



Cracking The Engagement Puzzle

Bonus Pack

We've designed this Bonus Pack to help you take meaningful steps toward building stronger engagement, wellbeing and happiness in your teams - whether you're just getting started or building on progress already made.

Because when your people feel supported and connected, your culture strengthens and performance follows.

This resource is just the beginning of what's possible.

- ▶ Out of 100 employees, 15-17 are disengaged. (Gallup, 2025)
 - **Use this to calculate an estimate of the number of potentially disengaged people at your company.**
- ▶ 1 disengaged person earning £42,000 per year costs an extra £14,280 per year on average, in lost time, productivity, sales, collaboration, outcomes, and turnover costs. Approximately 34% of their salary. (McLean & Company, 2017)
 - If disengagement is happening at the leadership level, these costs can be significantly higher—especially due to leadership replacement costs and lost productivity from that leader’s entire team.
 - **Apply this to salaries at your organization to estimate overall disengagement costs at your company.**
- ▶ A 5% increase in engagement can lead to a 3% increase in revenue. (Aon Hewitt, 2015)
 - Calculate this 3% increase for the revenue at your company.
 - **Use this to set a long-term ROI goal for engagement interventions.**
 - If this number is 5x or 10x the cost of boosting your engagement, then engagement interventions are an excellent investment.
- ▶ To get this lift target managers first—engaging managers brings the highest returns. (Gallup, 2025)
 - Managers had the biggest drop in engagement in the most recent data, so supporting managers is more important now than ever.
 - Managers affect productivity and outcomes across the board.
 - Managers account for 70% of their team’s engagement.
 - Only 44% of managers globally have received any management training.
 - Teaching managers coaching skills can improve their performance by 20-28% and raise team engagement by up to 18%.
 - Ongoing development boosts manager wellbeing from 28% to 34% - and up to 50% when combined with active encouragement.

Manager development is the engine of engagement and wellbeing.

Solving the Engagement Mystery

Why have engagement scores stayed the same for roughly 10 years? Why are they so hard to lift?

- You cannot pay someone into engagement.
- You cannot logic someone into engagement.
- Engagement is a Personal Emotional Process.
- Almost NO leaders are trained on this.

Mastering Emotional Experiences

Make sure all managers are fully trained in:

- High-level Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
- Authentic Motivation and Self-Determination
- Behavior Change
- Coaching Skills for Managers
- The 7 Human Needs at Work

Regularly measure:

- Manager skill and use of EQ.
- How well the 7 Human Needs at Work are being met in your organization.

Since emotions are the main driver of all human decisions and behavior (and consequently engagement and effectiveness at work) the #1 Leadership Question is:

How can I change (or positively influence) a person's emotional experience?

This can change everything else.

Using the Question

For Yourself:

Ask yourself the question whenever you're feeling frustrated or disengaged.

Journal your answers to discover actions for embracing what you feel and for shifting your state into higher levels.

For your Teammates/Direct Reports:

Ask yourself this question to think of new actions to boost and engage teammates.

Sometimes you'll need to involve your colleagues directly:

- What would make this situation feel better for you?
- What would you ideally love to feel in this situation? What could help create that?

Use their answers to create goals and actions to support that.

The 7 Human Needs at Work

50 years of workplace science (and ancient wisdom on human happiness) point to these 7 Needs every human has to be fully energized, cared for, and engaged at work.

1. Safety	Trust and Psychological safety. Created through authenticity, vulnerability, credibility, equal talking time, and social sensitivity.
2. Play	Social creativity, experiments, and innovation. Created by giving freedom and time for people to collaboratively explore new solutions. Giving time and resources to employee-created ideas and initiatives.
3. Power	Autonomy and Mastery. Created through giving freedom of “the how” to employees. Created by identifying each person’s strengths and skills they want to improve and matching specific work and projects to progressing those strengths and skills. Created by improving line of sight to affecting change.
4. Belonging	A sense of being truly understood, accepted, and uniquely valued by your leader and colleagues at work. Created through gratitude, appreciation, and social support.
5. Self-Expression	Speaking your truth and owning your values. Created through identifying personal values and using them. Created by radical candor and radical leadership transparency.
6. Inspiration	Using Intuition and Vision. Created through dedicating time to visioning sessions and practical exercises that access each person’s deeper wisdom and intelligence.
7. Purpose	Truly meaningful work. Created by defining a cause or outcome that is bigger than the individuals or the company and creating a connection between a team’s work and that cause.

Here are some practical exercises you can run yourself with your team, with the purpose of helping to meet their individual human work needs.

1. Cheers For Fears

- ▶ **Purpose:** Building trust, psychological safety and connection, strengthening team bonds.
- ▶ **Where:** Do this inside an existing team meeting or set up a meeting specifically for this.
- ▶ **Instructions:**
 1. **Explain the exercise. (Example Script provided overleaf).**
 2. **Give people a minute to think about what they might want to share.**
 3. **The most senior person (the one with the most “power”) in the room needs to go first.** And ideally they will share an anxiety or fear that is quite vulnerable. This is to set the tone and makes it safer for others to share. To prepare, tell the group you will go first and remind them to cheer you and clap when you share your fear. Then share a genuine work fear/anxiety/worry that you have.
 4. **Then continue around the room in descending order of seniority.**
 5. **Debrief this exercise.** What did it feel like for people to hear others? What did it feel like to share themselves? Is there a positive take-away?
 6. **Continue to observe over time** if this brings changes to the interaction of the team.

- ▶ **Note to the facilitator:**

The point of this exercise isn't to spark a big discussion about each fear - and it's definitely NOT about offering advice or trying to talk people out of what they're afraid of.

It's very important that no fixing happens in this exercise. It's all about simply having the experience of each person admitting out loud what they worry about, other people hearing that, and being cheered for saying it. Everyone will see how easy it is to feel slightly better when the fear is out in the open. Sharing like this creates safety.

1. Cheers For Fears

▶ Example Script (but put this in your own words!):

“We’re going to try an exercise to let go of some stress. One of our biggest stressors is what we have fear or anxiety about at work. We all have this. It just means we care, and that we also have doubt. That’s okay, normal, and human.

Doubt and anxiety grows stronger in the dark, and messes with us. So we need to get it into the open. We do this by talking about it and facing it. This gives us the chance to support each other better.

So the goal of this exercise is to share what we are afraid of or anxious about at work. Just one or two sentences. We’re not going to talk about it in detail or explore it and ask you a bunch of questions about it. This isn't some therapy.

This is just an open discussion about what we are worried about, so that we can better understand each other and know how to better help each other. If you don’t want to do this, you can always pass. The goal is simply to get even better as a team.

Important note: We’re not fixing or solving anyone’s fears or telling them they don’t need to be afraid of something, or not to worry about something. Solutions can come later. Whatever someone says they are anxious about, we cheer! We clap! We can make it fun. There are only 3 possible verbal responses, “Nice one!” “Thank you, I get that.” or “Oh me too!”

We’re not cheering the fact that people are anxious or afraid. We’re cheering that people are brave enough to say it out loud. We are cheering their bravery! We’re also cheering as a thank you. Thank you for saying it out loud. Thank you for letting us know how you really feel. Thank you for making it easier for the next person to share what they feel. Thank you for helping others realize they are not alone with their worries. Thank you for giving us a clue to how we can all support each other better. That's why we cheer for fears.

And remember, you can always pass.

And you don’t need to pick anything huge or serious if you don’t want to. It can be anything you worry about. Big or small.”

2. Circle of Appreciation

- ▶ **Purpose:** Fulfills belonging, creates connection, and reinforces positive behaviors.
- ▶ **Where:** Use this as your closing round at the end of a team meeting to end your meeting positively, filling people's appreciation banks and strengthening team bonds.
- ▶ **What it looks like:** Each person in the room receives a single unique, genuine, personal appreciation from someone and then gives an appreciation to someone else. The appreciation goes around the circle until everyone has given and received.
- ▶ **Who starts?** If the meeting is in person, the most senior person in the room starts it off by appreciating the person to their right. That person then responds with a thank you and turns to the person to their right and appreciates them. All the way around the circle, ending with the first speaker. If online, the facilitator lists the order in the chat, with the most senior person starting first.
- ▶ **Instructions:**
 1. **Introduce the Exercise:** "We're going to end this meeting with an Appreciation Circle exercise.
 2. **Notes to share with the group before you start:**
 - **Give genuine appreciations:** appreciations are a genuine positive comment unique for the person we are appreciating. It could be something simple, or big. Something they did, said, or a question they asked, or how they listened, or how they showed up, or how they helped someone else. The main point is that it is not generic praise. It is specific. There are plenty of options for finding a genuine, unique appreciation.
 - **Receiver's Response:** Simply say, "Thank you." and let the appreciation land with you. No discussion needed.
 - **Continue:** The receiver then appreciates the next person, and so on, until everyone has given and received appreciation.
 3. **Observation:** Watch how this affects the room & the relationships between team members.

3. The Stakeholder Game

▶ **Purpose:** Enhances creativity and problem-solving by incorporating unique perspectives. Makes meetings more engaging. Potentially taps inspiration and purpose.

▶ **Instructions:**

1. Choose your Meeting: Pick a discussion where outcomes are undecided (e.g. decision-making, planning, ideation).

2. Introduce the Exercise:

- Explain: “We’re playing the Stakeholder Game. We need volunteers to play roles of stakeholders not on our team. Think and speak as they would. Any volunteers?”
- If no volunteers, assign roles to those with the least stake in the outcome.

3. Identify Stakeholders:

- Ask: “Which stakeholders not here are affected by our decision?”
- Examples: Customer (good or difficult), marketing team, executive, etc.

4. Assign Roles: Have the group choose and assign the roles.

5. Conduct Discussion:

- Proceed normally with your discussion with the people that have assigned roles speaking and acting as their assigned stakeholders.
- Encourage participants to think and speak as their assigned roles would.

6. Reflect: Discuss how the inclusion of “outside” stakeholders affected the discussion.



What's Next?

We hope this resource helps you and your leaders take practical, immediate steps toward strengthening engagement and driving meaningful change in your organization.

If you're ready to build on what's here, let's talk about what's next.

Reach out today:
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This resource was created by Think Productive. Feel free to use and share widely.
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