I included them in the new Organisational Motivational Map which is now available for any organisation to use to find out what is really going on at an emotional level within their company. However, the ideas, whilst simple, do require more unpacking and unpicking, and so in that spirit of enquiry I would like now to revisit these ideas and specifically relate them to Motivational Maps.

First, one major block to organisational change is what has been called 'dependency culture'. We are familiar with this term from psychotherapy and individuals who are dependent and co-dependent; but since organisations are made up of individuals it should not surprise us that they exhibit the same tendencies collectively that individuals do. One aspect of this is that just as individuals in the grip of dependencies do not act in their own self-interest, but in reality harm themselves, so too organisations do the same. So despite the fact that the leadership may bang on about the bottom-line, what they are really doing is making success in the bottom line ever more difficult to achieve - at least in the middle to long-term.

Dependency culture is associated with hierarchical management, and is where people depend because they are lacking information, skills, confidence, or power and are deliberately kept that way by management; and if there were one magic bullet or cure for the situation it would be the widespread adoption of the delegation skill. When we think of this issue from a motivational perspective a number of things become clearer. First, that whereas motivators are in one sense 'pure': pure energy that we all have, that drive us to achieve things, yet in dependent or co-dependent people these energies can be mis-directed.

Thus, dependency culture is going to be associated most with three relationship motivators, which most wish to resist change and avoid risk: namely, Defender, Friend and Star. In particular here, hierarchical management - often felt to be 'stable' (a flipside perhaps to 'rigid') is mostly likely to be Defender (security) and Star (recognition) orientated; in this scenario not rocking the boat is crucial as is everyone knowing their place in the scheme of things. And in its outcome of depriving employees of information, skills, confidence, or power, there will also be a concentration of either Expert or Director motivators. To explain that: senior people, who are Expert motivator, will withhold sharing their expertise; and senior people who are Director motivator, will withhold power and responsibility and retain it for themselves.

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So, these four motivators, rather than the other five - although this is a generalisation not an absolute law - will tend to be present where dependency cultures are revealed, and knowing this provides a way in which Motivational Maps can help breakdown this block.

Here are some ideas from the Maps' tookit: one, recruitment at senior level is an issue. Stop recruiting more in the same image! Diversity, then? Yes, but not as traditionally understood, although that may be relevant too. But motivational diversity! In particular, if we want the kind of people at senior level who have little time for rigid structures and dependency culture, we need Spirit and Creator motivated people. Two, we need deeper leadership expertise; but the kind of leadership training that is not the old command and control model, or a disguised variant of it, but one that has as central a personal development component, realising that the leader who is not personally developing is not developing leadership. The Maps' programme has its unique '4 + 1' leadership model described in some detail in my book, Mapping Motivation, http://amzn.to/1XoxiqQ, which is ideal for this purpose. Third, and finally, and simply as a more tactical approach in the short-term: focus on delegation skills at a senior level. Even if attitudes are not profoundly changed, then if senior staff at least go through some motions of delegating, there will be improvements.

2 Busy-Busy Management

I looked last time at the first major change stopper within an organisation - dependency culture - and how this related to Motivational Maps and how Maps can help unravel this problem. The second major change blocker is similar: it's the Busy-Busy Management style that is so prevalent within organisations, including the organisation of the home, the family. Indeed, Petronius Arbiter commented some two thousand years ago on this phenomenon, or rather one of its classic effects: "We trained hard … But it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up in teams we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising, and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation". If the dependency culture creates self-importance through being needed, the busy-busy management style generates self-importance by the process of forever being in charge, forever changing things, and forever never asking why! The Busy-Busy style is symptomatic of authoritarian types, especially those of a basically insecure type who need to prove themselves and be seen to be doing something. That is why the perennially busy leader or manager is so receptive to new fads and the latest ideas, as their adoption may just show them in a positive and progressive light; unfortunately, because no 'why' ever informs their thinking, the fads, even if they are good ones, are never followed through properly, but soon replaced by another one, and so a process goes on in which nothing ever seems accomplished, although every one is always being required to work flat out. As Petronius observed, this creates profound 'demoralisation' and, as I would say, demotivation.

From a motivational perspective, and given that this is what Norman Dixon would call a psychopathology, the dominant perversion of motivators is likely to be in the Achievement cluster of motivators (as dependency culture tended to the Relationship cluster), and especially the Director and Builder motivators. To be clear here: all motivators are equal, and we need them all. We need people who want to manage (Director motivator) and who want to make money (Builder motivator), but the psychopathology starts when managing becomes an end in itself, as opposed to being a means to a higher purpose or mission, or when the 'bottomline' and their quest to improve it also becomes the be all and end all of existence, and the rationale for every ill-advised and ill-considered irrationality.

In working in this situation, then, what are the best counterweights to check this tendency? First, from the perspective of the busy-busy manager gripped by this managerial obsession, self-awareness has to be the starting point. The two most likely sources of this self-awareness will have to be external, since clearly the busy-busy manager never has time to reflect or self-reflect on what they are doing. Thus, quality feedback from above or from peers is essential, and if this is not possible, then one has to consider reviewing mission: the why are we doing what we do? If this sounds motivationally familiar, then it should: both feedback and mission are aspects of the Searcher motivator. Ultimately, both the feedback and the mission come under the purview of the customer, or client: what do they think?

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We need to get the busy-busy person to accept that we need quality feedback from the customer, and that that feedback needs to shape our future actions. Of course, where the psychopathology is too strong, the busy-busy manager never will accept the actual feedback, but there is a strong likelihood that they will accept the process. Why? Because it is a new distracting fad, just like the others (indeed, they may well accept 360 degree appraisals for the same reason), but the challenge is - in these cases - to get the findings to stick in terms of action plans.

Secondly, there are at least three key skills that the busy-busy manager needs to be introduced to. I mention the motivators these are most associated with because as we know no-one has one motivator, but a range, and it may be possible to 'sell' the busy-busy manager a skill or concept on the back end of its position in his or her profile. So, one skill is delegation; the more effective delegation is diffused through an organisation, the more the downside of busy-busyness is blunted. And the beauty of this idea is of course that the busy-busy manager may well have Director motivator in their top three, so appealing to their upskilling of their management capability is intrinsically attractive to them.

Also, listening is a core skill, some might say the number skill of an effective leader. To accept this they will be far from comfortable, because this is typically a skill associated with the Friend motivator (and Searcher too), the need to belong. This is unlikely - but not impossibly - to be in the top three, and there is often a big incompatibility between the Director and Friend motivator. It does seem unlikely that the busy-busy manager will accept this, but if they do make sure that this is really a full-on and extensive listening skills course, not just a one-day introduction. Ideally, it would have follow-up components weeks or months after the main training. The reason I say this is because it is obvious so many people go on listening skills, and then practice a technique of listening but actually are not listening! This will be especially true of the busy-busy type. In fact, combining listening with meditation techniques - so driving more deeply into their personal development - is really necessary here.

Finally, the third skill is planning, planning as a detailed activity, which is very much related to the Defender motivator. Planning in this sense is the antidote to the latest fads acquisition that the busy-busy leader is drawn to: a long term plan that the organisation is committed to and is not going to deviate much from (unless there is a significant market shift) is stabilising, and creates a 'cage' that contains the busy-busy managers' range of interference. Naturally, it won't block it completely, as there will doubtless be operational things that can be stop-started-re-aranged and so on. But some big planning markers laid down and adhered to make things more awkward to shift. Keep in mind, the busy-busy type wants to be perceived to be effective, and so any evidence that seems to contradict that reality for them must be avoided at all costs. As a sidebar to that point, of course, it is why the busy-busy manager often moves on within 3 years, as the ineffectiveness of what they are doing finally begins to unravel. In planning here, we can also draw upon their tendency to the Achievement motivator, the Builder, who likes goals. But the goals must be subsumed under a bigger structure of mission, vision and values.

3 Isolation

If the first change stopper, dependency culture, is heavily related to Relationship type motivators, and the second change stopper, busy-busy management, is more relevant to Achievement motivators, then it may come as no surprise to Motivational Mappers that the third change stopper, isolation, is deeply connected to the third of the motivational triad, Growth motivators. This, when you think about it, is obvious. The central motivator sandwiched between the inner and outer limits of the Growth trio is the Spirit motivator; in other words, the desire for autonomy, and of course this is hardly a team-orientated motivator; on the contrary, it tends to produce mavericks who by their own desire sometimes want to be isolated to get on with what they wish to do. But further than this, when we consider the Creator motivator, the desire to innovate, and the Searcher motivator, the desire to be on mission, one can easily see what whilst these desires can be met collectively, there is plenty of scope for isolation: often innovation and creativity comes down to an isolated individual's breakthrough, and oftentimes too we find that our own mission leads us away from others and we become isolated on our own path. Thus from a motivational point of view we need to consider what motivators are dominant motivators throughout the organisation, for although the the Growth motivators are themselves pro-risk and pro-change, the fact that the individuals with these motivators may well be fragmented in a number of ways means that the aptitude for change may well be dissipated - the individual fragments of glass, separated and discrete, not forming one, whole unit. What I am saying here is that the very strength of the Growth motivators has the potential to become a hygiene factor, or an Achilles' heel, to the whole organisation and the remedy for this will have to be in considering motivators that aren't so motivating for such a group: the Relationship motivators.

There are four types of isolation: physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual, and each needs a separate comment. Physical isolation is easy to understand as it commonly refers to geographical isolation. Within an organisation this frequently occurs when team members are in different offices, or varying locations, which may even include being in different countries and on different continents. Modern technology seemingly does a lot to obviate this problem, but no video conferencing and webinaring - nothing really - can get over the fact that physical proximity is essential for many aspects of effective functioning, especially effective team functioning. Naturally, although I am treating them individually, it's clear that physical isolation is a precursor for emotional, intellectual and spiritual isolation and indeed may trigger these too. But in motivational terms the physical proximity provides security, Defender motivator, and more directly, recognition, Star motivator. The need, then, that is triggered by this is to ensure if people are geographically isolated that the communication systems are in place to obviate at least some of its effects, and alongside that sufficient recognition as well. On this latter point: keep in mind, that even when people are physically working close together, it is difficult enough for anyone to feel that they get enough recognition for what they are doing. What then needs to happen when they are far apart?

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Thus, while it is easy for leaders to ignore implications of simple geographical layout in terms of effective communications, this is something they need to periodically do, alongside considering Reward Strategies for the Defender, Friend and Star.

Emotional isolation is, of course, even worse than physical isolation. As I said before, it can arise from physical isolation, but it can also be present in packed offices too where 10 other employees are no more than 10 feet away from you! Its causes can be many and various, including personality clashes and motivational conflicts; on the wider scale, values and culture are immensely significant. If we don't feel we fit for any length of time, then this begins to stress us, doubts occur - is it me? - guilt arises, and the individual starts withdrawing inwardly. Clearly, the Friend motivator, the desire to belong is an antidote to this state of affairs within an organisation, except when it is the cause: the individual wants to belong, has a strong Friend motivator, but this is simply the lowest motivator of the whole organisation and this is reflected in the value statements whereby, for example, only lip-service, if any, is paid to the importance of effective teams. If Friend is the lowest motivator of the whole organisation, and strongly so, and the organisation is of sufficient size, then it will be almost certain that emotional isolation is occuring, and therefore training managers on Reward Strategies for the Friend motivator may well be a way forward.

More briefly, intellectual isolation is mission critical for an organisation - or rather impeding its mission! - when we consider what it means: it means that employees are without access to others' ideas, and this lack of ideas further means that progress is difficult and individuals become more resistant to change. The free flow and exchange of ideas is absolutely essential for any organisation that wishes to stay on top of its game and dominate its market through innovations in products, services, processes, systems and the like. The lack of interchange especially hits two motivators: the Expert and the Star. We become experts by learning from each other; if there is intellectual isolation, then this cannot happen. Further, there is a curious symbiosis in the teacher and the taught. In some way the teacher gets recognition (Star) when they teach, and in yet another way nobody has ever fully understood anything until they can teach it. Indeed, many teachers (for which read: coaches, trainers, consultants, counsellors, therapists et al) freely admit that they deliver what they deliver for it is the only way that they could learn what they needed to learn! Bizarrely, then, there is in the exchange of learning a deep and satisfying sense of recognition. We have all had the experience of explaining something important to someone only to be told by them, 'I know that already', and the crushing sense of non-recognition that that produces. So it is that we counter intellectual isolation - and the change stopper it is - through the Expert motivator and its Reward Strategies.

Finally, spiritual isolation sounds a little recherche, and it is important to stress here that I am not talking about religious beliefs. But all psychologically healthy human beings are spiritual in the sense that they seek meaning: we are meaning machines and we interpret reality and what it means all the time. All of us, one way or another, has a paradigm explanation as to how the universe works and what our place in it is. That includes people who say, 'Life means nothing and then you die'.

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That too is a spiritual belief, albeit an extremely bleak one. But my central point here is: within an organisation change stops when people are isolated from the meaning of what the organisation stands for - its core values and mission; or when they sense a misstep between what the organisation preaches and what it does; or when the key leaders don't walk the talk. Then - spiritual isolation occurs and its effects long-term are devastating. For those familiar with Maps you will clearly see where this is going: the motivator par excellent relevant to this issue is the Searcher, the desire to make a difference, the passion for purpose, the motivator that stands for why? Why are we doing this? And the motivator that most stands for the interests of your clients and customers, and sometimes your number one customer has to be your employees. So here we have to look at the Reward Strategies for the Searcher and build into our organisational work life the big why: and the starting point is reviewing the mission and its relevance, and secondly, asking where does our quality feedback come from and how can we improve it?

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4 Blame

Blame is one of the triumvirate of psycho-pathologies that worst afflict human beings. If we consider briefly for a moment the story of Adam and Eve in the garden at the beginning, when they were perfect, we find in the Fall of mankind all three psycho-pathologies there in virulent form. First, they attempt to deny their guilt by hiding: denial. Second, they project their guilt onto the serpent: projection. But third, and most critically of all, Adam blames Eve and Eve blames the serpent: blame. Indeed, blame may be said to be the most endemic, the most pernicious, and the most destructive of all the psychological vices that beset mankind; it is the kingpin of all that is negative within us. Small wonder, then, it wreaks such havoc around us; and it is very difficult to counter.

One crucial aspect of why blame is such a bad thing is that - in the jargon of the personal development movement of the last 50 years - it avoids taking responsibility for what happens to us: somebody else made us do it, somebody else caused it to happen, we are not responsible for what happened because somebody or something else is to blame. It is little understood but every time we blame we are quite literally killing ourselves; there is self-death involved in blaming others, and this is for a very good reason. For when we blame others or some other factor we are denying a part of reality that has been created, and saying we are not part of that. Essentially, we are denying ourselves as co-creators of reality and denying that we accept things as they are; this is why blame is a kind of blasphemy: we are denying our god-like powers to co-create; we are foreshortening ourselves, which is a kind of death, the ultimate foreshortening. In short, we are exiting and isolating ourselves from the Consciousness that drives the universe and of which we are a part. In theological parlance: we are heading for hell; but writing in this secular state now one needs to understand hell not as a place beyond life, but as a state of mind we enter in the here and now.

Organisations, of course, because they are made up of people, blame others too. In the UK at the moment we have the unedifying spectacle of a major High Street brand, British Home Stores, going bankrupt and all the players at senior level blaming each other, and staff at lower levels blaming the senior levels, and media and politicians joining in the fun too. Noticeably we find, when blame starts, there is never any solution to the real problem, just punishment(s) which may or may not be 'just', and a trail of lessons never learnt! And this goes to the heart of what happens within organisations, especially within teams: blame destroys trust, lack of trust produces fear, fear creates paralysis, and paralysis depresses motivation, performance and productivity. And all the while this 'depression' is going on, something else is being elevated: people learn to play games, political games, and particularly the blame game. The whole organisation becomes centred around surviving the game, avoiding blame becomes the central preoccupation of every worker, every manager; while customers, sales, products and services are left floating adrift as blame stays centre stage; at least until death strikes and it's over; by which I mean, of course, from an organisational perspective, bankruptcy.

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Thus, it is important to say, as we reach this 4th organisational change stopper, that as far as motivation and the nine motivators are concerned, all are equally culpable and susceptible to blaming. There is no one motivator where we can say that this is the one where blaming occurs. We can see that for the one who wants security, their own may be apparently enhanced if others are to blame; that for the one who wishes to belong, that those who do not are to blame; that for one seeking recognition, then those who withhold it must be culpable; that for the one who wants control, their failure to have enough of it, or somebody else's misuse of it, is to blame; that for one seeking money, their failure to be rewarded sufficiently is to blame; and for one wanting expertise, their teachers, coaches, trainers, mentors were simply not good enough; and then for one seeking innovation and creativity, the bores around them and the dull environment is to blame; and for those seeking freedom it is not their fault they are in a 9 to 5 job, but their merits were overlooked; and finally for those wanting to make a difference, it is obviously others failure to support them that caused the mission to fail. In all cases there is a sad litany of excuses which constitutes blaming others. As a curious sidebar to this exploration of blame, I would like to point out one of the most anomalous things I constantly encounter: atheists who blame God for their condition of non-belief! My point here being that we seem to be so constituted that we need to blame someone even when we don't believe they exist: that's how endemic, that's how deep-rooted, blame is in our psyches. If Father Christmas had only delivered that special present down the chimney in 1999, then I would not be a serial killer today!

Blame, then, is all too familiar and corrosive. By definition, considering all that has gone before, blame is something all effective leaders avoid and never use. Sidney Dekker put it this way: "Blaming people may in fact make them [people/employees] less accountable: they will tell fewer accounts, they may feel less compelled to have their voice heard, to participate in improvement efforts". Great leaders always take personal responsibility for what has happened 'under their watch'. They also are mindful to root it out in their subordinates through training, coaching, mentoring, and most importantly of all, through example: walking the talk. Blame destroys a creative, risk-taking culture, as people people conform, lay low and play it safe; so this is especially relevant where we are dealing with Relationship type motivator organisations. Here there is already risk-aversion and a procedural mentality, so the addition of blame would destroy irreparably any chance of creative change if it were the cultural norm. So with Relationship motivators the key is a leadership style that impacts the culture, and where blame has no grip.

As I said before, blame reduces the effectiveness of the individual; subordinates harbour grudges even when blame is justified. Thus as we consider the Achievement motivators we need to realise that the focus here may be more managerial than leadership driven: the relentless focus of managers and employees needs to be on what needs to be done to attain organisational objectives, and how this needs to be done despite whatever setbacks seem poised and in the way. In short, it is a problem solving mentality within the culture that regards spending time on attributing blame as just so much a waste of time, bringing us no nearer to the results we want.

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Notice the difference in the potential approach to the blame problem organisationally from a dominantly Relationship motivator culture to an Achievement driven one: one has to have decisive and strong leadership, whereas the other can benefit from determined and relentless managerial focus. This is not to say of course that either motivator triad could not find the other's approach effective; clearly, as always with Motivational Maps, context is everything.

For the third triad of motivators, the Growth motivators, and perhaps the Expert motivator might also feature here too, there needs to be a deep commitment to making mistakes because making mistakes is the most effective form of learning. The well-known cartoonist Scott Adams expressed it this way: "Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep". This can only happen when two things are true: first, that people, especially management, actually believe that proposition, and second when there are systems or controls in place which ensure that no catastrophic damage is done in the process. On this second point, Harvard Business School Professor, Amy Edmondson said it this way: "Small failures are the early warning signs that are vital to avoiding catastrophic failure in future". Blame is invariably attributed because somebody has 'made a mistake', but what if we live in a culture where making a mistake is the norm, is what we expect, and indeed what we want: that the boat of exploration is truly being launched on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. So, curiously, systems in place with that end in mind is a potential antidote to this blame issue where this triad of motivators is involved. Curious, perhaps, because of course the kind of systems we are talking about here most readily appeal to the Defender or Relationship motivator at the other end of the motivational spectrum. But the same is true of the Relationship motivators requiring truly dynamic leadership (when usually they are managerially handled!), which one might tend to associate with the maverick types at the Growth end of the spectrum. Clearly, then, there is a balancing going on here at the organisational level whereby the yin of low risk motivators needs the counterbalance of the yang of high risk, and vice versa.

The account above is part of an ongoing exploration of how we understand motivation in the organisational setting; it is not definitive, and I am hoping others, as they use the Maps and experiment with the Organisational Motivational Map in real life organisations, will be able to contribute more ideas and data so that we can refine this model and so achieve the result we all want worldwide: namely, organisations which are unblocked, which can effectively change and respond to developments and events, and where, as a result of using Maps, issues such as cultural dependency, busy-busy management, isolation and blame are correctly identified and their effects mitigated if not altogether abolished. Amen to that.

For more information about Motivational Maps read "Mapping Motivation", published by Routledge and available on Amazon at: http://amzn.to/1XoxiqQ,